

IN THE BEGINNING

We each experience daily life at a very personal level as it unfolds before us, the good and the bad alike. However, life with all of its complexities can have a devastating impact on humanity in general. Sadly, this was made apparent as Covid-19 made its unimpeded entrance not only into our personal worlds, but the world in general with a mercilessness that caused countless loss.

Unfortunately, faith and hope and trust in God can be stretched to the point of breaking as a result of our experiences with life. I understand. Years ago I was engulfed with thoughts of giving up. Hope was desperately low, while heartache and upset seemed to take on a life of their own.

This was not the first time giving up seemed the answer. At the age of fourteen, I awoke after an unsuccessful attempt to escape the wretched feelings of being unlovable and rejected to do what at times we naturally seem to do - project our feelings onto others, "God doesn't want me either." Maybe it was this belief, combined with the attention and concern given to family members whose conversion to Christianity

was thought 'cultish' that I made the decision to – seek the Truth about Jesus.



My discoveries brought both sadness and amazement. Sadness for the years spent merely glancing in the Lord's direction. Never realizing the willfulness of self-reliance could blind eyes with indifference, warp minds with conceit and harden hearts with deceit. Amazement at how God works within to bless and to transform with words of Truth when willingness to consider is present. He sends Light to open eyes and fill souls with awareness to the wisdom of humility for this brings honor. He sends Truth to guard and to guide us to the path of peace for it is known contentment is great gain (1Tim. 6:6).

How amazing and how sad for God to bestow righteousness and salvation He had to demonstrate His own love for us: While we were still sinners, He sent Christ to die for us (Rom. 5:8) giving us time and opportunity to correctly analyze and accurately divide the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15 AMP). With hope that we would come to realize

OUR ETERNAL LIFE MATTERS



Though it is difficult to state one purpose for my putting pen to paper, it is very easy to acknowledge the challenge of this endeavor, which is to emphatically point out the need for knowledge of God and His Word and our human condition. Many reasons can be given for straying from the Truth of God; however, there is only one with motives and incentives that are guilty of misleading - our very own heart.

Phil. 2:12 instructs us to work out our own salvation. For me, this Scripture was one I read, but it always left me scratching my head. Probably it was the word “work” that caused me to ponder since Scriptures such as Rom. 6:23 emphatically state, salvation is given to us so there can be no prideful boasting of self and achievement.

It wasn't until Holy Spirit flipped the switch that I realized Philippians 2:12 offers the perfect explanation for my writing (since singing is definitely not an option). Salvation is not a gift to be received and stored away. Yes, Salvation is a gift offered to all; however, every reward God individually prepares with one person on His mind, and right now that would be you.

The Message Bible offers this explanation, I want you woven into a tapestry of Love, in touch with everything there is to know of God.

Then you will have minds confident and at rest, focused on Christ, God's great mystery. ALL the richest treasures of wisdom and knowledge are embedded in that mystery and nowhere else (Col. 2:2-3).



For Jesus bestows upon us His righteousness, which gives us right standing with God, but I didn't realize how much personal growth and experience was needed to stand securely in faith and hope and love for God no matter the circumstances.

I had faith that God sent His Son so I could receive Life, not like this temporal life we've been granted, instead everlasting life. I had hope that through Jesus I too would be raised from the dead. What I didn't have was faith in Holy Spirit and hope in His resurrection power right now, right here on earth.

Today we can peer into a tomb that is empty and know there is no other like it. Some may doubt, some may disbelief; but know, Holy Spirit peers into those same hearts, and mourns for they too are empty of God's Word.



I pray eyes and hearts that are as sealed tombs would give ear to God's Word of Truth. Because, with faith as small as a mustard seed, Holy Spirit will work to roll that huge stone of deceptive self-righteousness away inch-by-inch, so the light God calls Day can break through. For the path of the righteous is like the gleam of dawn, shining every brighter till the full light of the perfect Day arises (Prov. 4:18 NKJV). And this song by Carly Pearce and Matthew West speaks to the great need for that stone of deception to be rolled away:

TRUTH BE TOLD

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xC2wk1w09U8>

Lie number one you're supposed to have it all together

And when they ask how you're doing

Just smile and tell them, "Never better"

Lie number 2 everybody's life is perfect except yours

So keep your messes and your wounds

And your secrets safe with you behind closed doors

Truth be told

The truth is rarely told, now

I say I'm fine, yeah I'm fine oh I'm fine, hey I'm fine but I'm not
I'm broken

And when it's out of control I say it's under control but it's not
And you know it

I don't know why it's so hard to admit it
When being honest is the only way to fix it
There's no failure, no fall
There's no sin you don't already know
So let the truth be told

There's a sign on the door, says, "Come as you are" but I doubt it
'Cause if we lived like it was true,
Every Sunday morning pew would be crowded
But didn't you say the church should look more like a hospital
A safe place for the sick, the sinner and the scarred and the prodigals
Like me

Well truth be told
The truth is rarely told
Oh am I the only one who says

I'm fine, yeah I'm fine oh I'm fine, hey I'm fine but I'm not
I'm broken
And when it's out of control I say it's under control but it's not

And you know it
I don't know why it's so hard to admit it
When being honest is the only way to fix it
There's no failure, no fall
There's no sin you don't already know
So let the truth be told

Can I really stand here unashamed
Knowin' that your love for me won't change?
Oh God if that's really true
Then let the truth be told

I say I'm fine, yeah I'm fine oh I'm fine, hey I'm fine but I'm not
I'm broken

And when it's out of control I say it's under control but it's not
And you know it

I don't know why it's so hard to admit it
When being honest is the only way to fix it
There's no failure, no fall
There's no sin you don't already know
Yeah I know

There's no failure, no fall
There's no sin you don't already know
So let the truth be told

God's miraculous will forever be occurring, for Holy Spirit will no longer be peering into a dark and empty tomb, for His resurrection power raises the Light of Life within us. Yes, the heart of every person who desires to walk in the ever-brightening Light of God's favor and grace, will live as a temple for Holy Spirit, Who enlightens us with knowledge and understanding so the dawning of Truth will give way to morning splendor (Prov. 4:18 TLB).



The world may have done to you as it did to my husband and I, rob you of everything essential. Over the past 20 years I lost my health, my career, a marriage separation, my home to bankruptcy and foreclosure, a church I had attended for 15 plus years, friends and even my reputation was attacked.

However, I came to discover the world could take what seems important, but never the truly essential my relationship with God and what He continues to give me through His Word, Christ Jesus: faith,

hope, truth, perseverance, confidence and the greatest of all His love more than enough for each and every circumstance that I encounter.

I tell my grandchildren in every situation there are only two choices to be made. Our travels in life will have us facing crossroads turn left or go and do what is right. I am but one voice giving this assurance: God worked good in every mess I set before Him. However, I would be remiss for not mentioning we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses to the life of faith (Heb. 12:1).

Every road I choose to walk with trust in God I am working out His gift of salvation – one of Renewal and Recovery where Reconciliation reigns over rebellion and animosity; where Redemption triumphs over pride and sin; where Restoration prevails over hopelessness and despair; where Regeneration overcomes death; where Revival loudly exalts God’s grace and mercy and love, for God’s love casts out fear of being wrong, abandoned, rejected or death....



I share the words of Truth, but they are yours to be experienced. And though they may have been read a thousand times there is always a new and fresh piece of Manna to be received. And every morsel that is

tasted has Revelation and Resurrection Power so we can see and know and experience how very good the Lord, Christ Jesus, truly is (Ps. 34:6a).

Jesus modeled God's goodness, love and devotion. He has designed clothes to be worn – garments of salvation, a robe of righteousness – for those who choose to model His likeness on the earth (Isa. 61:10). A place where choices must be made:

Offerings of Peace or dishing out anger

Encourage or tear down

Share Loving-kindness or control and manipulate with fear

God called the Light Day so we too could become light in the Lord (Eph. 5:8). So we could receive Truth and grow healthy and strong in the brilliant glory of the Son of God. Putting our trust in the Light of the World so we might become sons of Light (John 12:36).

And though, while in darkness we used building blocks of negativity that led to our constructing toxic tendencies and self-destructive behaviors, we can learn to live as children of Light whose fruit will become succulent, sweetened with the knowledge of Goodness, Righteousness and Truth.

We can discover what pleases the Lord, and choose to rid ourselves of the distasteful, shameful and damnable deeds of darkness as Holy Spirit exposes where and how and what and when they became issues of the heart (Eph. 5:8-10).



God sent His Word of Truth to open our eyes and turn us from darkness to Light, from the power of Satan to Himself. For it is God Who gives everyone forgiveness of sins, and places us among those who choose to follow Truth's program of Renewal and Recovery and be sanctified (regenerated, restored, refined) through faith in His Son (Acts 26:17).

Through Jesus we are blessed by God to be sons of Light and sons of the Day alert and self-controlled waiting for the day of the Lord's return, which will be sudden and as unexpected as a thief in the night.

As sons of Light and sons of the Day the choice has been made to be separate, set-apart from those who are asleep for there will be no escape from the power of darkness that will overtake and surprise so many people (1 Thess. 5:4-6 AMP).



How many words, choices and actions yet to be determined and implemented; however, nothing is hidden from God's sight. The thoughts and attitudes of the heart will be judged (Heb. 4:14). The Truth about this matter has been spoken:

“An account will have to be given on the Day of Judgment for every careless word spoken. By your words you will be acquitted, and by your own words you will be condemned.”

Matt. 12:36-37

Although there may be ample reason to do as Adam did point a finger of accusation at God and one to blame another, this will not happen when we stand before God. Our experience will be as Isaiah's: Woe to Me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips! I live among a people of unclean lips and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty (Isa. 6:5).

However, the Lord does what only He can do - the miraculous - He takes our guilt away for He Himself has atoned for our sins (Isa. 6:7). Jesus made a way so we could know - being in God's presence is an experience like no other. The very atmosphere makes one aware of His goodness. It seems to be saturated by the sweet and comforting essence of His gentleness and loving-kindness.

The multi-layered facets of God's love will seem to wrap themselves around you one-by-one as though to cocoon you in serenity, safety and contentment. Such a pleasant and welcoming embrace there will be no doubt of belonging, of being where you belong - home.



Unfortunately, our atmosphere has been polluted. There are many toxic agents that affect the quality of the air, as well as, the undeniable presence of evil that has affected the quality of life throughout the eras of time. Though we must endure the likes of fear, rejection, resentment, regret and repression, God's mercy is so great there is a fresh replenishment offered each and every single morning (Lam. 3:22).

So I write about this gift of time we've been given, God's words of Truth that strengthen and empower, and our natural tendency to use words that pollute our thoughts, opinions, attitudes and beliefs. For negativity works to produce a great heaviness that at times can become too difficult to bear.

Just as a switch when flipped will bring light into a room, so too our words for they have the power of choice. When Truth is told, the atmosphere of anger, hatred and despair can be transformed - for God inhabits the praises of His people (Ps. 22:3 AMP).



So I suggest this choice be considered - to give regard to the impact and importance of words. For one as very small as the word “re” introduces us to countless considerations “in the matter of...” And in the matter of this small word “re,” it is also known as a morpheme or prefix that means “back” and “again.” “Re” is widely used to form new words; however, if a morpheme is altered in anyway, the entire meaning of the word can be changed. For example, rebuild – build, recall – call, return – turn, repay – pay....

So I write of a conditioning (Life-giving, transforming, harmonizing) program designed by God’s Word of Truth, which uses this small word “Re” in the matter of changing the meaning of life for you:

Spiritually **Re**born, a divine offspring, a person who the Lord has blessed (Hos.1:11 AMP) for trusting Him to save them (John 1:12 TLB)

To **Re**mind you to hang onto the Word of Life, for the Lord will hold you up in bad times; the promises of God will **Re**juvenate you (Ps. 119:49-50)

Jesus gave Himself to **Redeem** us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good (Titus 2:14)

God's clear-cut **Revelation** is a quiet place of **Retreat** to wait for His Word to **Renew** us (Ps. 119:113-114)

The words of Truth will ease and relieve and **Restore** your soul; when you come to Jesus He will cause you to rest (Matt. 11:28) from striving so hard to _____

The God of all grace, Who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself **Restore** you and make you strong and firm and steadfast (1 Pet. 5:10)

Return to Me, and I will **Return** to you says the Lord (Mal. 3:7) and you will **Regain** the paths of Life (Prov. 2:19)

God sent Jesus so you might **Regain** your sight and be filled with Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17)

God saved you because of His own mercy by the cleansing of new birth (**Regeneration**) and **Renewing** of Holy Spirit Who He pours out so richly through Jesus Christ our Savior (Titus 3:5-6)

God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus, and through Him **Re**concile to Himself all things by making peace through the blood Jesus shed on the cross (Col. 1:19-20)

God has brought you into His own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault. But, you must continue to believe this Truth, and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you **Re**ceived when you heard the Good News, which has been preached all over the world (Col. 1:22-23)

God **Re**vives the spirit of the humble and **Re**vives the heart of the thoroughly penitent (bruised with sorrow for sin) (Isa. 57:15)

The church of the Firstborn who have **Re**turned to God are registered as citizens of heaven they have been made perfect by Christ Jesus (Heb. 12:23)

So keep your eyes ever on the Lord for only He will **Re**lease your feet from the snare (Ps. 25:15)

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Though I knew the Word of God there was so much error and double-mindedness in my thinking and my beliefs and opinions even the trust I offered God lacked authentic meaning. This may sound silly, but my faith seemed wrapped up in fear. It was like flipping a coin with two tails faith-fear how I wanted to respond correctly, and not be that emotional reactor.

Thankfully, I'm doing much better than in past days. I have learned fear and Faith may walk with me; however, only One brings **Renewal** and **Recovery** of sight for the blind and **Releases** us from the oppression of negative forces (Luke 4:18).

A definition given to Renewal: the act or instance of bringing something back to life, public attention, or vigorous activity. For Recovery: the process of combating a disorder or a real or perceived problem. Truly this journey of renewal and recovery is a life-time process of learning and growing strong in faith and trust for God.

- Renewal and recovery sets us on a journey to acquire and learn to live by spiritual principles
- Also, it is essential for us to learn to do intangible things like "Let Go and Let God" "Surrender" and "Accept" while we are doing

the more tangible behaviors, such as making decisions and setting boundaries and practicing Gratitude

- Changing today's self-defeating behaviors is an important part of this process of renewal and recovery – it's where we must begin
- Yes, the road of renewal and recovery is ongoing, a process that daily evolves as we work to establish and incorporate life-giving and supportive principles that work for us

By trusting the One Who works “Re” back and again and again into the matters of our lives so He can set us free from anything that hinders or torments or oppresses. Jesus makes His presence known as we take steps in our daily journey following Life-giving principles meant to be daily decreed.



Principles like the eight established by Celebrate Recovery, which are based on the Beatitudes Jesus shared with us as recorded in Matthew 5:3-11:

- 1. Realize I'm not God; I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable.**

*“Happy are those who know
They are spiritually poor.”*

Matthew 5:3a TEV

- 2. Earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him and that He has the power to help me recover.**

*“Happy are those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.”*

Matthew 5:4 TEV

- 3. Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ’s care and control.**

“Happy are the meek.”

Matthew 5:5a TEV

- 4. Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God and to someone I trust.**

“Happy are the pure in heart.”

Matthew 5:8a TEV

5. Voluntarily submit to any and all changes God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.

*“Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do
What God requires.”*

Matthew 5:6a TEV

6. Evaluate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I’ve done to others when possible, except when to do so would harm them or others.

“Happy are the merciful”

“Happy are the peacemakers”

Matthew 5:7a & 5:9 TEV

7. Reserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will.

8. Yield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and my words.

*“Happy are those who are persecuted
Because they do what God requires.”*

Matthew 5:10

We are working out our salvation by taking steps toward Renewal and Recovery, and applying Spiritual Principles, such as those mentioned above, into our daily lives – we will not only become more familiar with the ways, the Word and the will of God, but we will also begin to do as Hebrews 4:16 instructs:

*“Draw near to the throne of grace
Fearlessly and confidently and boldly,
That we may receive mercy for our failures
And find grace to help in good times for every need,
Appropriate help and well-timed help,
Coming just when we need it” AMP*



A decision to take steps and gain insight into the matters of your life will bring about this discovery: God's determination (purposefulness, resolve, readiness) is to release you from doubt, confusion and deception, and to bring you back again and again and again to the Author of Life for faith in the name of Jesus is God-given for a just and righteous cause so Salvation, Healing and Deliverance can be received by you.

Don't let core beliefs or feelings work against you because they are conveyors of negativity not facts. The Word of God works in your behalf from the inside-out until you have confidence your sins are forgiven and the penalty of sin has been **Removed** – Death – the last of God's enemies destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26) for you.

Sadly, for those who deny or reject God's Word the penalty for sin will not be removed – facing Death a second time. How unimaginable to spend eternity suffering the consequence of sin – shame, guilt, remorse, condemnation...Especially in possession of this knowledge - the heart of God could of and should of have been their everlasting place of rest.



As life played out for me day after day, I read to learn how to cope with rejection, betrayal, trauma and codependency. When trouble seemed more present than the Lord, I listened to teaching CD's and TV evangelists to stay connected to the Word of Truth. A different kind of strength is required because the world in which we live will drain a heart and soul dry for this is its goal - to kill - to steal - and to destroy (John 10:10).

However, the Word of Truth works to strengthen, encourage and provide (the) comfort (of knowing Life eternal) (1 Cor. 14:3). For no one can deny if the rulers of this world understood the mystery of God, they would never have crucified the Lord.

God's plan was hidden, even though He made it for our ultimate glory before the world began. However, it is not delivered with the kind of wisdom that belongs to the world or its leaders; instead, they are God's words of Wisdom (1 Cor. 2:6-8), Truth and Life - all of which point us to Jesus.

So I point everyone to Jesus, the Word of God, Who has worked throughout time to encourage, exhort and uplift so we could co-labor with Him in the realms of grace and salvation.

The world cannot deplete hope and faith and perseverance unless supplies have been limited by self-importance. A struggle of which God is well aware, so He sent His Word filled with truth and grace, to be delivered into the hands of the self-centered so we could come to know and become captivated by God's love, which surpasses our worldly understanding (Eph. 3:19).



Because of what Christ has done, we become gifts to God that He delights in (Eph. 1:11 TLB). He gives our lives the sweet, wholesome fragrance of Christ Who dwells within us. And always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ so that through us He can spread everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of the Gospel as a sweet perfume for those who know (or want to know about) Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 2:14-15 NIV & TLB).

Sadly, there are those who trust in fortune and destiny, choices in which God does not delight (Isa. 65: 11-12 AMP). If only they would move out of their own way for then the beauty of God's Word of Truth would not only be seen, but He would be heard:

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they’re doing.”

Luke 23:34



What’s so amazing God’s love for us; His love is so great He doesn’t just accept us just the way we are, He gives us His all – His Word, His Spirit of Grace - to support and encourage and comfort, to strengthen and uplift. However, when tangible solutions continue to be sought, when actions are the required proof, the weight of what happens naturally displaces the greatest treasure forever to be possessed – God’s Word.

Here are a few words that are synonymous with possessed: calm, collected, composed, peaceful, unshaken, untroubled, unworried, even-keeled, well-balanced, disciplined, self-controlled, confident, relieved, kept, reserved, withheld, rejoiced in....

The Word God sends provides a depth of meaning for Faith and Hope and Love of God, transcends (exceeds, outshines, surpasses) what can naturally be known. The Word God sent provides proof through His actions with faith and hope and love for God we can advance (approach, breakthrough, journey) for a lifetime traveling with a deep consciousness of God (1 Peter 1:17 Message).

Remembering the immense cost God had to pay for the ransom that would save us - the precious lifeblood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18 TLB). Jesus faced Death so God could infuse within us the life of His Word by the Spirit (1 Peter 3:18) of Holiness, Who openly designated the Son of God in power (in a striking, triumphant and miraculous manner) by His resurrection from the dead, our Lord Christ Jesus, through Him we receive grace.



God bestows His Word of Truth to promote obedience to the faith and make disciples for His name's sake among all nations (Rom. 1:4-5 AMP). Blessed be the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for He has not withheld His kindness and faithfulness; the Lord leads us on this journey to the house of His kinsmen (Gen. 24:27 BSB).

How many do not realize no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who (have been captivated by His love). However, God reveals it to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:9-10).

Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to gain knowledge, so we can be made aware of the day when Jesus will stand and shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. And they will live securely, for then His greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And He will be their peace (Mic. 5:4-5).



Those words Micah spoke are for our days. They are words from God so we can know the Lord is our strength and our shield. When our heart trusts in Him we are helped (Ps. 28:7) for the Lord has never forsaken those who seek Him (Ps. 9:10). God sent His Word so we could have Life and have it to the full (John 10:10).

God rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brings us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins (Col. 1:13-14), and we can know what His Word says:

“Those with many sins to be forgiven, much gratitude and love will be shown to Me. But those who believe they have little to forgive, will only show Me a little love. Your sins are forgiven”

“Go in peace, your faith has saved you.”

Luke 7:47-48 NLT, Luke 7:50

Those who hear God’s call are dearly beloved by the Father and separated and kept for Christ Jesus, to dwell in God’s Word so mercy and peace and love would be multiplied within us (Jude 1-2 AMP). Those who walk uprightly enter into peace (Isa. 57:2). For the Root of Jesse stands as a banner for the peoples, the nations will rally to Him, and His place of rest will be glorious (Isa. 11:10).



God’s gift of Life should not be left unseen stored away in our heart. God’s gift of Life is meant to be unpacked for it contains all the fullness of His grace so one blessing after another can be received (John 1:16). We don’t need anyone to tell us in this world we will have trouble; however, we need to hear Truth, Who tells us to:

“Take heart! I have overcome the world so that in Me you may have peace.”

John 16:33

And find true contentment.



Yes, God prepares every gift so we can unwrap revelation from Holy Spirit not only about the Way, the Truth and the Life Who is exalted in heaven, but of the way, the truth and life you are living here on earth. For surely, you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed within a mother's womb, so you cannot (know or) understand the work of God, the Maker of all things (Eccl. 11:5).

I share this Scripture because there were things about the way I lived my life and the truths I chose to believe many of which were proven to be harmful. Only God could reveal those toxic opinions and tendencies because He has the answers to what, when, where and how so we can better understand the why.

Why is not easily answered for many reasons. Our nature is to control, manipulate and fix things for personal comfort and satisfaction. I didn't view myself as being prideful or self-centered, and I surely didn't want anyone else to. As a result, I strove to please, which caused my perception of reality, and the person God knew me to be to become greatly devalued and flawed.

I would never have been able to realize how freeing it is to be vulnerable and transparent because I was too concerned with what others thought. So much effort went into being accepted, approved of and validated. Attempts made to feel appreciated and loved. So many times they proved futile. These attempts of mine were unable to fulfill my heart's desire; however, they were very effective in robbing me of confidence and self-esteem.



I point you to Jesus because as I've discovered we're just not able to properly help ourselves. At some time in some fashion, we are victimized (subjected to some form of abuse, deception, violence), forced to assume the role of victim (made to feel a loser, a laughingstock, a disappointment, a failure). While ironically, when fairness, justice and vindication are sought we may be forced once again to excuse partiality, wrongdoing and additional belittlement.

This also happens in a house of God because unrealistic expectations, critical judgments and disrespectful behaviors also occupy the pews.

We are all guilty. It's just so much easier to see error in someone else. I'm sure you've heard the saying "Rose-Colored Glasses" well they are

applied to our natural inclination, which uses any means of denial – to excuse, minimize, rationalize, compare,,, - to justify and assuage.



There is much to be learned about denial and avoidance for though it may seem a practical application the irritation of annoyance and bitterness and resentment is ever growing. When issues are not confronted, control and order can become so disheveled emotional reactions can erupt and spew over like molten lava.

There are many things lying dormant in a heart. Some speak to offense, shame, low self-esteem, failed attempts to control or to maneuver someone or something to our satisfaction. Within its chambers we have also stored a unique set of rules that are governed by the moral and ethical standards of our preference. As evidenced by the violence on our streets, when it is deemed something within our complex and personal system of beliefs has been disrespected, more than emotional triggers are being squeezed.

I'll offer this example, for years I could not understand how one remark could have triggered such a desperate reaction to give up on life. God helped me to understand I had made everything about performance. I

worked hard to earn love, respect and acceptance only to be left believing something must be wrong with me.

What I didn't understand within this way of thinking - everything had to be earned - I was giving to prove how deserving I was; instead of just knowing, believing, trusting what God says about me. It was very hard to realize my behavior said to others I will do what you want to be accepted. That is until something I thought outrageous was being asked of me. Who could have known? I surely didn't.



Sadly, when life is governed by self-interest the absolute worse consequence can occur. We become controlled as slaves by the master of deceit who uses evil - criticism and disrespectful judgments, anger and hatred, fear and condemnation, lust and idolatry - to mention just a few, to spin a web until our hopes, dreams, aspirations and possibly our life is consumed by this enemy of God - Death.

I speak from experience. Several years ago my world imploded in on me. Control was taken from me. Life went on all around me; however, I couldn't stop or prevent the internal hurts from occurring as I collided

day after day with uncertainty and confusion – why weren't my efforts enough? Why wasn't my love enough? Why wasn't I enough?

It took two and half years before I asked God the right question. What can we do? He opened my eyes to the post-traumatic stress with which I personally struggled, and to codependency which is a universal struggle. For no one can remain unscathed by the harsh conditioning of our human nature. What develops and occurs as a result of our leaning on, relying on and depending on self and others can vary as uniquely as every face.



Turning to the Word of God ensures we always receive Truth, Revelation and Understanding. For surely God saw our unformed substance. Nothing was hidden from Him when our frame was being intricately and curiously formed in secret. His concern and attention how abounding, how beautiful, how can we comprehend? For God knows us inside and out, every bone in our body, every thought and feeling in our soul. They too were intricately and secretly inspected.

Like an open book, God watches us grow from conception to birth; all the stages of our lives are spread out before Him. The days of our lives

all prepared before we even live one day. He has placed within our hands the power of free will to pick and choose, to determine and decide how each day should be painted. If only the dark and dreary hues of wickedness could be done away with (Ps. 139:15-19 AMP & Message).



Have you ever attempted to paint an image on a white canvas? Imagine what our choices would portray as color is added:

The vibrancy of reds – danger, passions, anger

The dark shadings of blue– rejection, sadness, violence

The greying of – doubt, disbelief, worry

How they change the beauty and appearance of:

The brightness of yellow – joy, happiness, friendliness

The splendor of pink – compassion, love, faithfulness

The warmth of green – growth, healing, security

The soothingness of sky blue – peace, confidence, sincerity

The magnificence of purple – royalty, wisdom, spirituality

The purity of white – hope, goodness, simplicity

The complexity of reasoning, feeling, imagination, motive, intention....becomes apparent when red runs because blood was shed; when yellow is soiled by cowardice and greed; when purple is marred by self-centeredness and arrogance; when green is muddled by money and fame; when blue is darkened by rebellion and defiance; and white becomes stained by the blotchiness of shame, guilt, condemnation and oh so many of our tears.

There is so much to be learned and experienced during our life's journey. However, to see our personage as God's own handiwork (His workmanship) a new life's journey must begin. For God reshapes and reconstructs our image of self when we're in Jesus so we can know and experience the dreams and hopes and aspirations He has for each one of us.



This new beginning sets us on a journey of studying and appreciating the complexity of God's craftsmanship. I took the following information from the article, "How to Appreciate Paintings." Painting is a visual art which means the greatest paintings tend to be those with the greatest visual impact.

Many paintings can be extremely complex. Complexity arises because of the artistic methods used to paint the picture, and/or its narrative content and message. The techniques (strategies, how, ways) used by an artist can vary enormously to increase the complexity and depth of a picture.

Color has always been an important feature, and its use was often subject to certain rules. For example, Egyptian painters used only six colors:

- Red – the color of power and authority
- Green – symbolized new life and fertility
- Blue – symbolized rebirth
- Yellow – symbolized the eternal, such as the qualities of the sun and gold
- White – symbolized purity
- Black – the color of death

The narrative content of a picture embraces at least four basic types of content

1. The main message

2. Subsidiary messages
3. Symbolism
4. References and analogies

<http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/how-to-appreciate-paintings.htm>



If we were a connoisseur someone who understands the details, techniques and pertinent principles of a particular subject then we have become competent to make critical judgments. God is a Connoisseur, the Creator of heaven and earth and of the sea and everything in them (Acts 4:24).

Do you know what a critical hour this is? How it is high time now for you to wake up out of your sleep, rouse to reality? For salvation, final deliverance is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone and the Day is almost here. Let us then drop the dreary works and deeds of darkness, and put on the full armor of Light (Rom. 13:11-12 AMP) so the glorious hues of Love, can paint our lives, our world with splendor. Critical thinking is vital because

OUR SPIRITUAL LIVES MATTER



God reveals the complexity of His heavenly techniques and principles through His Word. God has given us a powerful tool – our imagination. However, unhappiness with ourselves or life can color our world grey. There is no secret formula to help us access our potential or overcome emotional and physical pain.

Experience has revealed there is a path that can be taken that sets us on a spiritual journey to inner healing. I'm not talking about reaching a pre-determined destination; instead, an ongoing life journey of personal growth and transformation and freedom.

Because no two of us are alike, and because we have each conformed to the patterns of this world character deficits develop, as does harmful and destructive tendencies, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that are injurious to self and others.

This spiritual journey leads us into renewal and recovery, restoration, rejuvenation and reconciliation with God, with self and with others. Through His Word God invites us into a heavenly process for change:

- ASK and it will be given to you

- SEEK and you will find
- KNOCK and the door will be opened to you

For everyone who asks receives; and everyone who seeks finds; and everyone who knocks the door will be opened (Matt. 7:7-8). There is Hope!



Why is hope important?

You may hear people talk about holding onto hope and that can mean different things for each and every one of us.

The following information was taken from the website Extern: Hope can be a desire for something to happen, a wish for things to change for the better or a particular dream or aspiration. It is important for us to have hope in our lives, important for us to look positively into our future. Hope is a major protective factor in helping us tackle potentially dangerous ideations and intrusive thoughts.

Hope is also a very personal thing and it is important that you do not measure your goals influenced by others. Your aspirations are personal and important to you.

Hope reduces feelings of helplessness, increases happiness, reduces stress, and improves our quality of life.

Let's look at both the positive and negative aspects of hope to gain an understanding as to how it impacts a person's thinking, feelings and behaviors.

HOPELESS

Thinking

I can't cope

I don't see a way out

I'm so upset with everything

Feelings

Frightened

Worried

Hopeless

Behavior

Stay in bed

HOPEFUL

Thinking

I need help with this

We can get through this

This is a setback we can adjust

Feelings

Anxious (normal response)

Determined

Hopeful

Behavior

Reach out for help

Have arguments with loved ones

Support loved ones

Isolate and withdraw

Keep in contact with others

Hopelessness is a feeling that things will not and cannot change and creates a sense that there is no solution to a problem, which can be an increase to the risk of suicide. Whilst hopelessness is not a sole cause of suicide, having hope in our lives can significantly reduce the risk.

Hope is an incredible strength and protective factor in our lives.

There may be times you are challenged with believing there is hope. Try not to be hard on yourself, this is normal.

Tips to help improve your mood:

- Attend local support groups
- Counseling
- Use helplines for support
- Be mindful of what you eat as this can help lift your mood
- Exercise – this doesn't have to be at the gym – try walking, doing housework faster, or going up and down the stairs. As long as you are realistic about your goals and abilities

- Practice mindfulness – you can download Headspace, Calm
- Practice getting into a routine again
- Stay connected with others
- Helping others can really be a benefit
- Get new skills – keeps the mind active
- Practice breathing – the Headspace and Calm app help you do this

Positive impacts of Hope...

- Gives you a reason to get out of bed every day
- Improves mental well-being
- Benefits your physical body
- Helps with the immune system as it reduces your levels of stress
- Increases self-worth, self-belief and your confidence
- Encourages you to take positive action
- Encourages you to surround yourself with like-minded people
- Reduces sadness and anxiety
- Creates opportunities

Sometimes we need help to see things in a different way, sometimes we need to change parts of our lives, whatever it may be. There is support out

there to help you find the strength to believe that Hope is a possibility and it can help us change the way that we live.

[https://www.extern.org/why-is-hope-](https://www.extern.org/why-is-hope-important#:~:text=Hope%20reduces%20feelings%20of%20helplessness,improves%20our%20quality%20of%20life.)

[important#:~:text=Hope%20reduces%20feelings%20of%20helplessness,improves%20our%20quality%20of%20life.](https://www.extern.org/why-is-hope-important#:~:text=Hope%20reduces%20feelings%20of%20helplessness,improves%20our%20quality%20of%20life.)



Likewise, that you find the strength to believe when we have godly knowledge and wisdom for our soul our future's secure, for our hope will be on solid rock (Prov. 24:14 Message). For happy is the person who has the God of Jacob as their helper, whose hope is in the Lord their God (Pa. 146:5 TLB).

For we who have fled to the Lord for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our soul. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest (Heb. 6:18-20 NLT).

Now may the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, in the power of Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:13 ASV). For the world uses grey as the color to symbolize truth. During this spiritual journey God will be using our soul as His canvas on which

to apply the hues of the Light of His glorious Message so our mind's eye can gaze upon Love's perspectives, for God is Love (John 4:16).

There is such a vast difference between Good and Evil. For instance, in God's kingdom Truth is symbolized by the color blue - rebirth - Jesus explained:

"I tell you the Truth, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but Holy Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at My saying You must be born again."

John 3:5-7



We live in the darkness of malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But, when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of any righteous thing we had done, but because of His mercy.

He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by Holy Spirit, Whose brilliance He poured out on us generously through Christ Jesus

our Savior, so that having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:3-7).

Everyone who receives Jesus as their Lord and Savior, He gives the right to become children of God. All we need to do is trust Him to save us. All those who believe this are reborn! Not a physical rebirth resulting from human passion or plan, but from the will of God (John 1:11-13 TLB).



Our thoughts, feelings and beliefs have been darkened by the greys of half-truths, cunning and deception. BUT GOD, He adds the Light of Truth so we would not just come to know, but that we could enter into His heavenly realms. This is what the glorious Light of Truth can accomplish in and for us – Trust, Loyalty, Wisdom, Confidence, Perseverance, Faith in and for God if we're willing to learn. To think differently because:

Surely the darkness hides us, and the Light becomes night around us. BUT GOD, even here His hand will guide us, His right hand will hold us fast. For even darkness is not dark to

Him; the night shines like the day, for darkness is as light to Him (Ps. 130: 10-12)

It is not by our efforts that ground is won, nor can our strength bring us victory; it is God's right hand, His arm, and the Light of His face, for He loves us (Ps. 44:3)

Jesus delivers us from death, and our feet from stumbling, so we may walk before God in the Light of Life (Ps. 56:11)

Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim Him, those who walk in the Light of His presence. They rejoice in the name of Jesus all day long; they exult in His righteousness; for He is our glory and strength, and by His favor we are exalted.

Indeed, our shield belongs to the Lord, our King of Glory, the Holy One of Israel (Ps. 89:15-18)

May His deeds be shown to His servants, His splendor to their children. May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us, for He has set our iniquities before Him, our secret sins in the Light of His presence. Yet God establishes the work of our

hands for us. Yes, He establishes the work of our hands (Ps. 90:8, 16-17)

God's Word of Truth proclaims: This is the work of God - to believe in the One He has sent (John 6:29)

After the suffering of His soul, Jesus will see the Light of Life and be satisfied; by His knowledge My righteous Servant will justify many, and He will bear their iniquities. He poured out His life unto Death, and was numbered with the transgressors, for He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (Isa. 53:11-2)

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the Light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4)

The Light of Israel became a fire, our Holy One a flame; in a single day it will burn and consume His thorns and his briers (Isa. 10:17)

Yes, Jesus said, "I am the Light of the Word. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the Light of Life," John 8:12

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before people, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven (Matt. 5:14-16)

Live as children of Light, for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth, find out what pleases the Lord (Eph. 6:8-10)



The glorious Light of Truth opens our heart and mind so the mastery of God's creativity and His creation can be seen and appreciated and esteemed. God made the sky vast and painted it blue so we could know when faith and trust and loyalty are placed in His Word our potential is far-reaching; simply because God has a purpose and an individual plan for each of us. Truth tells us:

“I know the plans God has for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon Him and come and pray to Him, and He will listen to you. You will seek Him and find Him when you seek Him with all your heart. He will be found by you, and will bring you back from the captivity (to sin),”

Jer. 29:11-14

“My Father will give you whatever you ask in My name. Until now you have not asked for anything in the name of Jesus, Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete,” John 16:23-24



Here's another example, the world applies familiar colors to portray the Fear of the Lord – browns and blacks and greys – that diminishes instead of illuminating the brilliance of God's splendor. The darkness in this world caused by evil breeds negativity by applying the strokes of fear and shame, anger and condemnation so unhealthy practices are incorporated within us – to blame, accuse, self-protect and deny accountability.

However, the colors and tones and shadings God uses are applied with the strokes of kindness and gentleness and goodness, of grace and compassion. It takes time for us to become acquainted with the awe, the ingenuity, the deference and beauty of the Fear of the Lord. God wants to apply the brilliant colors and strategies and principles of Faith and Hope and Love so His Message can be clearly seen because:

OUR ETERNAL LIFE MATTERS



I hope your interest has been tweaked, because during this spiritual journey you will be taking steps to acquire tools and receive keys to God's Kingdom so the glorious hues of Salvation can not only be seen but also personally applied. An open invitation is given to all, to come and listen and learn, so you can become acquainted with the miraculous and wondrous will and ways and redemptive power of Almighty God.

Naturally, there is a starting point, but from the get-go heaven's Super will be working in our natural to release us from depression, anger, hatred, fear... Yes, Holy Spirit will be guiding our steps to the Fear of the Lord for this is where knowledge of God is discovered.

Through the Lord we receive Wisdom, from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. Jesus holds victory for those who believe. He is a shield to those who trust for He guards the course of their life's journey protecting the way of His faithful ones. So what is right and just and fair – every good path – can be understood (Prov. 2:5-11).

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of Life (Prov. 14:27).



Heavenly Wisdom is a fountain of Life as refreshing as water from a mountain spring. Those who drink from it become aware of the pitfalls and snares of Death (Prov. 13:14). Over time as the Word of God, which is a title given to the Lord (Rev. 19:13), is absorbed our natural perspectives will simply change, if there's a willingness to think a little differently. We change! Why! Our Deliverer, Christ Jesus, is the Word of God!

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word is God. The Lord was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made. In Jesus is Life, and that Life is the Light of

mankind. The Light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it (John 1:1-5).

Many people just don't get it. They don't acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God. They don't acknowledge every good thing - hope, love, kindness, encouragement, comfort...- God shares with them. They have not chained God or His Word; sadly, they have chained themselves making it impossible to obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with all its eternal glory.

If only their trust was not in the words they have used that paint our soul with the dark shadings of doubt and denial and disbelief. If only they would allow Holy Spirit to apply the Light of Life, for surely they would discover it is the Lord who delivers our lives from death, and our feet from falling that we may walk before God (Ps. 56:13 AMP) with the light of the Righteous One within us constantly growing brighter. Why? The lamp of the wicked only furnishes a derived, temporary light and shall be put out shortly (Prov. 13:9).



Yes, God sent His Word, the Light of Life, to shine and proclaim to the world:

“I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

John 14:6

The first man, Adam, became a living being (1 Cor. 15:45). God formed him from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of Life (Gen. 2:7). We have these human bodies just like Adam’s made of dust. Bodies that die and decay, that embarrass us because they are weak and become sick. So too did God’s Word share in the likeness of humanity. He became flesh and made His dwelling among us. The glory of the One and Only, Who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

There are many who have said: Oh, that we might see some good (Ps. 4:6)! How difficult it can prove to be when contention (speculation, guess, assumption, conjecture, strife, disagreement) all this and so much more is produced by the darkness of pride and insolence (Prov. 13:10a). If only there was a ray of willingness, for the Lord would lift up the light of His countenance upon them (Ps. 4:6b).

Know the Lord is willing! He is waiting to bring lives back from the pit of destruction, that they may be enlightened with the Light of the living

(Job 33:30) who give heed, not only by listening but by honoring God's Word!



For the Word of God is living and active (Heb. 4:12)! Therefore, God is able to make all grace and truth abound to you through His Word, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you too will abound in every good work (2 Cor. 9:8). This is why it is vital for our healing and deliverance and salvation, that we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on God's Word (Heb. 12: 2a).

God made a promise to Abraham, and gave to him His Word. There was no one greater for Him to swear by, so He swore by Himself:

“I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.”

God wanted to make the unchanging nature of His purpose very clear to all the heirs of what was promised, and He confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie. And those who take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

Why? We have this hope, for surely God is our salvation, with joy we draw water from the wells of salvation. We will trust in Him and not be afraid. The Lord is our strength and our song. He has become our salvation (Isa. 12:2-3).



God's Word of Truth gives us this hope as an anchor for our soul, firm and secure, for God's Word of Life enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain. Jesus has gone before us, He entered on our behalf, and has become our High Priest forever (Heb. 6:13-20).

This is how we know that we belong to the Truth, to the Lord Christ Jesus, His Spirit works within us, the Lord Himself, God's Word of Truth, to set our mind and heart at rest in His presence.

God's Word of Life gives us new life with the Knowledge and Wisdom and Understanding Holy Spirit brings us, so whenever our heart condemns us, and it surely will, we can hold tightly to God, to His Word, His promise

"I AM greater than your heart, and I know everything"

1 John 3:19-20



Yes, God is faithful (1 Cor. 10:13); He is not a God of disorder but of peace (1 Cor. 14:33). He does not want His children to be exasperated or give up. He has given us His Word to bring us up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). So His Spirit guides us into all Truth not speaking on His own; instead, Holy Spirit will speak only what He hears (John 16:13). You may wonder why?

God's Word provides us Insight, Discernment and Revelation so we can experience true and lasting inner healing. For when knowledge of God, of His Word and of His will and ways become familiar, then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; for your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. You will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and He will say:

“Here am I!”

Isa. 58:8-9

You will be strengthened and encouraged in God's Word, for there will be many hardships to be endured before we enter God's Kingdom

(Acts 14:22). Holy Spirit helps us to hear God's Word clearly so we can realize Jesus knows all things; so we can understand the One and Only, Christ Jesus, came from God full of the glorious light of grace and truth (John 16:29-30).

So we can believe God's Word tells us many things, so that in Him we may have peace of mind and heart. For surely, in this world everyone definitely will have trouble, but we can take heart and be encouraged, for the Son of God has overcome the world (John 16:33).



God sent His Word so Holy Spirit could fill us full of spiritual wisdom and insight so we can have a clear knowledge of what God's will is, so that the lives we live may be worthy of our Lord and wholly pleasing to Him; that we may be fruitful in all kinds of good deeds, and may grow into a fuller knowledge of God.

For so mighty is His majesty, He will nerve you perfectly with strength, endurance and forbearance in every situation, that we would give thanks to our heavenly Father Who has entitled us to share in the inheritance of His people in the realm of Light.

God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness, and has transferred us into the realm of His dear Son, by Whom we have been ransomed from captivity through having our sins forgiven (Col. 1:9-15 Goodspeed).

When we were dead in our sins and in the uncircumcision of our sinful nature, God made us alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins (Col. 2:13).



From God's perspective we were as children when we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But, when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law of Moses, to redeem those under the Law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because we are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our heart, the Spirit Who calls out:

“Abba, Father!”

So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir (Gal. 4:2-7).

We are set apart for God – for the Gospel He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding His Son, Who as to His human nature was a descendant of David, and Who through the Spirit of Holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 1:3-4).

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Those who have the Son have Life; however, those who do not have the Son of God do not have God's gift of Life (1 John 5:11-12); instead, they will find their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur – this is the second death (Rev. 21:8).

This is why it is most important to understand our earthly bodies are different from the bodies we will have when God brings us back to life again, for they will be bodies that will never die. We have this natural body until death; but when we come back to life they will be superhuman bodies, for they are also spiritual bodies.



Unlike the first Adam, a human living being; Christ Jesus, the last Adam, is a life-giving spirit (1 Cor. 15:44-45). God is Spirit, and His worshipers must worship in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:23). However,

the spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven (1 Cor.15:46-47).

Since the children of God 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 all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death, of what is unknown.

For this very reason Jesus had to be made like His brethren in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. Jesus Himself suffered when He was tempted, and because of this He is able to help those who are being tempted (Heb. 2:13-18).



We do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have One Who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin (Heb. 4:15).

Jesus gives us Holy Spirit to help us in our weaknesses. We don't know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with

groans that words cannot express. And He Who searches our heart knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will (Rom. 8:26-27).

You should know God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone to do what is wrong. As the Message Bible says, there is nothing deceitful in God, nothing two-faced, nothing fickle. He brought us to life by His Word of Truth, and shows us off as the crown of all His creatures.

So my very dear friends don't get thrown off course. As the New Living Translation states, temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions, and when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

God never wants to do wrong and never tempts anyone else to do so; instead, every good and beneficial and perfect gift comes to us from God, the Creator of all light, and He shines forever without change or shadow. It was a happy day for Him when He gave us our new lives through the Truth of His Word (James. 1:13-18 TLB).



The habits, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, character deficits...that we develop give rise to harmful and self-destructive tendencies, compulsions and behaviors that impede us and prevent us from going on our way and entering into the realm of tranquility. This is what faith in God's Word of Truth accomplishes for us (Luke 8:48 Wuest).

We can be so hard on ourselves, and no one could have been more demanding of themselves than me. Only God, through the power of our faith and willingness to trust Him, can help us truly understand ourselves, this world of Doing where we are physically driven and emotionally depleted.

Jesus is the Way to follow, for God's Word gives us entrance into an existence of BEING strengthened and uplifted as the Spirit of Truth guides us so all that Christ accomplished for us through His life and death can be received.



Only God can renew and reconcile and restore hopes and dreams, aspirations and relationships when our life's journey becomes an expectancy of unusual, simply miraculous experiences as we co-labor with the Lord, instead of our going round and round with anxiety and

apprehension and upset over the usual exhaustive experiences that are brought about by co-depending on one another.

I could use the pages of this book to testify to how God used His Word of Truth to bring about my inner healing. However, what is needed is God using His Word of Truth to bring about inner healing within you.

What I can testify to at the age of fourteen I attempted to escape life; at 39 I planned a means of escaping that horrible sense of being inadequate, a failure; however, around the age of 55 when the very worst occurred the thought of escape was simply ignored.

Before PTSD was diagnosed, there were times when I could hardly recognize myself, the behavior I displayed was so bizarre; my point, though thoughts of death continued to popup I never entertained them.

I came to understand Deep calls to deep in the roar of waterfalls and waves and breakers that may sweep over us; but the Lord by day directs His love to us and at night His song is with us (Ps. 42:7-8).

Life will come with its storms and upsets, turmoil and confusion but there is nothing confusing about God's love – about His Word of Truth.

They lay a solid foundation to stand upon for they remain constant. Jesus, the Word of Truth, is the same yesterday and today and forever (Heb. 13:8).



Today, when upsetting circumstances arise I'm not continually focusing on the problem as I used to do because then I would be giving power and control over to a heart that so quickly pumps out negative emotions, and easily sparks remorseful reactions. But God, He empowers us with grace so our circumstances won't be worsened.

If we would be willing to include gratitude, gratefulness and thanksgiving into to our thinking, there would be ample opportunity for that "But for the grace of God moment" to be experienced. There may not be much in your life to be grateful for, but there is an abundance of time to praise God instead of giving anger a voice. We can choose to be gracious as God has been with us. How grateful God must be when a soul drenched by the waters of adversity discovers warmth in His loving embrace. I pray the heart of God would be sought for then Love could really be known:

"I have no interest in what you have - only in you!"



The chosen ones of God are those who have chosen to let God pursue His interest in them, and as a result receive His stamp of legitimacy (Rom. 11:7 Message). Yes, those who choose to truly place their hope in Christ, who put their confidence in Him are destined and appointed to live for the praise of His glory!

Those who have chosen to believe in Jesus we hear the Word of Truth, the glad tidings of our salvation. A line is drawn in the sand to trust, to adhere to and rely on the Lord. As a result, we are stamped by God with the seal of His long-promised Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of God guarantees our inheritance (Eph. 1:12-14 AMP). Dear _____, legitimate son in the faith: Receive everything God our Father and Jesus our Savior give you (Titus 1:4 Message)! God so loved the world He sent His one and only Son to reveal His interest in you!

For Zion's sake the Lord did not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake He did not remain quiet. He makes our righteousness shine out like the dawn, our salvation like a blazing torch. Oh that the nations would see our

righteousness and all kings our glory. When faith in Christ is chosen, the Lord calls us Hephzibah, for He takes delight in us. God's Word says:

“You will be called by a new name that My mouth will bestow. You will be a crown of splendor in My hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so too will your God rejoice over you.”

Isa. 62:1-5



How grateful we should be for the many opportunities to experience “But for the grace of God moments,” amazed when we too offer grace by responding in a way that glorifies God not anger or hatred or greed, but with patience and kindness and empathy. For we too know how the waters of adversity can wear a person down.

Know those with faith in Jesus are the “Beloved of Jehovah,” and He has great interest in us. So let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in Him, for He shields us all day long. Yes, the one the Lord loves rests between His shoulders (Deut. 33:12).

Paul wrote: It is quite true the way to live a godly life is not an easy matter. But, the answer lies in Christ 1 Tim. 3:16 TLB). In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Tim. 3:12). When knowledge of God's Word is in our possession, we can stand firm even if we have to bite our tongue or sit on our hands knowing, proclaiming: I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me. I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into Me. I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency (Phil. 4:13 AMP).



Yes, God's Word strengthens and encourages us in our faith, so that no one would become unsettled by the trials that come upon us. You know quite well that we were destined for them (1 Thess. 3:2-3). So God's Word gives us supernatural ability to be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power; so we can take our stand against the devil's evil schemes.

Our struggles are not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Eph. 6:10:12). Even if you should suffer for what is right, know that you are blessed. In your heart set apart Christ as Lord, Who says:

“Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.”

1 Peter 3:14-15

Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great:

Jesus appeared in a human body

He was vindicated by the Spirit

He was seen by angels

He was preached among the nations

He was believed on in the world

He was taken up in glory

1 Tim. 3:16



This is why we are told to judge nothing before the appointed time; instead, wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of a person's heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God (1 Cor. 4:5).

Paul wrote: Personally, I care very little if I am judged by people or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is

clear, but that does not make me innocent (1 Cor. 4:3-4). Know therefore, you have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same sort of things.

God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when a mere mortal passes judgment on another and yet does the same things, do you think they will escape God's judgment? Or is contempt being shown for the riches of God's kindness, tolerance and patience, by not realizing that God's kindness leads a person toward repentance (Rom. 2:1-4)?



Yes, living a godly life is not an easy matter, but God's Word speaks to how Christians ought to conduct themselves. The church of the living God is the pillar and foundation of the Truth (1 Tim. 3:15). Therefore, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against another or judges them speaks against the Word of God and is judging what the Lord says.

When the Word is being judged, it is definitely not being kept, when a person is sitting in judgment of godly Wisdom. There is only one Truth-

giver and Judge, the One Who is able to save and destroy. Who are we to judge anyone (James 4:11-12)?

This is my prayer: That your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus -to the glory and praise of God (Phil. 1:9-11).

For it's the love of Christ that constrains and restrains us, when we judge thusly: That if One died for all, then all died. And, He, Christ Jesus, died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him Who died for them and rose again (2 Cor. 5:14-15 NKJV).



Dear friends, do not therefore believe every spirit; instead, test the spirits to see whether they are from God. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. We can overcome the temptations and sin that comes from the world, and from those who speak from the

viewpoint of the world because the One Who God places within us is greater than the one who is in the world (1 John 4:1-5).

So test everything! Hold on to the good! Avoid every kind of evil (1 Thess. 5:22). Keep away from such people who are not serving the Lord Christ Jesus; but instead, their own appetites (Rom. 16:17-18). And if you have sinned, you will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. For the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective (James 5:15-16)!

May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through by His Word of Truth. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus, for the One Who calls you is faithful and He will do it (1 Thess. 5:23-24).



The Book of Exodus recounts a time when Joshua was fighting the enemy. Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning. But, whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning.

When Moses' arms grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up – one on one side, one on the other – so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword (Ex. 17:10-13).

When a person's hands are raised above their head two thoughts come to mind: the first, an act of surrender; secondly, in worship of God. And, Moses' body language spoke of both. Earlier you read the spiritual was not first, but the natural and then the spiritual (1 Cor. 15:46).

Of course this battle in which Joshua was engaged was definitely one of flesh and blood. However, with arms raised there was surrender to the Truth – though the spirit may indeed be willing, the flesh is weak (Mark 14:38 ASV). But, when faith is present in a heart, this discovery will be made – God inhabits the praises of His people for He is enthroned by the exaltation and worship of those who trust Him (Ps. 22:3 NKJV) enough to follow His Word even when “self” is made uncomfortable, for God leads us out of our zones of comfort.



It isn't just the posture of Moses' body, but the posture of his heart that clearly reveals God's grace is sufficient for us, for His power is made

perfect in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). Our life journey will eventually make evident just how perfectly imperfect our physical design. I'm not just referring to what is apparent – that process of aging: but, also to what is not visible - our soul - that processes thoughts and feelings to lean our will in certain directions.

Of course, our physical life is essential for survival on earth, but that spiritual component – our prideful nature – will ensure a willful, stubborn heart will remain eternally earth bound. Though circumstance may bind us to the consequence of our mistaken judgments, if we are willing to raise our hands Hope will be found.

Know willingness to examine our ways and test them puts us on the battlefield in opposition to a willful heart. But also know just as Joshua, whose name means a savior, a deliverer, and Hur, whose name means liberty, whiteness, hole; God's Word and His Holy Spirit will help us to keep our face, our hands and heart upraised, when there is willingness to stand firmly determined to exalt God instead of "self."



This story in Exodus reveals Moses' physical stance will eternally proclaim what must be spiritually discerned: Commit your way to the

Lord; trust Him and He will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun (Ps. 37:5-6).

The Old Testament is filled with stories that depict people being enticed and defeated by doing what we learn at first to do - rely upon our own understanding and physical ability. And though the power of our soul - mind, emotion and will - makes it possible for great heights to be reached, when eyes are opened to the Truth that God gave us His Second (Aid, Advocate, Champion) we will come to understand: When we lean on and rely on the Lord, and what He has done for us, then different realms of possibility and potential will become apparent.

Why? Because the power of God's Word and His Spirit makes what is impossible for man to accomplish possible with God.

Yes, if there is a willingness to examine our ways and test them it will become very evident we have sinned and rebelled in ways that we have difficulty forgiving. Why should God's forgiveness be expected (Lam. 3:40-42)? But God, He has given us time and opportunity to not only embrace but release (proclaim, publish, give way to) so Truth will be

heard: Every child of God can and should be receiving every good and perfect gift He bestows.

Through His Word and His Holy Spirit it is not impossible to receive forgiveness for God has pardoned (absolved, cleared, remitted) sin for everyone. However, Death will only pass over those souls who have returned to the Lord with hands uplifted and a heart flowing with gratitude, because the blood Jesus shed has blessed us with Life.



God sends His Word, full of Grace and Truth, to take hold of our hand and guide us in the right direction. God sends Holy Spirit to hold the hand of betrothal and guide us into knowledge and understanding of the depths of Christ's love for us. For this very reason the hand of Jesus should be grasped.

So pick up God's Word and learn about Christ Jesus, Who is the Word God sent. Grow in faith for the Lord is the Spirit, Who takes hold of the hand we extend, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty (2 Cor. 3:17 AMP)! If there is willingness to consider, to learn then it will not take very long to understand the mistaken judgments of a willful heart gives evidence to our need for a Savior.

Jesus imparts Truth so we can be rid of doubt and desperation and deception:

“There are those who don’t believe, but My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand. My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of My Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”

“So don’t be afraid, for I Myself will help you. I am the Lord, your God, Who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear; I will help you. I am the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.”

“I will refine and test My people, for what else can I do because of their sin? Many have tongues as deadly as an arrow, for it speaks with deceit.”

“But God choose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; He chose the weak things of the world to shame the

strong. He chose the lowly things of the world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him. Instead,

those who boast, boast in His Word, His one and only Son.”

John 10:25-30, Isa. 41:13-14, Jer. 9:7-8, 1 Cor. 1:27-29,31



Faith required God’s people, the smallest nation on the earth, to step out and heed His Word instead of the dictates of their soul. So the house of Israel could learn to trust in the Lord, for He is their help and shield (Ps. 115:9).

Jesus stepped out with faith in God to offer all mankind to join Him and become members of God’s household. A great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb, wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. They are those who have placed their faith firmly in Jesus: “Salvation belongs to our God, Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb,” Rev. 7:9-10.

For Jesus Himself is our peace (Eph.2:14a). How we benefit from what Christ accomplished so God's love could be made known to all. Jesus destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the Law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in Himself, in His body, the Church, by reconciling both Jews and Gentiles to God through the cross (Eph. 2:15-16 TLB).

It is because of God that we are in Christ Jesus, Who has become for us Wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30). Jesus came and preached peace to those who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. And in Him we are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit (Eph. 2:17&22).



So don't allow thoughts and feelings, even beliefs and opinions to prevent you from gaining knowledge from God's Word:

“Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic. For the Lord your God is the One Who goes

with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.”

Deut. 20:3-4

Though God set His Spirit on some, during the days of the Old Testament to give this clarification – Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit (Zech. 4:6). God has given mankind a New Covenant sealed with the signet ring of Love. He sent His Second, Christ Jesus – the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15) to destroy the work of him who leads all mankind into rebellion and sin, the devil (1 John 3:8).

God has put His mark on those who place their faith and trust in Jesus, to show that we are His. Yes, He put His Spirit in our heart as the first payment that guarantees all that He will give us (2 Cor. 1:22 ERV).

Through His Word we learn God keeps us near like a seal worn over His heart, like a signet ring worn on our hand in permanent betrothal.

For Love is as strong as death, His jealousy as unyielding as the grave. His passion demonstrated on that cross burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; neither can the floods drown it. If one were to give all the wealth of their house to procure what God bestows with love, they would utterly be scorned (SS 8:6-7)



God sent Jesus – His unchangeable Word and Oath; God sent the Spirit of His Son – the Spirit of Truth – to guide us into all Truth (John 16:13) until we find the Way, for God did not give us a spirit of fear; instead, He has given us His Spirit as our source of Love and Power and Self-Control (2 Tim. 1:7 ERV).

God has always had us on His heart and mind. His desire is for us to know His love, so we can experience the power of His Spirit of Grace as we co-labor with the Lord, obeying and following His Word. For then, we will discover God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit - displacing our shame and guilt and regret by filling us with Awe and Reverence and Delight because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom (Ps. 111:10).

Naturally we must be introduced to God’s Word before the eyes of our heart can be flooded with Light. So we can know and understand the hope to which God has called us, and how rich is His glorious inheritance in the saints. So we can know and understand what the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of God’s power is, in and for those who believe.

Power He demonstrated in the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.

God put all things under the feet of Jesus, and has appointed Him the universal and supreme Head of the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him Who fills all in all, for in that body lives the full measure of Him Who makes everything complete, and Who fills everything everywhere with Himself (Eph. 1:17-23).



So you see, spending time with God's Word gives us knowledge and understanding of God and all that He has accomplished. God has given us so many priceless gifts but our spiritual being must also be esteemed as an invaluable jewel. For those the Lord our God saves on that day as the flock of His people, they will sparkle in His land like jewels on a crown (Zech. 9:16).

With such spiritual awareness, we can embark on a journey of God's design to walk and live in Holy Spirit (being responsive to and guided

by Him) so God, Who fills everything everywhere with Christ, can also fill us with His fullness.

With God's gift of faith and our willingness, Holy Spirit will work in us so we can truly come to know and experience the love of Christ, which constrains (impedes, restrains, compels) us to judge for ourselves whether it is right in God's sight to allow sin or fear or our prideful heart to obeyed rather than God (Acts 4:19).



God sent His Son so we could know His Word not only walks with His people in this world, but accomplishes the miraculous every step of the way. When a heart is set on God's Word, when His teachings are held fast, He will set our heart free for the way of Truth has been chosen (Ps. 119:30-32).

David wrote, My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is steadfast and confident! I will sing and make melody. Awake, my glory (my inner self); awake, harp and lyre! I will praise and give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to You among the nations. For Your mercy and loving-kindness are great, reaching to the heavens, and Your truth and faithfulness to the clouds.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth (Ps. 57:7-11 AMP).

David's life was a testimony of God's miraculous power. So he wrote and sang and danced to give glory to the Lord. Words and songs may stir a heart, but it is when the miraculous is personally experienced then a heart will join the festivity to write and sing of its joy.



AIN'T NOBODY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fRPWwcfUrc>

I got a story
Too good to hide
I was a blind man wandering
Until I saw the Light
Yeah, I got a story
I can't deny
I'm a living, breathing miracle
And I just gotta testify

Ain't nobody love me like Jesus

Ain't nobody love me this good
Ain't nobody love me like Jesus
And I know, I know nobody could
Tell me who could give me this freedom
Tell me who could get me this far
Ain't nobody love me like Jesus
And I know, I know nobody could

And now I'm anointed
To bring the news
Yeah, everything He did for me
I know He'll do for you
He gave me joy for the mourning
For the ashes, a crown
Yeah, I'm a walking, talking miracle
And I just gotta tell it out

Ain't nobody loves me like Jesus
Ain't nobody love me this good
Ain't nobody love me like Jesus
And I know, I know nobody could

Nobody could pull me from the darkness

And save me by the blood

And raise me from the ashes

I know, I know nobody could

Break off every shackle

And tear down every wall

And set free every captive

I know, I know nobody could

Nobody could love me like Jesus

Song by Cody Carnes



Paul wrote, It is God Himself, in His mercy, Who has given us this wonderful work of telling His Good News to others, so we don't lose heart and give up (2 Cor. 4:1 TLB). Yes, God has let us in on His mystery and secret concerning what He has done through Christ for the salvation of mankind (1 Cor. 2:1 AMP).

We don't use deception trying to trick people into believing, nor do we distort the Word of God we're not interested in fooling anyone. We

don't try to get anyone to believe the Bible teaches what it doesn't; on the contrary, we set forth the Truth plainly.

We commend (commit, confide, entrust) everything we say and do out in the open. We stand in the presence of God as we tell the Truth so those who want to can see and judge for themselves God has given us this new Way, one that fills us with Truth and Life (2 Cor. 4:1-2).



By Holy Spirit we have our life in God so we can walk aligned with His Word of Truth. Because of His purpose and plan and grace, God set the course of Life on earth. God sent His Word so mankind could know His thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are His ways our ways. As high as the heavens, so much higher than the earth are God's thoughts than our thoughts.

As the rain and snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth, making it bud and flourish so is God's Word that goes out from His mouth; His Word does not return to Him empty, but accomplishes all of what God' desires, and achieves the purpose for which God sent His Word (Isa. 55:8-11).

By His mighty power God saved us and called us to a holy life. Yes, God called us to live a holistic (body, soul and spiritually) wholesome life so we can go out in joy and be led forth in peace for the renown of the Lord Christ Jesus, God's Word, Who reveals God's banner over us is love (SS 2:4). An everlasting sign, which will never be destroyed (Isa. 55:12-13).



By His mighty power God saved us not because of anything we could have done, but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in His Word before the beginning of time, but has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, Who has destroyed death and has brought Life and immortality to Light through the Gospel (2 Tim. 1:8-10).

I write about God so we would not be ignorant (untrained, unskilled, inexperienced) in our spiritual relationship with the Lord, the Word of Truth and Life and Grace. For surely, there are secret things that belong to the Lord our God, but all that He has revealed belongs to us and our children forever (Deut. 29:29).

All of God's Word is ours, and Holy Spirit is sowing heaven's Seed in our heart so we too cannot only work as our Triune God does aligned in unity - body, soul and spirit - but also together with one Purpose, with one Accord and in Harmony for the praise and glory of the Lord (Phil. 2:2).



God is enthroned as the Holy One, He is the praise of His people (Ps. 22:3). In fact, God inhabits the praises of His people. When we send forth our words in praise and worship and allegiance with God's Word there is no place for the evil one. For what does righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can Light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial (2 Cor. 6:14-15)?

We can come together with raised hands and watch as the Lord, the Word of Truth, fights for us; we need only to be still (Ex. 14:13). We need only give God our hearts, all of who we are, and be assured as Aaron and Hur did for Moses, God does for us.

He sent us His Word and His Spirit not only to stand with us to help us remember and desire to hold our arms up to give praise and honor and

glory to our heavenly Father, but God places His Word and His Oath, Christ Jesus, and His seal of guarantee, Holy Spirit, in our heart so we can be certain there is now no condemnation holding us down.

Those who are in Christ Jesus, who live and are taking steps and making decisions not after the dictates of their flesh, but after the dictates of the Spirit (Rom. 8:1 AMP). They have taken hold of the Life that is truly life, and are laying up treasure for themselves not only in this present age but also in the one that is yet to come (1 Tim. 6:19).



We can show ourselves to be letters from Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote: Thanks be to God, Who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ, and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him. We are to God the aroma of Christ in the world. To those who are perishing we are the smell of death, to those who have taken hold of God's Word, the fragrance of Life.

We do not peddle the Word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like we are sent from God. Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you?

You are our letters, written on our heart, known and read by everybody. You are shown as a letter from Christ, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of the human heart.

Such confidence is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim any renown, but our competence comes from God. He makes us competent as ministers of the Life and the Truth and the Way of this glorious New Covenant – not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

The ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, but the people could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory, fading though it was. Will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns people is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings Righteousness (2 Cor. 2:14-3:11)!



Yes, Jesus has become for us Wisdom from God – that is our righteousness, holiness and redemption (1 Cor. 30). So, if what was

fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts! Since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the people from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away.

Their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains covering their hearts when the Old Covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it torn and taken away. Whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces reflect the Lord's glory (2 Cor. 3:11-17 NIV) as beholding in a mirror, know we are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory.

We are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, Who is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18 NKJV).

These words Jesus spoke in the Garden of Gethsemane before He was to be crucified:

“Father, I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are One: I in them and You in Me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me, and have loved them even as You have loved Me.”

John 17:22-23



I share about Jesus with the hope that people will ask the way to Zion, and turn their faces toward it; that they will come and bind themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten (Jer. 50:5). Jesus Who Himself is the Surety of a better testament (Heb. 7:22 KJV). This means that Jesus is the guarantee of a better agreement from God to His people (Heb. 7:22 ERV). God’s Word said:

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a person remains in Me and I in them, they will bear much fruit; apart from Me they can do nothing. Those who do not remain in Me are like branches that are thrown away and wither; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.”

“If a person remains in Me and My words remain in them, they can ask whatever they wish, and it will be given to them. This is to My Father’s glory, that they bear much fruit, showing themselves to be My disciples.”

“It is the Spirit Who gives Life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and they are Life.”

John 15:5-8, John 6:63



So let us consider the outcome of the Lord’s way of life. From a heavenly perspective He has been glorified and exalted to the right hand of God: however, from a human perspective He was considered stricken by God, smitten by Him and afflicted (Isa. 53:4).

We can think and believe and do whatever strikes our fancy, and a lot of people do just that as evidenced not only by the violence and pollution in our world, but also by the huge prison population. Consequence doesn’t seem to have the power to restrain our destructive ways so in many cases bars are needed to subdue a calloused heart.

As long as time remains there will be opportunity for different choices to be made, as so many pray will be done. Sadly, many people look at what is occurring to them and around them in this world, and choose to condemn God. Paul sets this question before us: “Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. For happy are they who do not condemn themselves in what they approve and allow,” Rom. 14:22.



If you were to place pictures of yourself that range in age say from childhood to the present, the changes in how you've aged would be apparent to all. However, the changes within your soul the thoughts and opinions, feelings and beliefs that have transpired can only be personally known. Those pictures depict the same person. They cannot possibly depict the changes within that life has brought about.

God is aware of the changes that have occurred as we've aged, but He also is well aware of the why and when and where and what and who and how every change within us has occurred. Through this knowledge He has of us and through His Word, God brings about reconciliation, renewal, recovery, restoration and revival to be personally experienced.

Look at that picture of you as a child when innocence and trust and hope and faith and love were in your possession. Maybe a time you don't even remember. As you gaze at that current picture it reveals a soul that has been robbed of those God-given treasures.

Life rubs and erodes, distances and distorts our perspective of God and His treasures bit-by-bit as the disappointments and rejections, betrayals and deceptions flow through our soul like troubled waters. The God-given attributes and characteristics that should be forever valued are too easily diminished if not pulverized by the negativity of criticism, cynicism, sarcasm, bitterness and unforgiveness.



The importance of cultivating a personal relationship with God cannot be overstated. I couldn't impose my relationship with God on anyone because all of the - how and when and where and what - that God has accomplished within me can only be described not experienced.

Not only that, it could be concluded if my behavior were to be judged it at times is incoherent (incongruity, discord, disunity) occurs with what I profess to believe. At those times a hypocrite is seen. In the past even as I professed to be a Christian, I applied the tools of deception -

minimizing, excusing, blaming, avoiding, rationalizing, justifying, denying...- instead of applying God's Word of Truth, which changed the way I think and reason.

The Contemporary Language from the Message Bible translates Rom. 14:22-23 this way: If you're not sure if your behavior and beliefs are coherent take notice if you are acting in ways inconsistent with what you believe. Some days you may be trying to impose your opinions on others, other days you're just trying to please them. Then you know that you're out of line. If the way you live isn't consistent with what you believe, then it's wrong.



It is hard not to feel condemned or criticized after reading verses such as the one above, but actually God's Word has the opposite intent. We have become so guarded as a result of receiving the feedback of others from a judgmental, critical and condemning point-of-view.

Instead of a knee-jerk reaction, consideration should be given to what is heard from God's Word because His heart-felt intent will give what we've heard - a different slant, so we can see from a different perspective - a heavenly one.

We are familiar with the guilt and shame of our wrong doing. We may not be able to answer the why things happen the way they do, or why we behaved as we did, but God knows. We have gotten ourselves into some real messes, but He wants us to know:

Surely, the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear (Isa. 59:1).



Though in Psalm 40 David starts out telling us how he patiently waited on the Lord, for the majority of time God has been waiting patiently for us to turn to Him. David continued telling us about His personal experience with God:

The Lord turned to me and heard my cry. 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 our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.

Blessed are they who make the Lord their trust, who do not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods. Many

are the wonders the Lord my God has done. The things He plans for us no one can recount to Him; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.

Psalm 40:1-5



When Truth is told, we discover Jesus is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is the Head of the body, the Church; He is the Beginning and the Firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy.

I write because there is so much that we need to learn about God, His Word and our human condition. The Lord is not being slack or slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is being patient with us, not wanting anyone to perish, but that everyone would come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

There was a time in my life I never gave God much thought at all. As a result, there were also many things left unreconciled, unresolved. If given the time and opportunity, God will work in us so Good can be seen and better understood:

- The Lord our God is a merciful God; He will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant He confirmed with us by oath (Deut. 4:31)
- Know therefore the Lord our God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping His covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His Word; He will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate Him (Deut. 7:9-10)
- The Lord our God is a consuming fire, a jealous God (Deut. 4:22)
- God is not a man, that He should lie; nor a son of man, that He should change His mind. Does He speak and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfill? I have received a command to bless; He has blessed, and I cannot change it (Num. 23:19-20)
- Be assured today the Lord our God is the One Who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire (Deut. 9:3)

- The Lord our God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, Who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes (Deut. 10:17).
- The eternal God is our refuge, and you are underneath His everlasting arms. He will drive out your enemy before you (Deut. 33:27).



Yes, there are a lot of horrible things going on in our world, by people who are making horribly abusive and destructive choices. God and His miraculous way of Life cannot be experienced unless His Word has been given personal significance.

What is amazing a prideful heart, which we each possess, seems to think it's okay to decree itself as God by saying "I am who I am," but refuses to submit to His Word, so they can discover who God says we are.

How is it possible to even consider this comparison to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Creator of all things. When given the condition

of the earth, what seems remarkably obvious mankind is more than proficient at creating heartache and sorrow, suffering and despair.



Only the love of Christ can constrain and change a heart (2 Cor. 5:14). The love of Christ makes it possible for us to look past what we think and feel and believe so Truth can eliminate the deception and error and misjudgments that actually work to oppress (weigh down, distress, torment, discourage, dishearten, dismay, depress...) us.

The Word of God speaks of Truth and Life to everyone, but Holy Spirit speaks to us personally so we can find the Way is with Jesus. For when God's Word is believed and spoken, disbelief and doubt and delusion must relinquish its hold in our soul.

There are a multitude of personal reasons for our rejecting or ignoring or refusing to show a personal interest in God's Word. But, there is only one reason God would ever reject or ignore or refuse anyone - when the work He requires is not being done - to believe Him and to believe in the One He has sent (John 6:29).



Here are a few words that are synonymous with work – to breed, bring about, yield; to decide, determine, cultivate; to crack, give rise to, conclude; to serve, respond, take hold...The work God is asking us to is not strenuous it requires thought so we can take hold of His invitation:

“Come now, let us reason together. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. But, woe to those who continue to rebel and live wickedly! Disaster is upon them! They will be paid back for what their hands have done.”

Isa. 1:18, Isa. 3:11

Who could ever know what you're thinking and planning except you yourself? The same with God – except that He not only knows what He's thinking, but He lets us in on it. God offers a full report on the gifts of Life and Salvation that He is giving us. We don't have to rely on the world's guesses and opinions. We didn't learn this by reading books or going to school; we were taught by God, person-to-person through Jesus, and we're passing it on to you in the same firsthand, personal way (1 Cor. 2:10-13).

~

Who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Jesus lived an ordinary life. He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty – no majesty to attract (dazzle, impress or draw) us to Him, there was nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him. (Isa. 53:2).

He was despised (ignored, neglected, slighted) and rejected (dismissed, disapproved, avoided) by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom people hide their faces, He was despised. We did not esteem (consider, believe, trust) Him.

Surely, He took up our infirmities, and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God. He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

After the suffering of His soul, He will see the Light of Life, and be satisfied; by His knowledge God's righteous Servant will justify many. For He poured out His life unto death, and was numbered with the

transgressors; He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (Isa. 53:1-6, 11-12).

Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God has been miraculously given to us by getting to know, personally and intimately, the One Who invited us to enjoy a personal relationship with God. The best invitation we ever will receive! (2 Peter 1:3 Message).



It may seem silly using synonyms: however, words are powerful. There are words that have been spoken over us from childhood that are not only remembered but believed. You know that saying 'Sticks and stones will break our bones, but words will never hurt us.' Our bodies heal, but our heart can store a hurt a lifetime.

Words prompt us to be worldly, to desire fame and fortune that exalts self-interest, to be dissatisfied with ourselves and others. This worldly unspiritual self by its nature can't receive the gifts of God's Spirit. There's no capacity for them. They seem like so much silliness (1 Cor. 2:14a Message). The unspiritual self is unable to know or experience them because the gifts of God's Spirit are investigated in a spiritual realm (1 Cor. 2:14 Wuest).

Holy Spirit, the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengthenener) is sent to us by the Lord. The Spirit of Truth comes from the Father, and testifies regarding Jesus (John 15:26). Spirit can be known only by spirit – God’s Spirit and our spirit in open communion. Spiritually alive, we have access to everything God’s Spirit is doing because we have Christ’s Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14b-16 Message).



How integral to learn the Truth of God, which is not only meant to be heard but experienced. For a worried heart does not have the faith and trust in God to defeat the Goliath’s of this world, or to cut off the head of what deceives and confuses them. Though David chose five stones -

- 1.) God restores my soul and guides me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for He is with me
(Psalm 23:3-4)

- 2.) You, O Lord, are a shield around me; You bestow glory on me and lift up my head. To the Lord I cry aloud, and He answers me from His holy hill. I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. I will not fear (Psalm 3:3-6)

3.) I will come into Your house, O Lord, by Your great mercy; in reverence will I bow down toward Your holy temple. Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies – make straight Your way before me (Psalm 5:7-8)

4.) My shield is God Most High, Who saves the upright in heart. God is a righteous judge (Psalm 7:10-11)

5.) I will praise You, O Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of Your wonders. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High (Psalm 9:1-2).

Only one stone was needed to defeat that giant who defied the armies of the living God (1 Sam. 17:26)! Like David, our heart will be strengthened by the faith and trust we gain from knowing and experiencing what the God of Truth promises:

1.) “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord of Hosts (Zech. 4:6)

2.)“Do not be afraid of their faces, I am with you to deliver you,” says the Lord (Jer. 1:8)

3.)Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them; for the Lord your God is He Who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you (Deut. 20:4)

4.)Do not be afraid nor dismayed for the battle is not yours, but God’s (2 Chron. 20:15)

5.)You do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places (Eph. 6:12)



David is known as a man after God’s own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). A man who made mistakes, but knew his errors and misjudgments pointed him to the One Who is greater than our heart (1 John 3:20). David spoke of the discoveries he made on his spiritual journey after God’s heart:

I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only God, have I sinned, and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are proved right when You speak and justified when You judge.

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely You desire Truth in the inner parts; You teach me wisdom in the inmost place (Psalm 51:1-10 NIV).

To create in me a pure heart, and to renew within me a steadfast willing spirit that will sustain me. For going through the motions, doesn't please You; a flawless performance is nothing to You. I learned God-worship when my pride was shattered. Heart-shattered lives ready for love don't for a moment escape God's notice (Psalm 51:16-18 Message).

God will not reject a broken and repentant heart (Psalm 51:17 NLT).



Yes, David triumphed over that giant with a sling and a stone; then he took hold of that Philistine's sword and cut off his head (Sam. 17:50-51) for he knew:

The Stone the builders rejected has become the Capstone; the Lord has done this and it is marvelous in our eyes.

In my anguish I cried to the Lord, and He (the Word of Truth) answered by setting me free. The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? The Lord is with me; He is my helper; I will look in triumph on my enemies.

It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. The Lord is my strength, my song and my salvation. The Lord's right hand has done mighty things and is lifted high.

I will not die but live, and proclaim what the Lord has done. He has chastened me severely, but He has not given me over to Death.

He has opened the gates of righteousness and I will enter and give thanks, for He answered me and became my salvation. His love endures forever.

The Lord is God, and He made His light shine upon us to save us and grant us success. Blessed are they who come in the name of the Lord

(Psalm 118: 1-29), who brings faith and teaches so God's Truth is known - the kind of truth that changes lives (Titus 1:1 TLB) so it can be understood

OUR ETERNAL LIFE MATTERS



But that is not the only reason I write, to bring awareness to our eternal welfare, but also to bring awareness to the welfare of our current lives. Stress occurs, and leads to painful emotions as we lean on, depend on and rely on ourselves and others.

The most painful experience of my life, one that brought PTSD upon me, occurred in what many view as a safe environment, I know I did - the Church. A time that was so very hard to understand and cope with because family members by blood and by the waters of baptism deemed it best, I should be shunned.

The years that followed brought with them heartache and sorrow, but the most remarkable, miraculous transition occurred - they also brought deliverance and inner healing. I learned from God and His Word:

“Pain seizes you like a woman in labor, you will be rescued for I have redeemed you out of the hand of your enemies.”

Micah 4:10

For me that meant rescued, freed, released from the clutches of fear, despair, unforgiveness, anger...I knew I was becoming God dependent, not independent, all alone to cope with and manage emotion, circumstance and interactions. Though I wanted to blame others I was to learn just how much error there was in my own thinking. Why? Codependency!



Researchers have revealed the traits and characteristics of codependency are much more prevalent among the general population than had previously been imagined. Why? As social creatures, we live in a world that fosters dependence on self and others, which promotes disorderly thoughts and behaviors, in other words dysfunction. Holy Spirit once told me if God and His Word are in absentia, then the presence of dysfunction will always be found in attendance.

We just naturally point fingers at ourselves, others, even God, without faith or adequate trust in the spiritual power Holy Spirit releases from

within God's Word, Christ Jesus. God applies His Spirit to our natural abilities to empower us with His Breath of Life. God's precious Holy Spirit resurrects the Word of Life within us to make us strong in the Lord and in His mighty ability and power.

Holy Spirit brings us understanding through personal experience as we recognize and acknowledge we've accomplished something that we've struggled on our own to do. Maybe something that seems minor (little, incidental, unimportant), don't label achieving by God's Word in this manner, for this is the beginning for major breakthroughs to occur.



I was attending a woman's conference when I had a vision of a brick wall. I realized the mortar was being chiseled away from behind, as slivers of light began shining through. Holy Spirit is always working to bring those walls of self-protection down because they harm our relationship with self and others and especially with God.

There's a story in the Bible, when God led His people into the land of promise by His servant Joshua. By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people marched around them for seven days (Heb. 11:30). Those walls didn't come down by human effort. The people obeyed God's Word and

followed those who ministered to and for God – the priests -who blew trumpets announcing the Kingdom of God is advancing on the earth.

There are walls we have erected, and there are circumstances we face that appear impossible to scale, But God. Give Him praise and thanksgiving for there is nothing impossible with God (Luke 1:27).

When we blow our horns of gratitude, what seems impossible takes on a new appearance when we recognize the Kingdom of God is advancing in our life. The good God wants us to receive will not only break through, but will pour out to overflowing upon and within us.

But of course we will experience resistance from within. The abusiveness and traumas we experience in this world have caused us to erect those walls that keep the Light of heaven out. Keep standing in faith for Holy Spirit is working to bring those walls down.



Holy Spirit will always help us to trust in, depend on and lean into God and His Word so the full armor He bestows can be worn. So a stand can be taken against the devil's schemes (Eph. 6:10).

Like a hunter who builds a stand high up in a tree, God wants us not to give that stand to the enemy so he can prey upon us; instead, that we would take that stand and pray for the determination to look past whatever problem or trouble or circumstance that may arise so we are not robbed of any experience of having our faith realized - the Lord stands with us and fights for us. Those walls will come crashing to the ground.



The shame and low self-esteem that just naturally develops along with the anxiety and sorrow this creates will be brought down. In faith we do as God's Word instructs - call those things that are not as though they were. God sends His resurrection power - Holy Spirit - to raze (demolish, pulverize, annihilate) those things of death: dread and deception, doubt and disbelief...

Fear of being judged, rejected or abandoned; fear of making mistakes; being thought of as a failure; being trapped in confusion; feeling isolated and alone. Codependency creates stress, which leads us into anxiety and fear that just naturally cause feelings of anger and resentment, depression, until hopelessness and despair gain control.

Sadly, when the feelings are too much, this can result in a person feeling numb. Why? Because codependent symptoms get worse if left untreated.

The good news is they're reversible.



The following is a list of symptoms of codependency. It's not all inclusive and you don't need to have all of them to qualify as being codependent:

- Low Self-Esteem - Feeling you're not good enough or comparing yourself to others. The tricky thing about self-esteem is some people think highly of themselves, but it's only a disguise - they actually feel unlovable or inadequate. Underneath, usually hidden from consciousness, are feelings of shame. Guilt and perfectionism often go along with low self-esteem. If everything is perfect, you don't feel so bad about yourself
- People-Pleasing - It's fine to want to please someone you care about, but codependents usually don't think they have a choice.

Saying “No” causes them anxiety. They go out of their way, and sacrifice their own needs to accommodate others

- Poor Boundaries – Boundaries are sort of an imaginary line between you and others. It divides up what’s yours and somebody else’s, and that applies not only to your body, money and belongings, but also to your feelings, thoughts and needs. This is where codependents get into trouble. They have blurry or weak boundaries. They feel responsible for other people’s feelings and problems or blame their own on someone else. Some codependents have rigid boundaries. They are closed off and withdrawn, making it hard for other people to get close to them. Sometimes, people flip back and forth between having weak boundaries and having rigid ones
- Reactivity – A consequence of poor boundaries is that you react to everyone’s thoughts and feelings. If someone says something you disagree with, you either believe it or become defensive. You absorb their words, because there’s no boundary. With a boundary, you’d realize it was just their opinion and not a reflection of you. You would not feel threatened by disagreements or confrontation

- Caretaking – Another effect of poor boundaries is that if someone else has a problem, you want to help them to the point that you give up yourself. It's natural to feel empathy and sympathy for someone, but codependents start putting other people ahead of themselves. In fact, they need to help and might feel rejected if another person doesn't want help. Moreover, they keep trying to help and fix the other person or their problem, even when that person clearly isn't taking their advice
- Control – Control helps codependents feel safe and secure. Everyone needs some control over events in their life. You wouldn't want to live in constant uncertainty and chaos, but for codependents, control limits their ability to take risks and share their feelings.

Sometimes they have an addiction that either helps them loosen up, or helps them hold their feelings down, like “workaholism,” so they don't feel out of control. There is also a need to control those close to them, because they need other people to behave in a certain way to feel okay. In fact, people-pleasing and care-taking can be used to control and manipulate people. Alternately,

codependents are bossy and tell you what you should or shouldn't do. This is a violation of someone else's boundary

- Anger – Codependents have a lot of anger they don't know how to manage it effectively. They're frequently with people who contribute less than they do, who break promises and commitments, violate boundaries or disappoint or betray them. We all have this need to feel needed and significant. Wanting to be needed is okay until it turns compulsive and becomes an addiction. It's when our good intentions of helping others, becomes a perpetual means for us to get love, feel valued, accepted, feel superior and good about ourselves. It's when we become so obsessed with other people's problems that we neglect our own feelings and needs. And most importantly, we can't stop it.
- Dysfunctional Communication – Codependents have trouble when it comes to communicating their thoughts, feelings and needs. Of course, if you don't know what you think, feel or need, this becomes a problem. Other times, you know, but you won't own up to your truth. You're afraid to be truthful, because you don't want to upset someone else. Instead of saying, "I don't like that," you

might pretend that it's okay or tell someone what to do.

Communication becomes dishonest and confusing when you try to manipulate the other person out of fear

- Obsessions – Codependents have a tendency to spend their time thinking about other people or relationships. This is caused by their dependency and anxieties and fears. They can also become obsessed when they think they've made or might make a "mistake." Sometimes you can lapse into fantasy about how you'd like things to be or about someone you love as a way to avoid the pain of the present. This is one way to stay in denial, but it keeps you from living your life
- Dependency – Codependents need other people to like them to feel okay about themselves. They're afraid of being rejected or abandoned, even if they can function on their own. Others need always to be in a relationship, because they feel depressed or lonely when they're by themselves for too long. This trait makes it hard for them to end a relationship, even when the relationship is painful or abusive. They end up feeling trapped
- Denial – One of the problems people face in getting help for codependency is that they're in denial about it, meaning that they

don't face their problem. Usually they think the problem is someone else's or the situation. They either keep complaining or trying to fix the other person, or go from one relationship or job to another and never own up to the fact that they have a problem.

Codependents also deny their feelings and needs. Often, they don't know what they're feeling and are instead focused on what others are feeling. The same thing goes for their needs. They pay attention to other people's needs and not their own. They might be in denial of their need for space and autonomy. Although some codependents seem needy, others act like they're self-sufficient when it comes to needing help. They won't reach out and have trouble receiving. They are in denial of their vulnerability and need for love and intimacy.

- Problems with Intimacy - By this I'm not referring to sex, although sexual dysfunction often is a reflection of an intimacy problem. I'm talking about being open and close with someone in an intimate relationship. Because of the shame and weak boundaries, you might fear that you'll be judged, rejected, or left. On the other hand, you may fear being smothered in a relationship and losing your autonomy. You might deny your need for closeness and feel

that your partner wants too much of your time; your partner complains that you're unavailable, but he or she is denying his or her need for separateness.

Taken from the article "Codependency: How to Recognize the Signs and Overcome it," by MJ Kelly.

<https://www.goalcast.com/codependency-signs-low-self-esteem-overcome-it/>



There is so much to learn about God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - and about ourselves. But know this - Christ will truly set us free. With the empowerment we receive from Holy Spirit we can make sure that we stay free, and don't get all tied up again in slavery to those things that lead us into sin. If you are counting on tradition or religion or your own moral code to make you right with God, then Jesus can't help you because He will be of no benefit to you (Gal. 5:1-2 NLT).

The Message Bible has a much more blunt way of paraphrasing this: It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: Repetitiveness (doing the same things over and over expecting a different result); impotence to love and be loved; cheap sex,

a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage, frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness, idols (with “self” just naturally given the place of highest honor), a critical and judgmental or religious spirit, loneliness, all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants, a brutal temper, divided homes and divided lives, small-minded and lopsided pursuits, the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival, uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions...I could go on.



If you are deliberately using your freedom this way, you will not inherit God’s kingdom. But, what happens when we live God’s way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard – things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity, contentment, gratitude, joy...

We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.

Religious tradition and legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way. Among those who belong to Christ, everything

connected with getting our own way and mindlessly responding to what everyone else calls necessities is killed off for good – crucified.

Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our head or a sentiment in our heart, but work out its implications in every detail of our life. That means we will not compare ourselves with others as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original (Gal. 5:19-26 Message).



At a mind's-eye level where the natural aspects of life are seen occurring, there are tools we use to achieve and survive. So too is the Word of God a tool for our daily use so we can receive from God and overcome all that pride and fear and sin produces.

Since our sight has just naturally been set at a mind's-eye level, our words are used as the building blocks for the personal beliefs that our reasoning and decision making draws from. However, for God's Word to become for us more than mere sentiment or conjecture, we must

draw from what Jesus has said and done at that level of vulnerability (sensitivity, openness, receptiveness) – our heart.

As Truth becomes known, God will Himself complete and make us what we ought to be, by establishing us in faith; by securely grounding us with hope as an anchor; by strengthening us with knowledge and understanding of His loving-kindness; thereby settling us (1 Peter 5:10) into this grace in which we now stand (Rom. 5:2).

God has given us a wonderful gift – our imagination – so use it every time you’re reading His Word, and see yourself sitting at the feet of Jesus. Personally learning from Him, personally receiving from Him knowing, trusting, believing - He is personally invested in you.



We most definitely need a spiritual connection to God. The lifeline we receive is Holy Spirit, for He channels everything God bestows – faith, knowledge, hope, understanding, patience, wisdom, peace, insight, discernment, and so much more.

Holy Spirit channels those things of God from a mind’s-eye perspective, where we think about what God can do for us – down into the depths of

our heart where Truth becomes apparent, God has given us what is essential for our lives – His Word.

At a mind's eye level we may think how very grateful we ought to be, for what God has done for us. But, as Maya Angelou has said, "I have learned people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

It may definitely be easier for the Spirit of Truth to be ignored even by those who profess to know God's Word. However, Holy Spirit doesn't let the evil of negativity deter Him. He will always be working to bring all glory to God for what His Word accomplishes, as those many, many reasons our heart seeks glory for me, myself and I are revealed.



We have allowed sin to control us, using words as its most integral tool to conform our mind so the body's sinful desires will be gratified. We shouldn't allow any part of our body to become a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning; instead, we ought to be giving ourselves completely to God – every part of our being.

God sent His Word so we could know and receive and experience the resurrection power of His Holy Spirit, Who works to chisel and mold us to be unique and specifically designed vessels that serve for the pleasure of God and His good purposes. So sin never again will be our master, for right now we are no longer tied to the Law (doing and trying and striving) for this is how sin enslaves us.

Jesus has freed us and Holy Spirit is breaking those chains of slavery from us so we can understand with all our heart we are free to be and believe what God says about us, because we're under His covering of love and grace and mercy (Rom. 6:12-14 TLB).

For this reason I extend an invitation to join in this spiritual journey after God's own heart.

PRACTICING THESE PRINCIPLES FOR TAKING
STEPS TOWARD RENEWAL AND RECOVERY
TO BE MORE GOD-DEPENDENT NOT
CO-DEPENDENT

- The first key is to maintain an honest view of reality not only considering particular circumstances and events as substantial, but

recognizing the substance of Truth – the Life, the Alpha and Omega, the heart and the spirit as we work on taking steps of faith

- 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



My prayer is God's love would impact our personal worlds and our world in general. And through willingness to gain knowledge of God, encounters with the only One Who is Good (Matt. 19:17) will become such treasured experiences that hearts and hands and eyes and ears and minds would be opened eager to receive more.

The Lord told me if the Word of Truth is not the foundation upon which we stand then our lives will be affected by dysfunction, which is the breeding ground of Codependency.

Codependency is a learned behavior that can be passed down from one generation to another it is an emotional and behavioral condition that affects an individual's ability to have healthy, mutually satisfying relationships. It is also known as "relationship addiction" because people with codependency often form or maintain relationships that are one-sided, emotionally destructive and/or abusive. Below is a list of a few characteristics or traits of codependency:

- A tendency to confuse love and pity, with the tendency to "love" people they can pity and rescue
- A tendency to do more than their share
- A tendency to become hurt when people don't recognize their efforts
- An unhealthy dependence on relationships. They will do anything to hold onto a relationship to avoid the feeling of abandonment
- An extreme need for approval and recognition
- A sense of guilt when asserting themselves
- A compelling need to control others

- Lack of trust in self and/or others
- Fear of being abandoned or alone
- Difficulty identifying feelings
- Rigidity/difficulty adjusting to change
- Problems with intimacy and boundaries
- Chronic anger
- Lying, dishonesty
- Poor communication
- Difficulty making decisions

Information taken from the website

<https://www.mhanational.org/co-dependency>

Codependency may not be the struggle for you as it has been for me, but we all have developed traits that are harmful to self and others.

So I pray as the Word of Truth freely gives, filling us with knowledge of all the fullness of God's love, peace, joy, patience, kindness, gentleness...that thought would no longer be given to fear, anger, hatred, unforgiveness... because all this negativity would no longer be fueled by the pumping of our hearts; instead, our heart would beat to the rhythm of Love.

YOU ARE GREATLY LOVED

YOU ARE GREATLY LOVED

YOU ARE GREATLY LOVED



YOU ARE PERFECTLY LOVED

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfUkEgG5rEk>

Who said that you weren't beautiful
And that you didn't belong in your own skin?

Who said that you were all alone
And that you're never gonna find love again?

So many little words, so many little lies
That have followed you all your life
Looking for the Truth, look into your eyes
And you'll see its been there the whole time

Ooh, even when you were running
Even when you were hiding
Never been a moment that you were not perfectly loved
When you barely believed it
When your eyes couldn't see it

Every single moment, you've always been perfectly loved

Oh, perfectly loved

You've always been perfectly loved

In the hands of the Infinite

As the wounds of the world became His

See the kindness Heaven has for you

And how He's always been drawing you in

So many open doors so many miracles

That have followed you all of your life

Looking for the Truth look into your eyes

And you'll see its been there the whole time

Oh, even when you were running

Even when you were hiding

Never been a moment that you were not perfectly loved

When you barely believed it

When your eyes couldn't see it

Every single moment you've been perfectly loved

Ooh, perfectly loved

You're not a problem
You're not a mistake
Don't need fixing or solving
In the arms of His grace

You're perfectly human
Made from the dust
You've got a heart broken and scared,
Yet perfectly loved

Song by Racheal Lampa
Featuring Toby Mac