

WALK WITH GOD

When Kenan had lived 70 years, he became the father of Mahalalel. And after he became the father of Mahalalel, Kenan lived 840 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.

When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he became the father of Jared. And after he became the father of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died.

When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. And after he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.

When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away (Gen 5:12-24).



These are generations that called on the name of the Lord. There's a story in first Kings that tells of Elijah, a prophet of God, who faced down 450 prophets of Baal: Call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. Whoever answers by fire - He is God. Two bulls were chosen, each side prepared their sacrifice and put it on the wood but did not set fire to it.

When the prophets of Baal had no success in calling down fire, Elijah took four large jars filled with water and poured them on the offering and on the wood. Three times the water was poured down around the altar until it filled the surrounding trench. Elijah called out: O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and have done all these things at Your command. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that You are God and that You are turning their hearts back again.

The fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, it also licked up the water in the trench (1 Kings 18:22-24,33-38).



Changing an opinion, a belief, can prove to be as difficult as starting a fire with wet wood. Even when evidence is given as proof, change will quite often be challenged by an air of brassiness or indifference. Why? Unfortunately, there are as many different and unique reasons as there are individuals.

For me, I believed my way was the right way. It certainly wasn't Father knows best because I never looked for God's input. It was all about what I thought and felt and experienced. Faith in God in the unseen was replaced by faith in the trinity of me, myself and I.

I remember someone approaching me many, many years ago to speak about Jesus. I was not only arrogant but also rude because I abruptly told that person I knew all that I needed to know. Don't think about preaching religion to me. I was holding tightly to those self-prescribed beliefs filled with opinions and feelings that definitely ensure the likelihood of being disappointed in some way or fashion.

Yes, life happens and for me I arrived at the end of self – with no control, no answers, feeling helpless, but thank God not completely hopeless. I will always be grateful for the beliefs that were instilled in me from childhood because somewhere deep inside there was Jesus.



What an amazing realization – Jesus is waiting to begin a relationship with us. There’s a Scripture that tells us, Love never fails! Where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when Perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child (1 Cor. 13:8-11).

Yes, I was set in my ways and my beliefs not understanding I could not be identified as spiritual but as worldly – a mere infant in Christ. I was given milk, not solid food, because I was not ready for it yet. Indeed, well into my 40’s I was still not ready; instead, I remained worldly, which points to the fact the Lord considered me worldly, jealousy and quarrelling was in my midst (1 Cor. 3:13).

The thought that Holy Spirit was waiting and wanting to explain God's Word was completely alien to me. It wasn't the fact that I was slow to learn, I allowed ignorance and indifference and non-compliance to keep my focus on my own interests, not those of Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:21).



1 Tim. 6:3 says: If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. That was definitely me. I was following my own faulty and deceptive system of beliefs.

What's amazing I never gave any thought to how often I would change what I thought and believed when faith was all about me, and my unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions with constant friction occurring.

Why? My thoughts, my opinions, my attitude, my behavior, my beliefs were fueled by a corrupted mind. I was robbed of the Truth. There was no thought of godliness, of virtue or morality, devotion or uprightness.

No, not at all! I viewed life as mere chances and opportunities to achieve worldly comforts by financial gains (1 Tim. 6:3-5). I desperately lacked the spiritual gains that are received from God's Word of Truth.

Only God knows those who make up His treasured possession. Earlier I claimed to be an infant in Christ, well I'm not sure if I was just like a star twinkling before the eyes of the Lord, Who says:

"I tell you the truth, unless you are born again you cannot see the Kingdom of God."

"I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don't be surprised when I say you must be born again."

"When a person is born again, it is not to a life that will quickly end. Their new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living Word of God."

“People are like grass; their beauty is like a flower in the field. The grass withers and the flower fades, but God’s Word remains forever.”

John 3:3-7 NLT, 1 Peter 1:23-25a NLT



That Word, Christ Jesus, is the Good News that God sends to us (1 Peter 1:25b). There were so many new things to be received from God, Who brings us back to Himself through what Christ Jesus did. How many people are like twinkles before the eyes of God without Light shining brightly from within them.

There is not a person on this earth whose heart has not been filled with darkness. BUT GOD, He fills our heart full of light from the Lord (Eph. 5:8). When someone becomes a Christian, they become a brand new person inside. They are not the same anymore. A new life has begun (2 Cor. 5:17 TLB)!

And, our behavior should show it! Because of this Light within us, we should do only what is good and right and true (Eph. 5:9 TLB) giving all to God not allowing self-will and reliance to bask in the glory that has the worth of fool’s gold.

God has given us His Word, Christ Jesus, Who is the same yesterday and today and forever (Heb. 13:8). When we place our faith in God and in His Word, one of the first things we confront is our shifting opinions and beliefs that cause us to sway and become unsteady and confused when the questioning and doubt filled “whethers” approach.

There is nothing more amazing and awe-inspiring than watching that creeping caterpillar transform into a beautiful and graceful butterfly; that is, unless such an astonishing and miraculous transformation is personally experienced.



What God applies pertains to everyone with an interest to preserve their life – faith. Anyone with faith in Jesus will be sanctified (cleansed, purged, refined) and made spiritually alive by God’s Word of Truth. The Lord Jesus said:

“Father, I have given and delivered to them Your message, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”

“I don’t ask that You would take them out of the world, but that You would protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Father, sanctify them (purify, consecrate, separate them for Yourself, make them holy) by the Truth; Your Word is Truth.”

“Just as You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And so for their sake and on their behalf I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in the Truth.”

John 17:14-19 AMP



God sent His Word in human form, His Son Christ Jesus, so we could know and experience joy and love and power to live a holy life. God promised this Good News in advance through His prophets.

Good News concerning His Son – Jesus is descended from David physically; He was powerfully demonstrated to be the Son of God spiritually, set apart by His having been resurrected from the dead; He is Yeshua the Messiah, our Lord (Rom. 1:2-4 CJB).

Going back to that first Garden this is where God Himself made garments of skin for Adam and for his wife and clothed them. The Lord God said:

“They have become like one of Us, knowing good and evil. They must not be allowed to reach out their hand and take also from the Tree of Life and eat, and live forever.”

Gen. 3:20-22

Why? The life of a creature is in the blood, and God gave it to make atonement; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

Blood is the fluid of life, transporting oxygen from the lungs to body tissue and carbon dioxide from body tissue to the lungs. Blood is the fluid of growth, transporting nourishment from digestion and hormones from glands throughout the body.

Blood is the fluid of health, transporting disease-fighting substances to the tissue and waste to the kidneys. Because it contains living cells, blood is alive. Red blood cells and white blood cells are responsible for nourishing and cleansing the body.

Without blood, the human body would stop working.

<https://training.seer.cancer.gov/anatomy/cardiovascular/blood/#:~:text=Because%20it%20contains%20living%20cells,human%20body%20would%20stop%20working.>



“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”

Leviticus 17:11

This great verse contains a wealth of scientific and spiritual truth. It was not realized until the discovery of the circulation of the blood by the creation scientist William Harvey, in about 1620, that biological “life” really is maintained by the blood, which both brings nourishment to all parts of the body and also carries away its wastes.

Its spiritual truth is even more significant. The blood, when shed on the altar, would serve as an “atonement” (literally “covering”) for the soul of the guilty sinner making the offering. In fact, the “life” of the flesh is actually its “soul,” for “life” and “soul” both translate the same Hebrew word (*nephesh*) in this text. When the blood was offered, it was thus an offering of life itself in substitution for the life of the sinner who deserved to die.



Human sacrifices, of course, were prohibited. No man could die for another man, for his blood was contaminated by his own sin.

Therefore, the blood of a “clean animal” was required. Animals do not possess the “image of God” (Genesis 1:27), including the ability to reason about right and wrong, and therefore cannot sin.

Even such clean blood could only serve as a temporary covering, and it could not really “take away” sin. For a permanent solution to the sin problem, nothing less was required than that of the sinless “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us (Hebrews 9:12). Since His life was in His blood, Jesus has “made peace through the blood of His cross” (Colossians 1:20).

Information obtained at the ICR Institute and Creation Research website, and taken from the article, “Days of Praise Life in the Blood,” which was written by Henry M. Morris, PH.D.

<https://www.icr.org/article/life-blood/>



Because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins; Jesus came into the world. He said:

“Father, sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You prepared for Me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings You were not pleased. So I said, ‘Here I am – it is written about Me in the Scroll – I have come to do Your will, O God.’”

Jesus cancels the first covenant in order to put the second into effect. For God’s will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Christ Jesus, once for all time (Heb. 10:9-10 NLT).

God paid a ransom to save us from the impossible road to heaven, and that ransom He paid was not mere gold or silver. He paid for us with the precious life-blood of His Son, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. God chose Jesus for this purpose long before the world began (1 Peter 1:18-20 TLB).



Jesus said to the people:

“Is it not written in your law, You are gods? So men are called gods (by the Law), men to whom God’s message came – and the Scripture cannot be set aside or cancelled or broken or annulled – if it is true do you say to the One Whom the Father consecrated and dedicated and set apart for Himself and sent into the world, You are blaspheming, because I said, I am the Son of God?”

“If I am not doing the works or performing the deeds of My Father, then do not believe Me or place your faith and trust in Me. But, if I do them , even though you do not believe Me or have faith in Me, at least believe the works and have faith in what I do, in order that you many know and understand clearly the Father is in Me, and I am in the Father, One with Him.”

“I am the Resurrection and the Life. Those who believe in Me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?”

John 10:34-38 AMP, John 11:25-26



Jesus sanctified Himself for His disciples whose faith at that time was not as big as their fear. He laid down His life on His own accord, no one took His life from Him (John 10:18). And though it was Peter who declared, "Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You," all the other disciples said the same thing (Matt. 26:35). Yet, they allowed fear of punishment and death to cause them to run.

What they needed was to be sanctified by Truth, and the truth is Christ has been raised up, the first in a long legacy of those who are going to leave the cemeteries. There is a nice symmetry in this: Death initially came by a man, and resurrection from death came by a Man.

Everybody dies in Adam; everybody comes alive in Christ (1 Cor. 15:20-22 Message).

Just as the angel appeared to the shepherds saying, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you Good Tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord.

And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger," Luke 2:10-12 NKJV; an angel appeared to the women at the tomb of Jesus and said, "Do not be

afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, Who was crucified. He is not here; He has risen. Come and see the place where He laid," Matt. 28:5-6.



When the tomb was entered there were strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around the head of Jesus. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. Yet, they still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead (John 20:6-9).

The Lord's disciples did not know that they were eyewitnesses who would record the unfolding of history that would become the foundational doctrine for God's New Covenant. When the apostles chose to share what they believed with the unbelievers in their midst, they did so by proclaiming the Truth of the resurrection and their own status as eyewitnesses.

They told of the time when Jesus said:

“The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill Him, and after three days He will rise again.”

And how they didn't understand, but they were afraid to ask Him about it (Mark 9:30:30-32).



They wrote so all future generations would know it was after Jesus was raised from the dead, they recalled what He had said. They came to believe the words Jesus had spoken (John 2:22).

They told that Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, and He appeared first to Mary Magdalene. Afterward the Lord appeared in a different form to two who were walking in the country. Later Jesus appeared to the eleven as they were eating; He rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

Jesus said to them:

“Go into all the world and preach the Good News to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was taken up into heaven and He sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed His word by the signs that accompanied it (Mark 16:9-20).

The account of their being eyewitnesses is consistent throughout the Book of Acts. The Apostles identified themselves as eyewitnesses, they shared the Truth as eyewitnesses, and eventually wrote the Gospels as eyewitnesses.

<https://coldcasechristianity.com/writings/the-apostles-wrote-the-gospels-as-eyewitness-accounts/>



These men set aside their own worldly agendas to speak of God’s agenda – healing, deliverance and salvation. Yes, they set aside what

the world considers important and received such a precious faith in and for God and His Word and the love of Christ which they came to know and witness and experience. For this is how we know what Love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us (1 John 3:16).

Yes, they were guilty of abandoning the Lord, but they never rejected God's Word of Truth. For both He Who sanctifies (making people holy) and those who are sanctified all have one Father (Heb. 2:11 AMP) God! And God is Love!

We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in His love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid because we know such love has no fear, because perfect Love expels fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced God's perfect love. We love because God loved us first (1 John 4:17-19 NLT).



God is love. This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son

as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us (1 John 4:8-12).

What I received I passed on to you – as of first importance – that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He appeared to Peter, and then to the other disciples. After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brethren at the same time. Then He appeared to James, then to all the Apostles, and last of all He appeared to me, Paul, as to one abnormally born (1 Cor. 15:3-8).

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you (1 Peter 1:3-4).

God has given us His Spirit as proof that we live in Him and He in us. Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify the Father sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. All who confess that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God.

We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in His love (1 John 4:13-16 NLT).



We're not keeping this quiet, not on your life. Just like the psalmist who wrote, "I believed it, so I said it," we say what we believe. And what we believe is the One Who raised up the Lord Jesus will just as certainly raise us up with you, alive. Every detail works to your advantage and to God's glory: more and more grace, more and more people, more and more praise (2 Cor. 4:13-15 Message).

So we're not giving up either. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without His unfolding grace. These hard times are like small potatoes compared to the coming good times, the lavish celebration prepared for us. There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But, the things we can't see now will last forever (2 Cor. 4:16-18 Message).

So then, brethren, consecrated and set apart for God, who share in the heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest Whom

we confessed as ours when we embraced the Christian faith (Heb. 3:1 AMP). Therefore, in your heart set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have (1 Peter 3:15).



Like Paul I believe I have been sent to bring faith to those God has chosen and to teach them to know God's Truth – the kind of Truth that changes lives – so that they can have eternal life, which God promised before the world began – and He cannot lie (Titus 1:1-2 TLB).

God's Word of Truth has taken a firm hold on me assuring that no matter the appearance of circumstance, God is working good in and through all things (Rom. 8:28). This knowledge may be eye opening, but when it becomes experience how could the heart not open and be flooded with gratitude eager to acknowledge every good and perfect gift – love, grace, kindness, goodness, gentleness, hope, peace... comes down to us from our heavenly Father (James 1:17).

I now know this verse of Scripture also says God chooses to give us newness of life by giving us birth through His Word of Truth (James 1:18). There are so many things I could share about myself, but

if you really want change to occur in the way you live and view your life then turn to the Word of Truth, and Holy Spirit will help you to establish a system of beliefs that will not be shaken anymore by those questioning and doubt-filled “whethers.”

For I know the Lord is my God, Who has taken hold of my right hand. He is helping me so I will not fear (Isa. 41:13). It’s amazing how I started this journey of renewal and recovery seeking knowledge of the Lord, and what I have found is rest.

My soul finds rest in God alone; my hope comes from Him. He alone is my Rock and my Salvation, He is my Fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; He is my mighty Rock, my Refuge. So I say to all, Trust in Him at all times; pour out your heart to Him, for God is our refuge (Ps. 62:5-8).



We have placed so much faith and trust in deceptive words that are worthless (Jer. 7:8 NIV). We have caused ourselves great harm by worshiping idols (Jer. 7:6 NLT). Turned out my idols were people including myself and things the world considered to be of importance.

As a result of being so very earthly minded, I was among those dwelling in this world as a fool.

I was guilty of a great deal of foolishness - audacity, gall, nerve, presumption, arrogance, assurance, overconfidence, disrespect, inconsideration, rudeness, insolence, sass....and so much more. I tell people God wrote about me in His Book, I was that fool.

Thanks to God, He washed away my sins, giving me a new birth and new life through Holy Spirit. Yes, through His Word of Truth God generously pours out His Spirit (Titus 3:5-6 NLT), Who has been helping me to be prudent: discerning, insightful, perceptive, knowledgeable, experienced, thoughtful...These days I may be found guilty of behaving foolishly, but I am no longer that fool. God has crowned me with Life (James 1:12).



I share God's Word not to speak of religion but to discuss the importance of relationship, which of course takes an investment of time. When I began seeking a relationship with God, it seemed as though the words Jesus spoke so many centuries ago were also being spoken directly to and for me.

“You don’t know who I am, so you don’t know who My Father is, for He is Truth. I am the One I have always claimed to be, the Son of God. You are truly My disciple if you live as I tell you to, and you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free.”

“You have been a slave of sin, and slaves don’t have rights, but the Son has every right there is. So if the Son sets you free, you will indeed be free; however, if you don’t believe I am the Messiah, the Son of God, you will die in your sins.”

“I will not judge those who hear Me but don’t obey Me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it. But all who reject Me and My message will be judged by the Truth I have spoken.”

“I don’t speak on my own authority. The Father Who sent Me has commanded Me what to say and how to say it. And I know His commands lead to eternal life; so I say whatever the Father tells Me to say.”

“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all Truth. He will not speak on His own, He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to Me by taking from what is Mine and making it known to you,” John 8:19&25, Matt. 26:63 NLT, John 8:24,34-36 TLB John 12:47-50 NLT, John 16:12-14



God shows us things through the Spirit. Holy Spirit knows all things. The Spirit even knows the deep things of God. It is like this: No one knows the thoughts that another person has. Only the person's spirit that lives inside knows those thoughts. It is the same with God. No one knows God's thoughts except God's Spirit. We received the Spirit that is from God, not the spirit of the world. We receive God's Spirit so that we can know all that God has given us.

When we say this, we don't use words taught to us by human wisdom. We use words taught to us by the Spirit. We use the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths. People who do not have God's Spirit do not accept the things that come from His Spirit. They think these things are

foolish. They cannot understand them, because they can only be understood with the Spirit's help.

We who have the Spirit are able to make judgments about all these things. But anyone without the Spirit is not able to make proper judgments about us. As the Scriptures say:

“Who can know what is on the Lord's mind?

Who is able to give Him advice?

Isa. 40:13

But God, He gives us Christ's way of thinking (1 Cor. 2:10-16 ERV).



Jesus brings the miraculous into our lives. In order to receive everything God wants to place in our possession, acknowledging Truth is essential. Just as fundamental as reading is to navigating life as we know it, so too is understanding God's Word, for then Holy Spirit can help us experience life as God knows it.

How many times have efforts been made to change or improve something about ourselves or our living conditions with little or no

success? If our eyes are not opened to see past our own endeavors, there is no way to know, let alone advance into the potential and possibilities God has already set before us. As a matter of fact, as evidenced by the vast population of homeless on the streets of our nations, the cruelty of this world robs what is essential.

What do you consider essential? There's a story in the Book of Daniel about a king who possessed a grossly, overly- exceeding abundance of everything we'd consider essential. I'm sure history books have been written about King Nebuchadnezzar, but Daniel Chapter 4 tells of the time this king arrived at the end of himself.

To better understand what I mean by this, what this world is more than proficient at producing – suffering – God uses it to bring us to the end of ourselves and back to Christ – and that's worth any cost.



Sadly, the worst had to come upon this king before he could discover the very best! The king begins to relate his story this way: It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders the Most High God has performed for me. How great are His signs, how mighty

His wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation (Dan. 4:2-3)!

Jesus said to His disciples:

“I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Matt. 19:23

Why? Again the answer is found in that Garden, where the first perversity occurred within that serpent, “God does know that in the day you eat of this fruit your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil,” Gen. 3:5. The willfulness of pride not only condemned all mankind, but it became for us a way of life. If we continue to BE so proud of ourselves there is nothing we can DO when God is faced, but receive the very same condemnation as the devil because of his pride (1 Tim. 3:6 ERV).



God's Word says:

“You are as gods, but you shall die like men”

There are many things we suffer in this world; and sadly, many will find themselves at the end of themselves, as I did. If you have reached this troubling destination, you don't have to struggle anymore with uncertainties, look up. For the very first amazing miraculous experience can be yours - the turning of willfulness into a taste for the choicest of spirits - willingness!

God freely gives so we can know what being liberated feels like - freedom from being so very, very prideful: arrogant, egotistical, selfish, conceited, snobbish, dominating, domineering, pretentious, condescending, self-centered, self-glorifying, overbearing...to mention just a few of the synonyms associated with prideful.



Now it's easy to understand how the average person can be prideful, but can we really understand how grandiose the rich and power-hunger become. We are told King Nebuchadnezzar had become great and strong. His greatness had grown until it reached the sky, and his dominion extended to distant parts of the earth (Dan. 4:22).

However, as he was sitting at home in his palace, content and very prosperous he had a dream that made him afraid. There is no way for us to know all the images and visions that passed through his mind as he was lying on his bed (Dan. 4:4-5). Unfortunately, many people suffered fear at his hands, but until this time the only fear he lacked was fear of the Lord.

As a result of the dream of this very night, this king would not only become aware of God's decision he would experience its verdict: The living Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone He wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men (Dan. 4:17).



The Message Bible explains God's Word this way:

“Let Me lay it out for you as plainly as I can: NO ONE in history surpasses John the Baptist. But, in the Kingdom He prepared you for, the lowliest person is ahead of him. The ordinary and disreputable people, who heard John: then, by being baptized by him into the Kingdom provide the clearest evidence. Those who are too prideful, like the

Pharisees and religious officials would have nothing to do with such a baptism. They wouldn't think of giving up their place in line to those they deemed as inferiors."

Luke 7:28-30

Like so many who cling to what makes them proud that spirit of pride will surely be exalted: We will triumph with the words our tongue speaks; we own our lips – who is our master (Ps. 12:4)? Like the one who bequeathed pride's nature, they oppose and exalt themselves over everything that is called God (2 Thess. 2:1). They have set themselves up to reign in a human tent, a body God intended to transform into a temple for His Spirit to dwell (1 Cor. 6:19).



Daniel interpreted that king's dream as a warning – for pride was reigning in his heart; My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies, and its meaning to your adversaries! Acknowledge the Most High is sovereign! Be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right and your wickedness by being kind to those you've oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue (Dan. 4:19,25b,27).

Twelve months passed, and as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon he said: Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty? The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven:

“This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals. You will eat grass like cattle. Seven years will pass by for you until you acknowledge the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone He wishes.”



Immediately, what had been said was fulfilled. Nebuchadnezzar was driven away. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

At the end of those seven years, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. I praised the Most High! I

honored and glorified Him Who lives forever: His dominion is an eternal dominion! His Kingdom endures from generation to generation! All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing – their prideful ways inconsequential!

God does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him – What have You done (Dan. 4:29-35)?



This king knew what God had done! His life was preserved, and he was given a most powerful testimony about a life God transformed! One that would be heard throughout generations: At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom.

My advisors and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything He does is right and all His ways are just. Those who walk in pride He is able to humble (Dan. 4:36:37).

This is a story about a very prideful nature recognizing the Truth: The Lord Who bestows transformational life reigns Most High in a humble heart. When all the glitz and glamour of this world is finally recognized as the fool's gold it is; when there's a willingness to consider: Look past what deceives by looking up. For then will eyes and ears and hearts and hands be opened to receive what only comes from above - every good and perfect gift (James 1:17a).

You too may be in possession of good and perfect gifts, but you lack the willingness to acknowledge how God has truly blessed your life. All the good in our lives - people, talents, intellect, perseverance, time, opportunities, witty inventions - for then, we will be and do what glorifies Good now and throughout eternity; instead, of being a soul who will dwell for all eternity in the absence of Good.



God's Word assures, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness," 2 Cor. 12:9. The Apostle Paul, along with so many others discovered the secret to inner peace and contentment - Jesus must become greater; I must become less (John 3:30).

As knowledge of God's Word of Truth increases, and we become less self-opinionated we too will be able to boast all the more gladly about our weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on us. Paul continues to say, that is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecution, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Cor. 12:9b-10).

The miraculous occurs (by this I mean we think and feel and behave differently) when we realize the ways of God are totally opposite to our ways. We can learn to be comfortable being honest and transparent and vulnerable with all of who we are, for then God can help us to be who He created us to be.

You will not only grow in knowledge of the Lord, but come to believe with all your heart the Word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him (Prov. 30:5). Yes, the Lord is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, for His name is the Word of God (Rev. 19:13). We need to stop fixing ourselves and manipulating others so we can be still and know God (Ps. 46:10) for this is how we become rich in faith (James 2:5).



There are no immediate changes in how we see ourselves, when the miraculous occurs. (We will be more aware of it as we work at seeing things from God's perspective) because He places us in Jesus. What is important for us to know and believe, God sees us as a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come (2 Cor. 5:17).

Just as time changed from BC (Before Christ) to AD (Anno Domini - After the Death of Jesus) we have lived in that time of BC bound to a worldly frame of mind. However, when the eyes of our heart are enlightened, we can come to know the hope which God has called us. We can understand the riches of His glorious inheritance is in His saints, those He calls His children.

We will experience His incomparable great power because we believe time has now changed for us personally to AD. We are in training to die to self, while learning to live for the glory of the Lord.

That incomparably great power is now within those who believe, and it's like the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion (Eph. 1:18-21). God raises us up with Christ, and seats us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6).



Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great:

Jesus appeared in a body
Was vindicated by the Spirit
Was seen by angels
Was preached among the nations
Was believed on in the world
Was taken up in glory

1 Tim. 3:16

This is what I have asked of God for His Church: that we would be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of Love, and that we would have the rich experience of knowing Christ with real certainty and clear understanding. For God's secret plan, now at last made known, is Christ Himself; in Him lie hidden all the mighty, untapped treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:2-3 TLB).

God has reconciled the world to Himself in Christ, not counting our sins against us (2 Cor. 5:19). Because of Jesus the whole body of believers, the Church, is being closely joined and firmly knit together (Eph. 4:16 AMP). However, because spiritual stamina did not come

first, but our natural tendencies (1 Cor. 15:46), an earnest commitment must be made to no longer be people who are always changing like a ship the waves carry one way and then another.

We must decide not to be influenced by every new teaching we hear from people who are trying to deceive us - those who make clever plans and use every kind of trick to fool others into following the wrong way. No, we need to speak the Truth in love. For then we will grow to be like Christ in every way.

He is the Head, and the whole body depends on Him. All the parts of the body are joined and held together, with each part doing its own work. This causes the whole body to grow and to be stronger in Love (Eph. 4:14-16 ERV).



The Word of God is continually equipping us and enfolding us in Love so we can grow up in every way and in all things into Him Who is the Head, Christ Jesus. Through God's Word we are learning how to follow the Truth at all times (Eph. 4:14-15 TLB).

God places His Super into our natural, giving us the power of His Spirit of Grace so we can stop changing our minds about how we feel and what we think and believe. Blessed is the Lord, for He has shown us that His never-failing love protects us like the walls of a fort!

So love the Lord, all of you who are His people; for the Lord protects those who are loyal to Him. So cheer up! Take courage if you are depending on the Lord (Ps. 31:21-24 TLB). Dear children, keep yourself from idols (1 John 5:21).

All who indulge in sinful lives are dangerously lawless, for sin is a major disruption of God's order. Surely you know that Christ showed up in order to get rid of sin. There is no sin in Him, and sin is not part of His program. No one who lives deeply in Christ makes a practice of sin. None of those who practice sin have taken a good look at Christ. They've got Him all backwards (1 John 3:4-6 Message).

So be on guard; stand firm in the faith; be an individual of courage; be strong (1 Cor. 16:13) in the Lord and in His mighty power (Eph. 6:10). Do you know if you are a child of God? Do you know the whole world is under the control of the evil one? This is why the Son of God has come to give us understanding, so that we may know Him Who is

true. So we can be in Him Who is true – even in His son, Christ Jesus. He is the true God and eternal Life (1 John 5:19-20).



Under the Lord's direction, the whole body – the Church – is being fitted together perfectly. Each part in its own special way is helping and complementing not competing with the other parts. No longer living as we once did being unsaved, blinded and confused - our heart full of darkness. Once, we too were far away from the life of God because we had shut our minds against Him, and could not understand His ways.

But that isn't the way Christ teaches us! If we have really heard His voice and are learning from Him the truths concerning Himself, then we will throw off our old evil nature we partnered with that ensured we walked in ways that were full of lust and shame.

Now our attitudes and thoughts must be constantly changing for the better (Eph. 4:17-23 TLB). Let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of Light by clothing ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us not only don the Word of Truth, but allow ourselves to

be filled with Christ, God's Word of Life, so we no longer think about gratifying the desires of our old sinful nature (Rom. 13:12-14).



Those who do not believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus have alienated themselves far away from the life of God because they have chosen to remain in ignorance by closing their mind against Him, so they cannot understand His ways. Do they really even care anymore about right and wrong, when they stop at nothing, while being reckless, callous and abandoned eager to be indulgent (Eph. 4:12-19 TLB).

God has called us to be free; sadly, there are many who have placed themselves in a very precarious position by using their freedom to indulge in their sinful nature to satisfy the desires of their flesh (Gal. 5:13).

However, what makes the Bible the most unique book ever written, God's Word is Jesus speaking, Who Himself is filled with hope, that the eyes of our heart would be opened. Then we can see and come to know God's Righteous One and understand God's will that we should be sanctified (1 Thess. 4:3). God chose to redeem us, and bless us with

this gift of time, giving us opportunity to receive the full rights as His sons (Gal. 4:5).



Yes, though we all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; God laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:6).

Why? God's desire is to enjoy a personal relationship with each one of us. His heart was pleased that Jesus was willing to suffer, to make His life a guilt offering (Isa. 53:10).

God so loved the world He choose to give His one and only Son, so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish; instead, they would have eternal life (John 3:16). God doesn't want anyone to perish; instead, His heart's desire is for everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). And now those who have come to repentance give thanks to You, O God. We give thanks for Your Name is near; people tell of Your wonderful deeds (Ps. 75:1).



There is so much in this world that causes us to lose sight of the importance of being in relationship with God. For many, the obstacle of mountainous proportions that causes us to circumvent (avoid, shun,

evade, disregard, ignore) the welfare of our eternal being is our own ego. Our soul – our thoughts, our emotions and our will – naturally focuses on what can be seen and felt - the issues and desires of this temporal (earthbound, physical, profane, secular) life.

But God, He wants all mankind to be saved and to come to the knowledge of Truth (1 Tim. 2:4). So God's Word, Christ Jesus, 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 was seen (John 1:14), and continues to be seen by those who no longer are waiting around to serve the heart's desires because they've discovered it seems never to be satisfied.

Instead, they have chosen to know God's will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from His mouth. To encourage others to get up, be baptized and wash their sins away by calling on the name of Jesus (Acts 22:14-16).

That you too would come to realize through the knowledge Jesus has gained, God's Righteous Servant will justify many, for He bore our iniquities so the will of God would prosper in His hand (Isa. 53:11). And God's will is that we should be consecrated by His Word of Truth

(John 17:19). And the work of God is this: Believe in the One He sent (John 6:29).



God works so you may come to not only know Him, but to also understand that He did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Christ Jesus. And whoever chooses to believe in God also will choose to believe in His Son so they will not be condemned. But, those who do not believe in the name of God's one and only Son already stand condemned (John 3:17-18)!

Thankfully, many have and hopefully many more will run in the path of God's living Message, the Word of God, for Jesus is continually at work with the Father for us and with us and in us to set hearts free (Ps. 119:32) from all we have received from the world: lies, anger, hatred, bitterness, fear...He does this through His Spirit of Truth Who works with us to bring reconciliation within our soul.

For those who desire relationship with God have made a conscious decision to believe and exalt God's Word above what they think and feel.



Jesus gave Himself for the Church with a love marked by giving, not getting. Christ's love makes the church whole (Eph. 5:25-26 Message). The Spirit of Truth guides us into all Truth (John 16:13) so Christ might sanctify and cleanse His Church with the washing of water by the Word (Eph. 5:27).

Everything He does and says is designed to bring the best out of the Church, to evoke her beauty by dressing her (Eph. 5:26-27 Message) and presenting her to Himself as a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle; instead holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:25-17 NKJV).

Surely, we have seen and known dishonor and disgrace, regret and grief. However, God has given us His written word, the Bible, not as a self-help book to be re-shelved; instead, He has breathed His living Message within its pages so we can receive God's help and become re-selfed.

Born-again through the living and enduring, imperishable seed of the Word of God; new life is received. The life our parents have given us will one day fade away; however, this new life will last forever, for it

comes from Jesus, God's ever-living Message to mankind (1 Peter 1:23 TLB).

God sent His Word so we could receive faith and grow strong experiencing the power of His grace and unconditional love. God gives us His Spirit so we can be filled with wisdom and revelation, and through this knowledge of God - His Word brings us closer, into a deeper and more intimate relationship (Eph. 1:17) with the one and only living God; Who wants all people to be saved and to come to the most essential Truth - there is One God and One Mediator between God and mankind, the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:4).

“Did I not tell you if you believed, you would see
the glory of God?”

John 11:40



By looking at words that are synonymous with glory, some interesting details will be discovered:

The righteousness of God which comes by believing with personal trust and confident reliance on Jesus is meant for all who believe, for there is no **distinction** (Rom. 3:22)

They put a purple robe on Him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on Him. They began to call out to Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Again and again they struck Him on the head with a staff and spit on Him. Falling on their knees, they paid **homage** to Him (Mark 15:17-19)

See Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and **honor** because He suffered death, so by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone (Heb. 2:9)

The **sun** will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory (Isa. 60:19)

When you declare the Lord to be your God and you choose to walk in His ways and listen to His voice, the Lord will

declare you to be among His people, a treasured possession, as He promised; and He shall set you high above all people for **renown**, for honor and for **praise**; and you shall be consecrated to the Lord your God (Deut. 26:17-19 NASB)

“Therefore, if you will obey My voice in truth and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own peculiar possession and **treasure** from among and above all peoples; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation” (Ex. 19:5-6 AMP)

I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her **jewels** (Isa 61:10)

We all arrive at Your doorstep sooner or later, loaded with guilt. Our sins too much for us – but You get rid of them once and for all. Blessed are the chosen! Blessed the guest at home in Your place! We expect our fill of good things in Your house, Your heavenly manse. All Your salvation

wonders are on display in Your **trophy** room. Earth-Tamer, Ocean-Pourer, Mountain-Maker, Hill-Dresser, Muzzler of sea storm and wave crash, of mobs in noisy riot – Far and wide they'll come to a stop, they'll stare in awe, in wonder. Dawn and dusk take turns calling, "Come and worship!" (Ps. 65:2-8 Message)

The kingdom of God consists of and is based not on talk but power - moral power and **excellence** of soul (1 Cor. 4:20 AMP)

God in His wisdom saw to it that the world would never find Him through human **brilliance**, and then He stepped in and saved all those who believed His message, which the world calls foolish and silly (1 Cor. 1:21 TLB)

"Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, He has endowed you with **splendor**." Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the

Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord (Isa 55:5-8)

You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord's hand, a **royal diadem** in the hand of your God (Isa 62:3)

Does God **lavish** His Spirit on you and work miracles among you because you practice the Law by doing things, or because being His child you hear and believe? So also, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who have faith are the sons of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and foretold the Gospel to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith (Gal. 3:5-9 BSB)

Now it is an **extraordinary** thing for one to give his life even for an upright man, though perhaps for a noble and lovable and generous benefactor someone might even dare to die.

But God, He shows and clearly proves His [own] love for us by the fact that while we were still sinners, Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) died for us (Rom 5:7-8 AMP)

Who is this that appears like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, majestic as the stars in procession?
(SS 6:10)

Are you among those who have made no distinction between the sacred and the secular? Have you not been taught the difference between the unclean and clean and profane God (Ezek. 22:26)



For many years, even while professing my Christianity I was behaving in ways that were not bringing glory to the Lord. Why? Because of all the baggage I was carrying – attitudes, opinions, self-destructive behaviors, character deficits, judgments, feelings and core beliefs that as I have come to learn are not as factual as I once thought.

However, God knew my heart's desire was to bring all glory to Him. So He honored my request to test me and to try me; to examine my

heart and my mind. And, by doing so I came to realize as David did God's love is ever before me helping me to daily walk in His Truth (Ps. 26:2-3).

God placed the entire fullness of Himself, His love - for God is Love - in His Beloved, Christ Jesus. So His Right Hand filled with righteousness (Ps. 48:10) could be seen and believed and accepted. Not just with a head filled with knowledge, but with a heart filled with hope and gratitude and thanksgiving.



Over time I too have received the confident assurance the Lord is with me; therefore, I have no need to fear. I have trust as never before for the One Who is my God. There is no dismay or confusion or doubt. For the Lord has, and through experience I now know He always will strengthen me; the Word of God will always encourage, uplift and help me. Yes, God will always uphold me and comfort me with His righteous Right Hand (Isa. 41:10).

I did not arrive at this place in my life easily. This song "Another in the Fire" written by Hillsong United gives meaning to what my words cannot adequately express:

https://www.google.com/search?gs_ssp=eJzj4tVP1zc0TMs2js-yKDIxYPQSTszLL8IILVLlzFMA0gppmUWpAMi9C4c&q=another+in+the+fire&rlz=1C1VFKB_enUS703US703&oq=ANOTHER+IN+THE+FIR&aqs=chrome.1.0i20i263i512j46i512j0i512j69i57j0i512l6.5787j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:28ce8d72,vid:WUSsEo52-a0

There's a grace when the heart is under fire
Another way when the walls are closing in
And when I look at the space between
Where I used to be and this reckoning
I know I will never be alone

There was another in the fire
Standing next to me
There was another in the waters
Holding back the sea
And should I ever need reminding
There is a cross that bears the burden
Where another died for me
There is another in the fire

~

An open line of communication is essential if any relationship is to develop and flourish. However, many relationships come to an end as a result of unconceivable, unbelievable even unimaginable deeds that offend, deceive, violate, harm, degrade, victimize...

To some degree we have all been guilty of following the principles of darkness – kill, steal and destroy. And as a result, the prince of darkness spews his own form of anti-glory: disgrace, dishonor, shame, fear, stigma, regret....to depress us and to stir up our emotions so anger, blame, accusation, hatred...can be slung everywhere including at ourselves and God.

Amazingly, God is very familiar with us individually. So much so that He knows every detail even those of which we may be completely unaware. Because of His great love for us, God, Who is rich in mercy extends to us the power of His grace, which not only saves us from the kingdom of darkness that reigns upon the earth, but from the control darkness has within our soul. This is why it's so important to understand - God makes us alive with Christ even when we are dead in our transgressions (Eph. 2:4).

~

God has done this for every single person. Sadly, there will be those who prevent the power of God's grace from working in their lives because more importance is placed in their own philosophies and agendas. Ultimately, God will only pick those in company (fellowship, friendship, harmony) with Jesus to be placed in the highest heaven (Eph. 2:6 Message). Thank God He has given us this gift of time for a reckoning:

- To act by evaluating, examining, exploring and reassessing so the value of possessing knowledge of God, of His character and characteristics can be personally determined. God gives us an understanding mind to govern ourselves so that we may discern between good and evil (I Kings 3:9)
- To act by scrutinizing this reckoning in the terms of the eternal and timeless purpose which God has realized and carried into effect in the person of Christ Jesus (Eph. 3:11 AMP); A process that applies mathematical operations to determine a redeemable and life-giving value:

There are 332 Messianic prophecies from the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) that Jesus fulfilled. The chance of 8

prophecies being fulfilled is 10^{17} . The calculation for one person to fulfill 48 prophecies is 1 in 10^{157} . The most logical conclusion: The complicated, many-sided wisdom of God in all its infinite variety and innumerable aspects might be made known (Eph. 3:10 AMP) to you!

- A reckoning: To decide, calculate, judge the size, amount, number or distance of something without actual measurement:

May Christ through your faith dwell in your heart! May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love, that you may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp what is the breadth and length and height and depth of that love; that you may really come to know through experience for yourself the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge without experience; that you may be filled through all your being unto all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:17-19 AMP)

- To form an opinion – allowing, believing, considering, feeling, imagining, thinking, supposing, relying, trusting, deducing, concluding...

To Him Who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be the glory (Eph. 3:20)

- A reckoning: To call upon, look to, confide in, trust, commit to

Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you your heart's desires. Commit your way to the Lord; trust Him, and He will help you. He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun (Ps. 37:5-6)

- A reckoning: To think of, esteem, regard, believe in a particular way

If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will

be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved (Rom. 10:9-10)



An investment of time - to share, to listen and to work things through these are requirements of a sincere reckoning. How I wish I would have subdued my pride when I was younger to seek the wisdom that comes down from heaven. I thought I knew all I needed and wanted to know, but it turned out I was in defiance and false to the Truth. What I possessed was superficial wisdom considered earthly, unspiritual (animal) even devilish (demonical) (James 3:14-15 AMP).

I ignored the obvious that as surely as there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body, (1 Cor. 15:44 AMP). I allowed my time and attention to be consumed by the concerns for daily living. I didn't set time aside to learn that by godly Wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established on a sound and good foundation. And by knowledge its chambers shall be filled with all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is strong and is better than a strong man, and a man of knowledge increases and strengthens his power (Prov. 24:3-5 AMP).

Being ignorant, clueless, unfamiliar with God and His ways blinded me to Truth that wherever there is jealousy (envy) and contention (rivalry and selfish ambition) there will also be confusion (unrest, disharmony, rebellion) and all sorts of evil and vile practices (James 3:16 AMP). Throughout my life confusion surely made its presence known.

I completely neglected the spiritual part of my being. I considered myself a good person. Until I was confronted with what turned out to be the most important decision a person will ever have to make, whether to accept God's Word of Truth, Christ Jesus, as Lord and Savior. A reckoning definitely must occur. How could I be considered a good person when the only glory I possessed was my guilt and shame.

I had my mind only on earthly things, turned out I was actually living as an enemy of the cross of Christ. The NIV version states your destiny is destruction, while the TLB version says your future is eternal loss. Why? Your god is your appetite (Phil. 3:18-19).

~

We know God said:

“Let us make man in Our image, in Our likeness,
and let them rule...”

Gen. 1:26

We also know the loss that resulted when sin occurred. We are left to only imagine how beautiful and serene the Garden of Eden; whereas, to imagine how evil ravages the world is quite unnecessary.

Satan came into the world with this agenda – kill, steal and destroy. However, crimes are being committed by hands of flesh and blood. Is this because hearts are committed to evil? Sadly, this is true when we are committed to satisfying our heart’s desires.

For the heart is hopelessly dark and deceitful, a puzzle that no one can figure out. But God, He searches the heart and examines the mind. He gets to the root of things. Yes, He examines a heart’s deepest motives to give a just reward for who we really are, not who we think or feel or pretend to be (Jer. 17:9-10 Message).

~

Yes, pretty words may hide the intentions of a wicked heart, just as a pretty glaze covers a clay pot (Prov. 26:23 TLB). And a person with hate in their heart may sound pleasant enough. Though they pretend to be kind, their hatred will finally come to light for all to see (Prov. 26:23-26 TLB).

So God continues to preside in the great assembly to dispense judgment among the “gods,” Ps. 82:1. For surely Jesus said to unbelievers:

“Is it not written: ‘I have said you are gods’? If the Most High called men ‘gods,’ to whom the Word of God came – and the Scripture cannot be broken – what about the One Whom the Father set apart as His very own, and sent into the world?”

“Why then do you accuse Me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’? Do not believe Me unless I do what My Father does. But, if I do it, even though you do not believe Me, believe the miracles that you may know and understand this: The Father is in Me, and I in the Father.”

John 10:34-39

Why not chose the Way of Truth? Why not set your heart on God's Word (Ps. 119:30)? For the Lord's teachings are perfect! They give strength to His people. The Lord's rules can be trusted (Ps. 19:7 ERV)! They stand fast and are established forever and ever in absolute truth and uprightness! God has sent redemption to His people! He has commanded His covenant to be forever! Holy is His name, inspiring awe, reverence and godly fear (Ps. 111:8-9 AMP).



The Lord's rules help the foolish become wise. The guidance of the Lord is right (Ps. 19:7-8 ERV)! For His heart is established and steady! He will not be afraid while He waits to see His desire established upon His adversaries. The Lord has distributed freely to all! His righteousness endures forever! He is exalted in honor (Ps. 112:8-9 AMP)!

The Lord's counsel makes people happy. For the Lord's instructions are good (Ps. Ps. 19:8 ERV). God's Word fosters within us faith that is firm and established so we're not moved from the hope held out in the Gospel. The Message that is told of Christ Jesus (Col. 1:23)!

Yes, the Lord's counsel reveals the right way to live! Learning respect for the Lord is good. It shall last forever (Ps.19:8-9 ERV)! By His favor and grace, the Lord establishes us as a strong mountain (Ps. 30:7 AMP)! So always be reminded of the things of God, even though you may know them so you may be established just as firmly in Truth (2 Pet.1:12).

Knowing, believing the Lord's judgments are right! They are completely fair (Ps. 19:9 ERV)! The King is mighty, He loves justice! He has established equity! He has done and does what is just and right for all people (Ps. 99:1).

Surely, His teachings are worth more than pure gold. They are sweeter than the best honey dripping from the honeycomb (Ps. 19:10 ERV). For it's by godly wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established! Through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures (Prov. 24:3-4)!



The Lord's teachings warn His servants (Ps. 19:11 ERV)! For He will not fail or become weak or be crushed and discouraged! He has established justice in the earth! God's people wait hopefully for Him

and expect His direction and have confidence in God's Word (Isa. 42:4 AMP).

Knowing, trusting, believing by experience good things come to those who obey the Lord's teachings. For people cannot see their own mistakes (Ps. 19:11 ERV)! And though the King detests wrongdoing, through righteousness His kingdom is not only established (Prov. 16:12), but advances in our lives so that Christ may dwell in our heart through faith, and we can become rooted and established in Love (Eph. 3:17).

So why fret because of evil people or be envious of the wicked, for the evil person has no future hope, and the lamp of the wicked will surely be snuffed out (Prov. 24:19-20). Sadly, there are even those who profess to know God, to recognize and be acquainted with Him, but deny and disown and renounce Him by what they do (Titus 1:16 AMP).



How evil ravages the world is readily recognizable, but how it ravages a soul can prove to be difficult to discern. Why? The heart self-protects, denies, excuses and blames others to adjust the perception of our own behavior.

Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded minds so the glorious light of the Good News about Christ, Who is the exact likeness of God, cannot be seen. Satan can also blind us to disturbing issues about ourselves that are a result of our fallen nature. There is no difference or distinction to be made, for surely all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:22-23).

The Word of Truth tells us,

“Don’t criticize and be judgmental, and then you won’t be criticized; for others will treat you as you treat them. Why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? Don’t be so hypocritical! First get rid of the log in your own eye.”

Matt. 7:1-2 TLB, Matt. 7:3-5 NLT

A log made up of character deficits, codependent ways, dysfunctional personality traits and behaviors....

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Dysfunction can be readily defined as an abnormality or impairment, or a deviation from accepted social behavior, but getting to the root that causes such issues as problems with self-esteem and acceptance, difficulty tolerating strong emotion, rigidity...are often difficult to define (determine, describe, identify).

Could one reason provide sufficient explanation for the countless forms of dysfunction we confront in our homes, schools, churches, work places...? I found this article on the website Inc.com: 50 Forms of Dysfunction in the Workplace. These are a few that were mentioned:

- Letting personal problems overwhelm effectiveness
- Withdrawing support
- Turf wars that result in arguments, rifts and mean-spirited rivalries
- Pouting and yelling – old fashioned bad behavior that can be both chronic and contagious
- Low self-esteem can lead to misrepresentation of self
- Resentments and lack of respect
- Compromising behavior can jeopardize everything a person does
- Backbiting and backstabbing
- Gossiping and rumors – nothing good every results from these types of behaviors

- Favoritism and preferential treatment – inequality is a quick path to discomfort and strife
- Bigotry and prejudice – should not be tolerated
- Failing to take initiative – self-motivation is required
- Listening only to what is said and not what is meant – superficial communication makes everything more difficult
- Breaking confidentiality
- Bullying and tyrannical behavior – should not be tolerated
- Disloyalty and undependability – both traits undermine trust which is essential
- Confusion – makes it impossible to set clear goals
- Squandering time – shows a lack of commitment
- Mistaking abusive behavior for toughness – is not justifiable and is a sign of weakness
- Focusing on self – unhappy and unfulfilled people focus on themselves
- Dishonesty – constant alibis
- Failure to confront – allows things that need to be confronted to grow in strength
- Fear of change – change is going to happen whether it is feared or embraced
- Perfectionism – the chase for unattainable goals

- Smugness and conceit – the hallmarks of people who cannot think well of themselves
- Shooting the messenger – unable to distinguish the message from the messenger or the Christianize version the sin from the sinner
- Hubris and arrogance – ego edges greatness out
- Overpromising and underperforming – the cost credibility
- Mismanaging the dysfunction – if you feed a monster, it will come back for more
- Paralysis by analysis – if you don't move, you cannot succeed.
(Being too earthly minded can result in our not accepting the victory that is received from Jesus)
- Unfriendliness and hostility – Those who fail to show respect are unlikely to receive it
- Undue emphasis on results – results are good, but how you get there is more important
- Inaccessibility and unavailability – serves to cause distrust, discouragement and disappointment
- Isolation
- Paranoia and suspicion – you cannot work if you can't trust

Unfortunately, we each have been guilty of behaviors such as these, and we surely have been on the receiving end of such dysfunctional behaviors. Impaired judgments cause hurting people to hurt people.

This article started out by saying dysfunction – in any form and any degree – comes at a cost, keeping us from effective outcomes, efficient results and successful conclusions. At its worst, it can bring down an entire organization. The first step is recognizing the problem.

<https://www.inc.com/lolly-daskal/50-forms-of-dysfunction-in-the-workplace.html>



If evil works to produce all this negativity, forces that are strong enough to bring down an organization what are we doing to ourselves? Our thoughts and feelings and desires are the fuel that propels evil out into the world. However, the only reason this occurs is because evil was able to first infiltrate our thinking.

How dangerous for us to be in agreement with these debilitating forces of negativity for their work is dedicated to bringing about dysfunction (affliction, disorder, disease, trouble, upset, unsoundness, debility, invalidism, weakness, hypochondria...) in order to pull us down into that pit.

Remember, there is always another choice – seek Good. We don't have to let things that are out of our control dominate our thinking, for this is what unbelievers or doubters do. Our heavenly Father knows all our needs so don't worry. What we need to do is set our minds on things above, not on earthly things (Col. 3:2). For God is able, through His mighty power working within us, to accomplish more than we might ask or think (Eph. 3:20 NLT), we just need to trust Him and believe.



Through His unlimited resources God will empower you with inner strength by His Spirit (Eph. 3:16 NLT). He is not a God of confusion and disorder (dysfunction, impairment, weakness) but of peace (1 Cor. 14:33 AMP). From above He sends down wisdom that is pure and peace-loving (James 3:17), for only God can bring order from the chaos (Eccl. 5:9 TLB), and make all things new (Rev. 21:5).

So why worry and be anxious about tomorrow? God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time (Matt. 6:34 TLB) without professing the dysfunction that – fear, hatred, anger, jealousy, resentment...has caused. Stop being overcome by evil; instead, overcome evil with Good (Rom. 12:21).

God has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:57). Know that everyone born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith (1 John 5:4).

God's Word will never fail (Luke 1:37). We are renewed in knowledge by His Word of Truth, so we can come to know our Creator and become like Him (Col. 3:10 NLT).

The only way we can come to know God and grow strong in faith is through His Word, Who says:

“The Lord your God is in your midst, a Mighty One Who will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you by His love; He will exult over you with singing.”

Zeph. 3:17

God's Word fills us with hope and peace and love and confidence...

"I have told you these things, so that you may have peace in Me. In this world you are going to have trouble. But be courageous! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33 EHV



It is not the spiritual life which came first, but the physical and then the spiritual (1 Cor. 15:46 AMP). Physical training is of some value, but godliness (spiritual training) is useful and of value in everything and in every way, for it holds promise for the present life and also for the life which is to come (1 Tim. 4:8 AMP). Surely, godly wisdom is sweet to your soul; if you find it, there is a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off (Prov. 24:14).

It isn't difficult to understand how regret and shame and sorrow can overwhelm and depress. This is why it is so important not only to be familiar with God's Word, but to trust the Lord's counsel because then you too can envision holding tightly to God's righteous Right Hand and allow words such as these from the Lord to comfort and help you continue to move forward:

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.

See, I am doing a new thing!”

Isa 43:18



Looking back can definitely be as disturbing as worrying about the future. The Word of God tells us to let tomorrow worry about itself since each day has enough trouble of its own (Matt. 6:34). Think about it - who can add a single hour to their life? If this very little thing can't be accomplished, why worry about the rest (Luke 12:25)? Worry speaks of little faith. Your heavenly Father knows all your needs.

You may be like me, many of my own issues made it difficult to impossible for me to be comfortable and just receive. So I share this Message Bible translation of God's Word:

“What I'm trying to do here is get you to relax and not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God's giving. People who don't know God and the way He works fuss and worry over things, but you know both God and how He works. By steeping yourself in God's Word you won't be so afraid. Seek His kingdom for this is what the Father wants to give the Lord's dearest friends.”



Many of us may have asked the Lord as the apostles did “Give us more faith.” The Message version of Luke 17:5-6 offers Jesus’ response this way:

“You don’t need more faith. There is no ‘more’ or ‘less’ in faith. If you have a bare kernel of faith, say the size of a poppy seed, you could say to this sycamore tree, ‘Go jump in the lake,’ and it would do it.”

Once you have reckoned those things that money can’t buy – Truth, Love, Peace...are to be found in God’s Word, an ongoing life-changing process begins.



The Word of God helps us to do all we can to add to our faith goodness; to our goodness - knowledge; to our knowledge - self-control; to our self-control - patience; to our patience - devotion to God; to our devotion - kindness to our brethren in Christ; and to this kindness to add love (2 Peter 1:5-7 Easy-to-Read).

No one not even God expects us to be able to control and manipulate our faith as we have done in so many other instances to produce what must grow and develop over time and through experience.

People in my own family have accused Christians of being hypocrites. At one time, like those without the kind of faith that makes it possible for us to be still and know that God has everything under His control than yes, we were counted among those that criticized, pointed accusing fingers, denied and formed judgmental attitudes and opinions. But guess what, we carry that behavior and all our past baggage with us when we come to Jesus.

We are not at all a surprise to the One Who always invites us in every situation to seek Truth from Him, God's Word:

“Come now, let us reason together. Though your sins **are** like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they **are** red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing to follow and obey Me, you will eat the best from the land.”

Isa. 1:18

This is not a fake, hollow promise.



God washes away the stain of our sins, and seals our inner spiritual being with His Holy Spirit when we choose to place our faith in His Son, Christ Jesus. God has dealt with sin for the entire world. Sin has been forgiven because Jesus took the sins of the world to the cross and buried them. However, there is a reckoning for those who come to God with their seed of faith.

What we need to realize about faith, we use it all the time. We have faith the chair we sit down on won't collapse. We have faith people will remain in their own lanes as we are among the other drivers on the road. Faith naturally brings so much into our lives, and we determine who and what and where it should be placed. Faith speaks of: constancy, commitment, attachment, reliability, trustworthiness, confidence, assurance, surety, principle, reliance, hope....



The Thesaurus has delineated these words as the very first references to faith: religion, worship, devotion, reverence....God knows how impossible it would be for a person's faith to automatically be given over solely to Him. He also knows there are people who will never

relinquish their faith to Him. As parents ourselves we experience difficulty understanding why our children don't seem to want to place their faith in our knowledge and experience. We may come to God with regret and shame and guilt and bad habits, but you can be certain God's Word will provide rest for our soul. Jesus said:

“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart. My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Matt. 11:28-30

As we become familiar with the stories in the Bible, and hold tightly to God's Word the changes we have desired maybe for years will begin to occur. This is why journaling is so important.

It is such a natural occurrence for us to forget when there is so much going on from day-to-day. However, by journaling we can look back and see what we were thinking and realize something, maybe something small, but none the less something in what we thought or believed or how we behaved was a bit different. All credit to the One Who is the Change-Maker, God's Word - Christ Jesus.

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When change is experienced Truth cannot be denied. This is why gratitude is such an essential tool for us to have in our arsenal. God has received us as His children, but like all children we too lack trust and confidence in His knowledge and experience. So as the song says there is a grace when the heart is under fire. God knows we must do those difficult things that can make us very uncomfortable like moving out of denial, admitting when we are wrong, detaching, making amends to those we have offended, hurt, cheated....

This reckoning with God moves us into a different space where inner healing will be experienced. When habits, hang-ups, character deficits and self-destructive behaviors can be identified as Holy Spirit sows the Word of Truth so disappointments, addictive tendencies, self-protective and defensive mechanisms can be left behind (John 3:30).

That is if change is truly desired. Because if it is, you will slowly but surely discover you are leaning less on your own philosophies and putting more faith, more credence in God's Word of Truth Who fulfills His promises just as He did for the more than 332 prophecies that were made about Him in the Old Testament. I suggest you do as David did and put five stones in your bag. These are five I have clung to:

Nothing is impossible with God. What is impossible with men is possible with God (Luke 1:37&18:27)

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28-29)

The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me (Heb. 13:6)

Behold, I am for you and I will turn to you (Ezek. 36:9)

For I am the Lord, your God, Who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you (Isa 41:13)



When it is truly realized and appreciated that God sent Jesus to be received as Savior, and acknowledged as Lord for He is God's Word of Truth (John 3:16); and when we choose to acquire knowledge of Him, we enter into the miraculous because God's Word, Christ Jesus, will be dwelling not just among us in this world God loves, but also within us.

No one can really know when this miraculous event occurs because only God knows every detail within our soul and in our life.



The Son of Man is like a farmer planting seeds, which are the words God instructed Him to speak (John 12:49). Jesus is spreading knowledge of God's love all around. Sadly, there are those whose heads are turned by other interests so the devil comes and takes the Word away preventing the miraculous that they may believe and be saved. There are others who joyfully receive God's Word, but in those times when faith is tested they fall away.

My own thoughts on the subject, I think there may be an unrealistic expectation attached to accepting Jesus for some people. That Jesus will make life easier. That somehow He will do the work or carry the cross meant for us to bear (Luke 14:27).

Thought is not given or maybe understanding so lacking - this world treated Jesus horrendously. There should be no doubt trouble and mistreatment will continue even when our faith is placed in the Son of Man.

However, Heb. 12:4 tells us we have not resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. The night before Jesus was to be crucified He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. An angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him. And being in anguish, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground (Luke 22:41-44).

God's promises and exhortations may quickly be forgotten when disturbing events unfold:

“Do not despise the chastening of the Lord. For whom the Lord loves He chastens. Yes, He disciplines those whom He receives.”
(NKJV)



Evil is in this world, and amazingly God works good in the bad we experience. I can only speak of what I have come to realize. Knowing what the Word of God says will be transformed to believing, when the Truth you lean on is personally experienced. And God's Word of Truth can only be experienced when His teachings are daily being applied. There are things that take time developing like many of our tendencies - to become codependent, to please people, to be fearful, to mistrust...

God is aware of evil's intention to harm. However, He is also aware of how these tendencies we've developed cause self-harm. The bad behavior, attitudes, opinions, beliefs...we've developed are as harmful to ourselves as they are to others.

When we hold onto the stones (Scriptures) that speak encouragement, strength, hope...to our soul, as we take the necessary steps throughout each day with this belief - though bad may occur God's intent is for good to be accomplished for us and in us. The power of His grace will be working to save us from the harmful tendencies, beliefs, attitudes... that can actually work to place us on a collision course with trouble.

It is the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony that helps us and others to overcome the accuser of the brethren; so we do not love this life so much as to shrink from death (Rev. 12:10-11). Because there are so many individuals, there are also many reasons we would possibly do the opposite and shrink back from death. God is aware of them all.

We can definitely grow strong in faith to overcome such fear. However, this can only happen when we allow our faith and trust to become anchored firmly and securely in God's Word. Not by just

holding on tightly to a book, but by becoming personally involved. Reading, believing, decreeing the Scriptures that fill its pages. For then we will begin to look for and anticipate, then recognize and acknowledge God is accomplishing good in the bad that is set before Him.



God is working in us to bring an end to any and all harmful tendencies or self-destructive behaviors or character traits that cause a deficit (failure, shortage, insufficiency) to occur as a result of the darkness of negativity that is within our soul. Let me take a moment to say, harm also happens to many of us because of the darkness in someone else's heart.

However, God's Word is sent with a very personal purpose, intent and interest - for you. So if we don't allow any physical discomfort or the negative repeat recordings of thoughts to cause us to shrink back before deception, fear, anger...is subdued, we will come to know through experience the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17) accomplished this victory for us and in us.



God's Light of Life will surely be seen shining brightly as we work to take captive every one of our thoughts that sets itself up against the knowledge of God's Word of Truth (2 Cor. 10:5). The enemy works to demolish our hopes and dreams and even our lives with his forces of negativity.

With the forces of goodness within God's Word we can demolish every pretentious (grandiose, high-minded, self-assertive) thought or feeling or argument, every wall we have built that keeps us from finding and receiving God's Wisdom and His unconditional love.

When we stand firm in faith, the miraculous will occur because God will help us to rise above doubt and confusion, fear and discomfort. We can use the imaginations God has given us so the eyes of our heart can see the One Who put on righteousness as His breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on His head; Who put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped Himself in zeal as in a cloak - our Redeemer.

The One Who comes to fight and lead into victory those who choose to believe in Him and repent for their sins (Isa. 59:17&20).



When we belong to the Light of Day we can be self-controlled, putting on Faith and Love as a breastplate, and the Hope of salvation as a helmet. For it is God's Word and His love that protects our heart, and it is Holy Spirit Who helps us gain victory on the battlefield of our mind. He works to secure our soul with knowledge of Truth by adjusting our thinking until we surely know, God has given us His Surety, through Jesus He has reached out to place the helmet of salvation as protection against negativity on our head.

Then, when upsets and trouble occur, and they will, we can with all confidence know that in **ALL THINGS** God works for the good of those who love Him (Rom. 8:28). We can know God always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of the Lord (2 Cor. 2:14). Faith develops and strengthens in the going through. We have to be willing to go through with God's Word of Truth leading, instead of our heart goading us along.

Experience is the key to understanding how truly amazing God really is. Just as He has destined for each person to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of

many people; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sins, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him (Heb. 9:27-28).

However, God continues to send His Word to be heard and heeded because even if we should suffer for what is right, we will know we are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, do not be frightened. Instead, in your heart set Christ, God's Word, apart as Lord (1 Peter 3:14-15).



Yes, God understands how self-serving our prideful human nature. How stubborn and willful a heart can be. So tainted by pride it can cause the sinew of a neck to be as iron and a forehead to be as bronze (Isa. 48:4). As a result, when asked to set apart (apply, commit, give up to) the authority of God's Word the heart causes many to turn and walk away.

An unfortunate development, for surely just as King Saul died for his trespass against the Lord, so too will those with an unfaithful heart that refuse to keep God's Word set apart as Lord (1 Chron. 10:13). Instead, they hold fast to deceit (idolatry - anything loved or revered more than God), refusing to repent and return to Him (Jer. 8:5 AMP).

Yet, there is always hope. For though rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness like the evil of idolatry (1 Sam 15:23a AMP) the Lord redeems, as He did Abraham out of Ur and idolatry (Isa. 29:22 AMP). However, those who have rejected the teachings of the Lord, they too will surely be rejected by Him (1 Sam 15:23 b)



God has given each person the gift of time so that opportunity and circumstance might bring us to Him before we reach the end of self. When life seems to bring us to the end of the road, where a heart is made to feel isolated, hopeless and down trodden, with no one in sight in which to turn. Let it be remembered, there is always One in which to turn, God's Word, for the Lord is the Lifter of our head (Ps. 3:3 AMP).

In this contest of life, evil works to remove Hope from a heart. This North American expression "uncle" can help us better understand how the enemy uses what is evil – fear, sin, confusion, anger, lust... to coerce so experiences with Good would be sacrificed. No matter the reason for saying "uncle" for giving up and surrendering to the longings of our heart, when a person does what is wrong, the harm to self will be more than just physical.

Know, if there is hopelessness then surely there is Hope, and the God of Hope is greater than our heart, and He knows everything (1 John 3:20).



You may be wondering why I am making such a distinction. Because, Jesus has been identified as the Word and He is both Lord and Savior for all who place their faith and trust in Him. There is a hymn you may be familiar with “I Surrender All,” sung by Carrie Underwood:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iE3jyYhHluo>

All to Jesus I surrender
All to Him I freely give
I will ever love and trust Him
In His presence daily live.

All to Jesus I surrender
Humbly at His feet I bow
Worldly pleasures all forsaken
Take me Jesus take me now

Just a few lyrics that may be sung during any Sunday service; however, when the hymnal book is closed, for far too many so too is the sentiment. We know when surrendering, both arms are raised in acquiescence to whoever the captor may be. However, surrendering brings with it the notion of loss maybe even regret for yielding to the power, control or possession of another.

How easy to raise an arm to accept Jesus as Savior, but allowing Jesus to be Captor of our heart may prove much more difficult for this is where all our beliefs and emotions and will-power are securely tucked away.

Like a treasure chest our heart stores and safe guards what has great value and meaning. However, the heart is also like a crypt, and sadly not the final resting place for those things we try so hard to forget. There are instances when poked in just the right way, at just the right spot that what erupts from a heart can produce an ugly mess not so easily cleaned up.



Who can understand a heart? (Jer. 17:9). For the things that cause us to be unclean evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft,

false testimony and slander come from within the heart (Matt. 15:18-19).

None of our ugly messes can be hidden from the Lord. He searches all hearts and examines their deepest motives so He can give to each person their right reward, according to their deeds – how they have lived (Jer. 17:10 TLB).

This Scripture taken from 1 Cor. 4:5 tells us to judge nothing before the appointed time; instead, to wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of our hearts. At that time each will receive their praise from God.



It must be remembered, God rescues us because He delights in us (Ps. 18:19). He turns our darkness into Light (Ps. 18:28). He arms us with strength and gives us His shield of victory (Ps. 18:32&26).

So we mustn't condemn others because we are just as bad and have no excuse! When we say someone is wicked and should be punished, we are condemning ourselves, for we who judge others do the very same things.

And we know that God, in His justice, will punish anyone for their misdeeds. If we judge others, why should we think we would avoid God's judgment when we are guilty of our own wrong doing? Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant and patient God is with us? Can't you see that His kindness is intended to turn us from our sinful ways (Rom. 2:1-4 NLT)?

Sinful ways that got their start during childhood; as children and possibly even as adults we surrender to the control and will of others. As a result, our heart has not only been affected by the inner vows we've made, but we'll also be accountable for the manner in which they've been carried out.



Control is something the heart greatly desires. So the thought of relinquishing it to another even to Jesus may result in a hand being slightly raised, instead of an arm being fully extended. I was to discover this was true of myself, even though I believed I was honoring Jesus as Lord. And I can assure you only God can help us untangle the thoughts and feelings that cause a heart to misfire

because He is fully aware of the internal damage life inflicts upon our soul.

Hang in there with me. Hopefully what you've read so far makes sense. Putting my thoughts on paper in an orderly fashion is proving difficult to do. When we accept Jesus as Savior, this gift of time God has given us becomes a process of maturing in Faith, Hope and Love. Growing strong in this faith, which proclaims Jesus is Lord (Acts 5:14), the only Way to Life eternal and the Word of Truth (John 14:6); Who delivers us from sin, and works with us so we can be freed from the dictates and demands of our own heart.

So we can hear about days that are yet to come when the people will proclaim, "This is our God! We trusted in Him, and He saved us! This is the Lord, in whom we trusted. Let us rejoice in the salvation He brings!" For the Lord of Heaven's Armies will spread a wonderful feast for all the people of the world on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. There He will remove the cloud of gloom, the shadow of death that hangs over the earth. He will swallow up death forever!

The Lord God will wipe away all tears. He will remove forever all insults and mockery against His land and His people (Isa. 25:6-8 NLT).

God has given us His Word to not only captivate our heart, but also to sanctify it with His Word of Truth (John 17:17).



Thankfully, we don't have to wait for something to happen in the future, we can experience God removing those heavy burdens of insults and mockery, hurts and habits and hang-ups right now. These steps we've been taking along our spiritual journey open doors for us to experience as Jesus did favor with God and people as we too grow in wisdom (Luke 2:52) with a stature that is in right-standing with God.

Truth, Discernment and Wisdom that continually develops until we all attain oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the full and accurate knowledge of the Son of God, that we might arrive at real maturity - the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection - the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him (Eph. 4:12 AMP).

We can begin documenting a new growth and development chart when we begin to:

PUT INTO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES
FOR TAKING STEPS TOWARD
RENEWAL AND RECOVERY
TO BE MORE GOD-DEPENDENT INSTEAD OF
CO-DEPENDENT

- The first key is to maintain an honest view of reality not only considering particular circumstances and events as substantial, but recognizing the substance of Truth – the Life, the Alpha and Omega, the heart and the spirit as we work on taking steps of faith remembering, believing, trusting:
 - God exists and I matter to Him
 - Admitting I am powerless
 - Acknowledging in certain areas my life became unmanageable
 - Believing God will restore me with Love, a Sound Mind and Power
 - Believing God will help me stay committed to this decision to put all of who I am into His possession and safekeeping
 - Believing the Word of God will encourage, support and strengthen me as I make a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself

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

- I seek Revival, Restoration and Reconciliation, a spiritual awakening, as a result of taking steps to carry God's message to others and to practice these principles in all my affairs



- As we work at reserving daily time with God, we begin the journey of applying what we have discovered in the steps we have already taken
- We humbly live daily – in reality, not in denial
- We have done our best to make amends for our past
- Through God's guidance, we can make choices about the emotions that affect our thinking and behavior
- We start to take action – positive action – instead of constant reaction
- During this time of self-examination, if we uncover wrongdoings, we admit them promptly
- These steps guarantee we do not ever have to be a victim again

- We may need to acknowledge our lives were filled with
 - judgment and attempts at perfection
 - we judged ourselves and others

- if we did wrong our defenses flew up, and we tried to deny our part, afraid we were not worthwhile if we were not perfect
 - we used our mistakes to reinforce our anger and resentment toward ourselves and others
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- By taking this step to reserve time with God daily and for self-examination we learn that making mistakes is normal, expected and to be anticipated – important lessons can be uncovered in our less-than-perfect behaviors
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- We discover if our self-esteem is resting on being right all the time - --- an attitude like this does not leave room for much growth of self-esteem
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- We become more comfortable with ourselves - so we can become more open, vulnerable and humble about this process of growth and renewal and recovery
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- This time of self-examination with God teaches us we don't have to listen to our old messages –
 - We can acknowledge how uncomfortable it is to admit our wrongs to people
 - How difficult it is for us to become aware of a new behavior that needs to be worked on

- The struggle with pride and our defenses will continue
 - That our need to be right and in control and perfect will still be nagging at us
-
- This time we spend with God for self-examination and prayer helps us to recognize our peace, our joy, our respect for self and others comes when we accept ourselves – when we allow ourselves to be honest, open and responsible – when we are responsible to ourselves and others

Father, I pray that your Word becomes well-known to each of us who love You, so new experiences and new heights of understanding can be reached.

That we would develop confidence and trust and assurance in Your Word - when you arise O God, your enemies will scatter; your foes flee from before You. As Your Word becomes rooted and grows to a godly stature within us, I pray that what Your enemy meant for our harm would be as smoke blown away by the wind. That Your Word of Truth blows all that is harmful away; for as wax melts before the fire, the wicked shall perish before God.

I pray for the righteous to be glad and rejoice before You, Father, for You are the Source of our happiness and joy. That songs would be sung in praise to God and the holy name of Him Who rides on the clouds - His name is the Lord, Christ Jesus, - and we rejoice before Him.

Praise to the Lord, to God our Savior, Who daily bears our burdens. Our God is a God Who saves; from the Sovereign Lord comes escape from death. Praise God in the great congregation; praise the Lord in the assemblies of God's people. Summon Your power, O God; show us Your strength, O God, as You have done before.

Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth, sing praise to the Lord, to Him Who rides the ancient skies above, Who thunders with mighty voice. Proclaim the power of God, whose majesty is over us, whose power is in the skies. You are awesome, O God, for You have made us Your dwelling place, Your temple; the God of Israel gives power and strength to His people.

Praise be God!

Psalm 68

THERE IS FREEDOM

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

Oh-oh, oh-oh

Oh-oh, oh-oh

... When I'm walkin' through the valley, Your presence is around me

'Cause nothin' stands between me and my God

And the fear that was my prison is no longer where I'm livin'

'Cause nothin' stands between me and my God

There's no place I go that He is not

... Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom

We'll be dancin' through the darkness 'cause we believe it

Every stronghold has to break at the name of Jesus

Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom (oh-oh, oh-oh)

... When the ground below is shakin', my joy cannot be taken

'Cause nothin' stands between me and my God

So I'm lookin' to Jesus through a veil that's torn to pieces

'Cause nothin' stands between me and my God, no

... Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom

We'll be dancin' through the darkness 'cause we believe it

Every stronghold has to break at the name of Jesus

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (oh-oh, oh-oh)

... Watch the lies break off

Watch the enemy flee

Watch the walls come crumbling down

When the people of God sing (when the people of God sing)

Hear the heavenly roar

Of every heart set free

Hear the chains of shame hit the ground

When the people of God sing (when the people of God sing, oh-oh-oh)

... Watch the lies break off

Watch the enemy flee (oh-oh-oh-oh)

Watch the walls come crumbling down

When the people of God sing (oh-oh-oh)

And hear the heavenly roar

Of every heart set free (oh-oh)

Hear the chains of shame hit the ground (oh-oh)

When the people of God sing

**... Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (there is freedom,
oh-oh-oh)**

We'll be dancin' through the darkness 'cause we believe it
And every stronghold has to break at the name of Jesus (oh, there's no
other name)

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, oh

... Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom

So we'll be dancin' through the darkness 'cause we believe it
And every stronghold has to break at the name of Jesus (oh, at His
name)

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (oh-oh)

There is freedom, oh, there is freedom (oh-oh, oh-oh)

There is freedom (oh-oh)

Song by Josh Baldwin