

## GOD MADE TWO GREAT LIGHTS

When I consider Your heavens, O Lord, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him (Ps. 8:3-4)? Yes, the heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world (Ps. 19:1-4).

However, not everyone who has heard the Good News has welcomed it, for Isaiah the prophet said, “Lord, who has believed me when I told them?”

Yet, faith comes from listening to this Good News – the Good News about Christ.

What about the Jewish people? Have they heard God’s Word? Yes, for it has gone wherever they are; the Good News has been told to the ends of the earth. And did they understand God would give His salvation to others if they refused to take it?

Yes, for even back in the time of Moses, God had said that He would make His people jealous and try to wake them up by giving His salvation to the heathen nations. And later Isaiah said boldly that God would be found by people who weren't even looking for Him.

In the meantime, God keeps on stretching out His arms to the Jewish people, but many keep arguing and refusing to come (Rom. 10:16-21 TLB).



The prophet Jeremiah wrote, "Oh, that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for my people, for they are adulterers, a crowd of unfaithful people. They have taught their tongues to lie; they weary themselves with sinning. They live in the midst of deception; in their deceit they refuse to acknowledge the Lord (Jer. 9:5-6).

Oh, that everyone would come, and accept God's free gift for the Word of Truth leads to a very different spring, one of living water (Rev. 7:17 TLB). The Commander of the heavenly armies (Ps. 46:11) has set a course that proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb on the pure water of the River of Life, clear as crystal (Rev. 22:1).

A journey specifically charted with you in mind so discoveries like this could be made - from Mount Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines in glorious radiance. The Lord, the Mighty One, is God, and He has spoken; He has summoned all humanity from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets (Ps. 50:1-2).



Look to the sky for as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. There will be false Christs and false prophets that will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect.

See, I have told you ahead of time; for there will be days of distress, and immediately after the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.

The Son of Man will appear in the sky, and every nation on earth will mourn. They will see the Son of God coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a loud

trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other (Matt. 24:24-31).



Yes, the Rock of Israel will cause His majestic voice to be heard, and shall crush down His mighty arm upon His enemies with angry indignation and devouring flames, tornadoes, terrible storms and huge hailstones (Isa. 30:29-30 NLT). So come and join yourself to the Lord in a covenant that shall not be forgotten (Jer. 50:5). An eternal covenant with God Who has such compassion for you He sends His Word, He sends His Spirit to teach you many things (Mark 6:33).

God says:

“So Come, let’s make a covenant, you and I.”

Gen. 31:44 NLT

God sends Jesus and Holy Spirit to be as witnesses to this relationship that speaks of love and honor and faithfulness, obedience and commitment. There are always two who stand as witnesses for those who have chosen to make a public profession of their love for one another.

The final gift given as marriage vows are spoken, a ring, meant to symbolize a relationship of covenant, of love, that has no beginning or no end. The wedding ring is an emblem of unity, a symbol of commitment, an agreement, a pledge made by a man and a woman to respect, to honor and to cherish one another for a lifetime. As does the cross God offers to mankind.



God is love (1 John 4:8). We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). And this is how God showed His love: 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 (1 John 4:9-10).

Because of His great love for us, God, Who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace that we are saved.

This precious gift of saving grace must be received through faith. A gift from God, not something earned through human effort so no one can boast (Eph. 2:4-9).

Right now, a righteousness from God has been made known, and comes through faith in Jesus to every person who believes. There is no difference, for everyone has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

God presents the Lord to you as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His shed blood. God is just, and the One Who justifies those who have faith in His Son (Rom. 3:21-26).



Truth is evident, the first man, Adam, became a living being; the last Adam, Christ Jesus, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of earth, the second man from heaven.

All mankind is borne in the likeness of the earthly man; however, when the choice is made to be born of God, Holy Spirit works to transform from the inside out so we can also bear the likeness of the Man from heaven (1 Cor. 15:45-49).

A covenant of Love recognized and experienced through the marriage of a man and a woman. A Covenant of Love offered to the atheist, the Jew, the Hindu...to all who hold strongly to the natural interests of the heart.

No one is immune to tradition, teaching and the will and won't power of the heart. And no one is excluded from entering into this Covenant of Love with the God, the Father of Jesus, Who blesses this union in the heavenly realms so every spiritual blessing can be received and experienced through faith in the Son of Man (Eph. 1:3). As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will God rejoice over them (Isa. 62:5).

For Zion's sake the Lord will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake He will not remain quiet. For your righteousness shines out like the dawn, your gift of salvation, like a blazing torch. A righteousness from God for all nations to see (Isa. 62:1-2).

A chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you might declare praises of Him, Who called you out of darkness into His wonderful Light. God's very own possession; and as

a result, His goodness can be shown to people with no spiritual identity so they too can receive God's mercy (1 Peter 2:9-10).



Come! Receive God's mercy before the fierce fury of the Lord falls, and the terrible day of the Lord's anger begins. Act now, before the time to repent is blown away like chaff (Zeph. 2:2 NLT).

Yet a time is coming, and for some has now come for true worshipers are worshiping the Father in Spirit and in Truth. The kind of worshipers the Father seeks; for God is Spirit, and His worshipers must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:23-24).

The law was given through Moses; grace and truth come to us through Christ Jesus (John 1:17). So when life is lived without understanding the importance of our spiritual identity; the interests of the soul - the intellect, emotions and the will - shall continue to attract and react as usual to the belaboring of fear, anger, confusion, unbelief, deception...



However, when a person comes to understand the importance of their spiritual identity, God Himself will open to them the door of faith so



they can learn to co-labor with the Lord, His Word, for only then can the heart of God be heard:

“Come, let’s make a covenant, you and I, and it will be a witness to our commitment. For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy, but just as Adam and Eve were deceived by the serpent’s cunning, you too have been led astray from a sincerely committed relationship with Me.”

“Return faithless people, for I am your Husband. Your Maker is your Husband – the Lord Almighty is His name – the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; He is called the God of all the earth. Though you have chased after your lovers, they will not be caught; though you look for them, they will not be found.”

“Though you have claimed to be wise, you have become fools, exchanging the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. So I gave you over to your sinful desires, to sexual impurity for the degrading of your bodies with one another.”

“Yes, multitudes have exchanged the Truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator – Who is forever praised. I will destroy your carved images, and your sacred stones. You will not bow down to the work of your own hands. I will uproot them from among you; I will take vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations that have not obeyed Me.”

Gen. 31:44 NLT, 2 Cor. 11:2-3, Jer. 3:14, Isa. 54:5, Hos. 2:7-8, Rom. 1:21-25, Mic. 5:13-15



God sent His Son into the world to attract humanity to His loving-kindness. To His Spirit of Adoption (acceptance, embrace, betrothal) for the Spirit produces son-ship so we can call God, “Abba, Father.” Sadly, when our spiritual being is not identified by Holy Spirit, people will continue walking after their own devices, doing as the stubbornness of their heart dictates (Jer. 18:12).

Eyes will wander, and an inheritance will be lost. You see, when Jesus laid Himself upon that cross, He allowed His ever open arms to be nailed to give each and every person opportunity to hear Him say:

“Dear friend.”

Those who carefully build themselves up in this most holy faith praying Holy Spirit bestow them with the grace and power to remain right at the center of God's love, with their arms open and outstretched, ready for the mercy of Christ Jesus – this is unending life, the real life (Jude 10-21 Message). So their God-created identity could be lived out. Living kindly and generously and graciously toward themselves and others, the way God lives toward them (Matt. 5:48 Message).



From the death and resurrection of Jesus, God brought forth a New Covenant between Himself and mankind. Offering time for faith to become carefully and firmly based on this fact: God designated Jesus as the Mediator of His New Covenant (Heb. 8:6), nothing and no one else.

God ratified (approved, authorized, finalized) this Covenant by the blood Jesus shed, which has become “The blood of the Everlasting Covenant” (Heb. 13:20).

This is the one and only covenant that God recognizes. God has spoken by His Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things (Heb. 1:1). God identified Jesus as His beloved Son in Whom He is well pleased. Listen to Him (Matt. 17:5).

Make an investment in your own well-being, and believe what God's Word says:

"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. So I give to those who trust Me authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome the power of the enemy; nothing will harm the life you live in Me."

"For those who chose to abide in God's Word, holding fast to My teachings and living in accordance with them, are truly My disciples. You will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free."

"If you keep My commandments, if you continue to obey My instructions, you will abide in My love and live on in it, just as I have obeyed My Father's commandments and live on in His love."

“I have told you these things, that My joy and delight may be in you, and that your joy and gladness may be of full measure and complete and overflowing. This is My commandment: That you love one another, as I have loved you.”

“So resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Submit yourselves to God! Co-labor with Me, God’s Word, and the Spirit of Truth will help you to wash your hands, for you are sinners, whose hearts need to be purified, for you are double-minded.”

“Humble yourselves before God, and He will lift you up. For your Husband has come to you to persuade you to return. Yes, return to your Fortress, O prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you. For God’s Word is the strength of His people, a Fortress of salvation for His anointed ones.”

“I am the Gate, whoever enters through Me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief

comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full.”

Luke 10:18-19, John 8:31-32 AMP, John 15:10-12 AMP James 4:7-10, Judg. 19:3, Zech. 9:12, Ps. 28:8, John 10:9-10



Jesus is the center of everything drawing the nations to Himself. And when a conscience is stricken and the Lord is listened to things will start to be sorted out, one detail at a time, from the oldest to the current ones, until you are left alone standing before Jesus (John 8:9 AMP) acknowledging His words of Truth:

You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more room for God

You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Then you can be embraced by the One most dear to you.

You're blessed when you're content with just who you are – no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought.

You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God's Word. He's food and drink is the best meal you'll ever eat.

You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being "Care-full," you find yourselves cared for.

You're blessed when you get your inside world – your mind and heart – put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

Consider yourself blessed if someone puts you down for your faith in Jesus because it means Truth is too close causing them to feel discomfort. So be glad because all heaven is applauding for God's children have always gotten into this kind of trouble (Matt. 5:1-12 Message).



There will be many things you learn while on this spiritual journey; however, the main mast is the cross of Jesus. Everything in your life is meant to be united to the rigging of that mast. How many crossroads

have been encountered, and God's gift of saving grace ignored, the inheritance He bequeathed untended.

So many imagined realities with rules and details for living life not understanding they are merely casting shadows before the reality (certainty, truth, life) that is to come; the substance, the reality (inevitability, authenticity, existence) is found in Christ Himself (Col. 2:17).

One day every person will face this reality (fact, event, Being) finally understanding all they have lost for not making the decision to be united in faith and in life to what symbolizes God's eternal love - the cross of Jesus.



This is how we know what Love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us (1 John 3:16). So come with your head lifted high looking to God and His Word and the Spirit of Truth, for they will help you navigate life's journey as you come into agreement, into covenant with your Husband, your Creator.



And of this you can be certain, no disgrace will come to those who learn to trust the Lord as their God; for the Word of Life sets the course in the right direction, and step-by-step He'll guide you.

Yes, hand-in-hand the Word of God will lead you down the path of Truth so every road you travel brings you closer to His Father. Doubts will be relieved by confident assurance; conviction will work to remove all disbelief; as Love works to cast out fear so questioning "Are You my Savior?" can be eternally confirmed.

Being earnest about this quest assures the best plans of God will come to fruition as Truth and Love and Faithfulness are discovered (Prov. 14:22). As you walk with God's Word, it will become evident that from the beginning, Genesis to Revelation, the Lord has worked to school mankind in the ways and the will of God.

The milestones have been marked to reveal God's love and mercy and compassion; however, the ancient paths that lead to the good way in which to walk (Jer. 6:16) have so often been abandoned. For many come near to God with their mouth and honor Him with their lips, but their heart is far from Him. Their worship of Him is made up of rules taught by men (Isa. 29:13).



However, when attention is given, the voice of the High and Lofty One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, will be heard:

“Build up, build up, prepare the road! Remove the obstacles! Move them from the way of My people. I live in a high and holy place, but ALSO with those who are contrite and lowly in spirit to revive their heart and spirit.”

“Though I have seen their sinful, greedy and willful ways, I will heal them. I will guide them and restore comfort to them, creating praise on the lips of those who mourn.”

“Peace, peace, to those far and near, I will heal them. But the wicked like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, wave after wave of mire and mud is cast up. Sadly, there is no peace for those who choose to follow their wicked ways.”

“I am going to attract them; I will lead them into the desert, and speak tenderly to them. I will make the Valley of Trouble a door of hope.

Isa. 57:14-21, Hos. 2:14-15 NCV,



Yes, the voice of God's Word is calling out:

“In the desert prepare the way for the Lord.”

This image of a desert may appear bleak because the atmosphere is dry and arid, while the nights are chilled by darkness. This is a picture of life without a relationship with God.

For sure, life can be bleak there's no denying that fact. However, our fallen prideful nature is always looking to accommodate self no matter the circumstance. So I point to Jesus, the Word of God, the only Source of power that fuels choices that are not naturally made, when there is willingness and desire to experience miraculous transformations. How much have you endured because the father of deception, Satan, has killed, stolen and destroyed?

Only the Word of Truth works to strengthen our feeble arms and weak knees. He makes level paths for our feet so the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed (Heb. 12:12-13). In every circumstance, even desert ones there is time, opportunity and invitation for deep reflection into spiritual reality (Life, Substance, Truth).



In this fallen world it is a natural occurrence to be stripped of what matters; BUT GOD, He works for change to occur when there is a willingness to do as instructed (i.e.) Matthew 7:7 Ask, Seek and Knock. For discoveries will be made regarding what truly is important (essential, meaningful, matters), and though the circumstance may not change, the way we think and feel and respond most definitely will.

The voice of Isaiah can still be heard calling out, “Make straight in the wilderness a highway for God,” (Isa. 40:3b). The wilderness is a place where intense experiences occur. Financial, material, physical even emotional burdens may be pressing making it a struggle simply to survive from day to day.

Though the flesh cries out for relief when there is need for food and water; when isolation grows unbearable; when danger is lurking, these are times when waiting on the Lord is the only answer, for God’s Word brings promise (divine, assurance) of blessings that are eternal (Eph. 3:6 NLT).

But, waiting on the Lord requires faith, for faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Heb. 11:1). This is what Paul wrote in first Timothy 1:15, “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst.”



Jesus was born to die!

Jesus knew He was entering the world to be the final and ultimate sacrifice for sin. His body had been divinely prepared by God specifically for that purpose. Jesus was going to die for the sins of the world, and He knew it. Moreover, He was doing it willingly. That was the whole point of the incarnation.

The important issue of when the birth of Christ is celebrated, Christmas, is not so much that Jesus came, but why He came. There was no salvation in His birth. Nor did the sinless way He lived His life have any redemptive force of its own.

His example, as flawless as it was, could not rescue people from their sins. Even His teaching, the greatest Truth ever revealed, could not

save us from our sins. There was a price to be paid for our sins. Someone had to die. Only Jesus could do it.



Jesus came to earth, of course, to reveal God to mankind. He came to teach Truth. He came to fulfill the Law. He came to offer His kingdom. He came to show us how to live. He came to reveal God's love. He came to bring peace. He came to heal the sick. He came to minister to the needy.

But all those reasons are incidental to His ultimate purpose. He could have done them all without being born as a human. He could have simply appeared – like the angel of the Lord often did in the Old Testament – and accomplished everything in the list above, without actually becoming a man. But, He had one more reason for coming He came to die.

Here's a side to the Christmas story that isn't often told. Those soft little hands, fashioned by Holy Spirit in Mary's womb, were made so that nails might be driven through them. Those baby feet pink and unable yet to walk, would one day stagger up a dusty hill to be nailed to a cross. That sweet infant's head with sparkling eyes and eager

mouth was formed so that someday men might force a crown of thorns on it. That tender body, warm and soft, wrapped in swaddling clothes, would one day be ripped open by a spear.

Jesus was born to die.



Don't think I'm trying to put a damper on your Christmas spirit. Far from it – for Jesus' death, though devised and carried out by men with evil intentions, was in no sense a tragedy. In fact, it represents the greatest victory over evil anyone has ever accomplished.

It's more than appropriate to commemorate the birth of Christ. But, don't make the mistake of leaving Him as a baby in a manger. Keep in mind that His birth was just the first step in God's glorious plan of redemption. Remember, that it's the triumph of Christ's sacrificial death that gives meaning to His humble birth. You can't truly celebrate one without the other.

Written by John MacArthur and posted on the Covenant Life Church – Cov Life Blog - <https://covenantlifetampa.org/2017/12/1-timothy-115-jesus-was-born-to-die/>



In first Corinthians 15:16-22 Paul wrote: If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. And, if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.

But, in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead.

So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another Man. Just as everyone dies because we belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. Jesus said:

“I am the Resurrection and the Life. Anyone who believes in Me will live, even after dying. Do you believe this?”

“I tell you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But, I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him Who, after the killing of



the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him.”

John 11:25-26 NLT, Luke 12:4-5



Through faith in the Glad Tidings (the Gospel), God’s gift of free grace to minister is bestowed by the working in all its effectiveness of His power (Eph. 3:7 AMP).

Inarguably, God has given His Word so fresh manna and living water could fill these jars of clay with His treasures. So peace and joy and contentment cannot only accompany us while in the midst of hardship and trouble, but give us the strength and courage to endure, to look past circumstance so Good can be experienced as we overcome our natural tendencies to curse or yell or strike out...

We must not just read God’s Word, but profess what the Lord has accomplished by our actions. For then we give Jesus time and opportunity to work in our behalf and to co-labor with us. It is amazing but that is exactly what the Lord wants to do co-labor with us. He extends this ever-open invitation:

“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, and you will find rest for

your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Matt. 11:28-30



Jesus, Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!

Therefore, God exalted Him to the highest place, and gave Him the name that is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:6-11).

Yes, that appointed time came when Christ, the Messiah, appeared as a High Priest of the better things that have come and are to come. Then, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with human hands, for is not a part of this material creation.

Jesus went once for all into the Holy of Holies in heaven, not by virtue of the blood of goats and calves by which to make reconciliation between God and man, but His own blood, having found and secured a complete redemption, an everlasting release for us (Heb. 9:11-12 AMP).



Don't you realize that this is not the way to live providing fuel for more wrong, more injustice, bringing more hurt? Unjust people who don't care about God will not be joining in His kingdom. Those who use and abuse each other, use and abuse sex, use and abuse the earth and everything in it, don't qualify as citizens in God's kingdom.

A number of you know from experience what I'm talking about (I Cor. 6:9-11 Message). But those who come to Jesus are washed clean, purified by a complete atonement for sin, and made free from the guilt of sin. We were consecrated, set apart and hallowed; justified,

pronounced righteous by trusting in the name of the Lord Christ Jesus and in the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6:11 AMP).

We can always give our praise and thanksgiving to God because of His grace given us in Christ Jesus. In Him we have been enriched in every way – in all our speaking and in all our knowledge – because the testimony about Christ was confirmed in us.

Therefore, we do not lack any spiritual gift as we eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, Who has called us into fellowship with His Son Jesus our Lord, is faithful (1 Cor. 1:4-9).



Jesus testifies to just how faithful God is. He was obedient even to death on the cross. The sacred writings contain preliminary reports by the prophets on God's Son. His descent from David roots Him in history; His unique identity as Son of God was shown by the Spirit when Jesus was raised from the dead, setting Him apart as the Messiah, our Master.

Through Him we received both the generous gift of His life and the urgent task of passing it on to others who receive it by entering into obedient trust in Christ Jesus (Rom. 1:2-5 Message).

Our attitude should be the same as that of the Lord (Phil. 2:5). We must live in a way that gives meaning to our salvation, with fear and respect for God.



Yes, it is God Who is working in us. He helps us want to do what pleases Him, and He gives us the power to do it (Phi. 2:12-13 ERV). Paul explained, I have been crucified with Christ (in Him I have shared His crucifixion); believing it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the body I live by faith (by adherence to and reliance on and complete trust in) the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Therefore, I don't treat God's gracious gift as something of minor importance and defeat its very purpose. I do not set aside and invalidate and frustrate and nullify the grace of God. If justification, (righteousness, acquittal from guilt), comes through observing the

ritual of the Law, then Christ died groundlessly and to no purpose and in vain (Gal. 2:20-21 AMP).

BUT GOD, He enables us to stand firm for Christ. He identifies us as His own by placing Holy Spirit in our heart as the first installment that guarantees everything He has promised us (2 Cor. 1:21-22 NLT).



May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully; for then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Now all glory to God, Who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to Him in the Church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! (Eph. 8:19-21 NLT).

Isaiah told of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which He is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us (so gratitude can fill our heart), for the many good things He has done.

The Lord said:

“Surely they are My people.”

And so, He became our Savior. In all our distress He too is distressed, and He saved us. In His love and mercy He redeemed us (Isa. 63:7-9).



So wait on the Lord, Jehovah Uzzi - The Lord My Strength. For with Jehovah Moshiekh - The Lord Your Savior - is kindness. And abundant is the redemption of Jehovah Goelekh - The Lord Thy Redeemer. Yes, Jehovah Shalom - The Lord Our Peace - redeems God's people from all their iniquities (Ps. 130:7-8 YLT).

So give thanks to the Lord Almighty - Jehovah Izuz Wegibbor, The Lord Strong and Mighty. For Jehovah Roi, the Lord My Shepherd, is good; His love endures forever (Jer. 33:11). This is what Jehovah Bore, the Lord Creator, says, He Who made the earth, the Lord Who formed it and established it - the Lord is His name:

“Call to Me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know, For when you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God, you live in error.”

“Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the Lord. There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off. For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

“Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart. I will be found by you.”

Jer. 33:2-3. Matt. 22:29, Prov. 23:17-18, Jer. 29:11-14



Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

Therefore Rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows his time is short (Rev. 12:10-12).



The Lord longs to be gracious to you; He rises to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for Him (Isa. 30:18)! So rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice (Phil. 4 NIV)!



Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, revel in Him! Make it clear as you can to all you meet that you're on their side, working with them and not against them. Help them see the Lord is about to arrive. He could show up any minute!

Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises and thanksgiving shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life (Phil. 4:4-7 Message).

If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep

your thoughts and your heart quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:7 TLB).

Summing it all up friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things that are true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious – the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse.

Put into practice what you are learning, what you have heard and seen and realized. Do that, and God, Who makes everything work together, will work you into His most excellent harmonies (Phil. 4:8-9 Message).



So rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name (Ps. 97:12). For the Lord is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made.

All You have made, Lord, will praise you. They will tell of the glory of Your kingdom, and speak of Your might, so that all people may know of Your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of Your kingdom.

Your Kingdom, Lord, is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is faithful to all His promises and loving toward all He has made. The Lord upholds all those who fall, and lifts up all who are bowed down.

The eyes of all look to You, O Lord, and You give them their food at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all His ways and loving toward all He has made.

The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in Truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear Him; He hears their cry and saves them. The Lord watches over all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy. My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise His holy name forever and ever (Ps. 145:9-21).

Yes, I will thank the Lord and confide in Him forever because He has done it (delivered me and kept me safe). I will wait on, hope in and expect in His name, for it is good (Ps. 52:9 AMP).

So don't be deceived beloved. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, Who does

not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through His Word of Truth (James 1:16-18).



So wait on the Lord, and keep His way, (let His words fill you with gratitude and praise). For the Lord shall exalt you to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, you shall see it (Ps. 37:34). Yes, wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord (Ps. 27:14 KJV).

Don't say, "I will avenge this evil!" Wait on the Lord, and He will rescue you (Prov. 20:22 ASB). For those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint (Isa. 40:31 NKJV).



So when your soul is distracted, bogged down by thoughts and feelings that provoke some sort of action, a sure way to move through all the self-rhetoric so the still small voice of Hope, Deliverance and Renewal can be heard, "Serve the Lord."

Not a natural response, but a sure remedy that works to redirect our thoughts, and fill us with gratitude for serving. The Son of Man explained He did not come to be self-serving, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

Jesus knew the cross was the reason He shared in this life of flesh and bone. The Living One, Who died and says:

“Behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades,”

Rev. 1:18

The Word of God lives to conquer sin and shame and death so we can reap what we have not sown (Luke 19:21).

Jesus sowed righteousness so we could reap the fruit of God’s unfailing love. Jesus broke up the unplowed ground of evil, of sin and death so He could shower righteousness on us (Hos. 10:12).

Like a farmer, God sows His Word so Holy Spirit can remove the foreskin from the heart (Rom. 2:29) of stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears (Acts 7:51).

God knew how stubborn and hardheaded we could be; with neck's as unbending as iron and foreheads as hard as bronze (Isa. 48:4 TLB) always resisting the convictions of Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51b), Who speaks deep into our heart to remind us of everything the Word of God has said (John 14:26).



However, God's Word is unable to reach certain hearts, for as soon as it is heard Satan comes along and removes it. There are rocky places, like a heart that is calloused and hard, where God's Word lasts but a short while and cannot become rooted. When trouble or persecution comes because of the Word of God, these people quickly fall away.

And when the Word is sown among thorns the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desire for other things come in and choke it, causing God's Message to be unfruitful. However, there are those who recognize how amazing the Good News of the Gospels.

They accept the Lord, and put God's Word in their heart to take care of it and to keep it (mark, observe and save it) for His pleasure as He did for God's people in a garden called Gethsemane. Just as an olive is

pressed so oil will flow, Jesus was crushed for our iniquities (Isa. 53:5) so the oil of anointing, Holy Spirit, could flow from within us.

The Word of God, Christ Jesus, remains the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8):

“If you eat the fruit of evil you will surely die. So, don’t judge, and you will not be judged. Don’t condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive! And you will be forgiven. Give! And it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

Gen. 2:15-16, Luke 6:37-38



You may find yourself standing at the crossroads looking: Remember, there are only ever two choices no matter how convoluted the circumstances. Ask for the ancient paths. Ask where the good way is. Where guardrails of Love and Self-Control will guide you into Peace and Joy as Holy Spirit cultivates His fruit: patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness (Gal 5:22), that you may find rest for your soul (Jer. 6:16).

Money cannot purchase what is freely received through faith in Jesus. The pride of life, the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh draw a heart away from God because these do not come from Him; instead, from the world (1 John 2:16); from the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is at work in the soul of the disobedient (willful, defiant, unmanageable).

Faith in the Word of Truth helps you to draw near to God not just with your mouth giving honor to Him with your lips, but with your heart (Matt. 15:8). Believing, receiving and experiencing the Word of God taking the lead in your fight against evil.



If you are interested in knowing and discovering Truth, the Word of God must not only be active in our thought life, but given predominance in the decisions that we make. When God's Word and our faith are co-laboring together different mental images will emerge. We see ourselves as God does, more than conquerors! Rom. 8:37

Yes, thanks be to God! He loves us and has given us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, His Word (1 Cor. 15:57). How great is the love



the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called His children.  
And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1).

The reality test on whether or not we love God's children is this: Do we love God? Do we keep His commands? The proof that we love God comes when we keep His commandments, and they are not at all troublesome.

The power that brings the world to its knees is our faith, for every God-begotten person conquers the world's ways. The person who wins out over the world's ways is simply the one who believes Jesus is the Son of God (1 John 5:2-5 Message).

For then, Elisha's prayer can be answered, "O Lord, open eyes so they may see. That they may know, and not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." There are horses and chariots of fire all around (2 Kings 6:17) those, who choose to believe and serve the Lord.



When we have faith in Jesus, the presence of fear may be sensed, but we can be loosed from any stronghold it may have on us as we come

into agreement with God's Word. You may not see, but your heart will come to know Jehovah Shammah, The Lord is There, and with you; So declare: I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? For Jehovah Maginnenu, The Lord Our Defense, is with me; Elohim Ozer Li is God My Helper; therefore, I will look in triumph on my enemies (Ps. 118:6-7).

Faith not only helps us to believe, faith fills us with confident assurance Jehovah Gibbor Milchamah, The Lord Mighty in Battle, is with us like a mighty warrior; so our persecutors will stumble and not prevail (Jer. 20:11).

El Emunah, The Faithful God, is sounding the trumpet call, and will go out against His enemies like a whirlwind off the desert. El Nekamoth, God that Avengeth, will defend His people, and they will subdue their enemies, treading them beneath their feet. They will taste victory and shout with triumph. For Jehovah Goelekh, The Lord Thy Redeemer, our God saves His people, for Jehovah Roi, The Lord My Shepherd, is caring for His sheep (Zech. 9-14 TLB).



Yes, Jehovah Keren-yishi, The Lord the Horn of My Salvation, rescues, and God's people become as jewels of a crown, catching all the colors of the sun (Zech. 9:16 Message). So do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom (Luke 12:32), for His banner over you is love (SS 2:4).

How great the goodness of Eloheinu Olam, Our Everlasting God; how amazingly beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News (Rom.10:15). For God's Word makes His people flourish and thrive (NKJV). By the Blood of Christ, God's radiant New Covenant, proclaims an emphatic Testament to Love, Truth and eternal Commitment (Zech. 9:16).



God protectively cares for His faithful friends, step by step; however, He leaves the wicked (destructive, cruel, unscrupulous) to stumble in the dark. That is until understanding dawns - No one makes it in this life by sheer muscle (1 Sam. 2:9 Message). No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 3:11).

God has given us His Word as a sure foundation to sustain us, to establish our faith in Him, so we can bear up against the difficulties we face and stand steadfast and firm because our faith rests securely in the One Who says:

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they will not overwhelm you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burnt or scorched, nor will the flame kindle upon you; for I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”

Isa. 43:2-3 AMP



God has given us His Word so our lives could be filled with Light as we see and understand God and His beauty, in the face of Jesus (2 Cor. 4:6 Message). Sadly, the prince of this world works to fill our thoughts, our feelings, our emotions and our beliefs with all the murky darkness of negativity.

Because of one man’s trespass, his false step released condemnation (belittlement, derision, punishment) onto all mankind; however, one

Man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and right standing with God, new life for everyone (Rom. 5:18 AMP).

We just need to be in agreement with what is Good. For what good will it be for someone if they gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can a person give in exchange for their soul? The Son of Man is going to come in His Father's glory with His angels, and then He will reward each person according to what they have done (Matt. 16:26-27).



I'm sure there are those who think they will escape God's judgment (Rom. 2:3). They close their eyes to the Truth, and do not choose to reverence and trust the Lord. They turned their back on Him, spurning His advice. This is why they must eat the bitter fruit of having their own way, and experience the full terrors of the pathway they have chosen. For they turned away from the Lord, Who is the Truth, the Way and the Life (John 14:6) - to death; their own complacency (ego, conceit, self-importance) will kill them. Fools! (Prov. 1:29-32 TLB).

They show contempt for the riches of God's kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that His kindness leads a person toward

repentance (Rom. 2:4). But God, for all who heed His Word shall live in peace and safety, unafraid (Prov. 1:29-33 TLB), walking in the awe and wonder that is the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31 ASV).



I realize that on this earth as it is – the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor satisfaction to the wise, nor riches to the smart, nor grace to the learned. Sooner or later bad luck hits us all. No one can predict misfortune. Like fish caught in a cruel net or birds in a trap. So men and women are caught by accidents evil and sudden (Eccl. 9:11-12 Message).

Yes, accidents happen, but what about the on purposes. Rom. 16:20a tells us, the God of peace will soon crush Satan under our feet. What about those who deliberately fill our pathways with terrors? It isn't someone with horns and a pitchfork that causes us to stay in after dark or look under the bed for the boogeyman, it's those with evil running through their veins.

Sadly, what is true we all have evil running through our veins. As a result, not only is our speech derogatory and insulting, we behave in aggressive and abusive ways. The source of all evil may be found to be

Satan, but the face of evil – fear, rage, hatred, bigotry, fetish, murder....can be seen in the reflection of a mirror. Only God knows what causes a person to think and behave the way they do.



We have each made bad decisions, and been forced to face the consequences. But, when it comes to coping (managing, faring, getting by) struggles may arise. James wrote about temptation saying, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.”

God is never tempted to do wrong, and He never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful action. And, when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death (James 1:13-15 NLT).

Well, we have all been tempted, we have all sinned and sadly, we have been affected by the wrong doings of another. If you have been mistreated by someone, I am sorry that ever happened to you. There are many things that occur that we don't deserve. I shared James 1:13 because we just have to turn on our TV sets to see sin has been allowed to grow. There is so much death being reported.

The purpose and goal of evil is to kill, steal and destroy (John 10:10). What about the damage it does within us? My thirteen year old granddaughter has been mistreated and bullied, and it has affected the way she thinks and feels about herself. Thankfully she still listens, but she is definitely not willing to receive what is said about God. So many times I have heard "I'm glad that is working for you."



Since the first mistake in judgment, which was made in the Garden of Eden, the same reactions occur: fear of punishment, shame, covering up guilt, anger, blame shifting, accusation attempts to deflect and deny and minimize accountability. Yes, we are deceived by others, but we are also deceiving ourselves.

DENIAL - refusal to admit the truth or reality of something (such as a statement or change). Terrence T. Gorski developed the following Patterns of Denial:

1. AVOIDANCE
2. ABSOLUTE DENIAL - refusing to admit
3. MINIMIZING - problem is less serious
4. RATIONALIZING - finding ways to justify problem



5. BLAMING – refusing to accept responsibility
6. COMPARING – other people have same problem
7. MANIPULATING – forcing others to act as rescuers to solve your problem
8. SCARING SELF INTO RECOVERY – fear of consequences
9. COMPLIANCE – say anything – leave me alone
10. FLIGHT INTO HEALTH – feeling better means better
11. STRATEGIC HOPELESSNESS – nothing works don't try
12. DEMOCRATIC DISEASE STATE – right to do as I please – live my life



I'm not going to defend God, and I sure don't have to prove the existence of evil; the greatest gift I can offer is the presentation of God's Word of Truth. Truth will free us from those self-imposed restraints we choose as protective and defensive measures.

Defense mechanisms are unconscious psychological responses that protect people from feelings of anxiety, threats to self-esteem and things that they don't want to think about or deal with.

## 10 Key Defense Mechanisms

## 1. Displacement

Have you ever had a really bad day at work and then gone home, and taken out your frustration with family and friends? Then you have experienced the ego defense mechanism of displacement.

Displacement involves taking out our frustrations, feelings, and impulses on people or objects that are less threatening

## 2. Denial

Denial is probably one of the best-known defense mechanisms, used often to describe situations in which people seem unable to face reality or admit an obvious truth.

Denial can involve a flat-out rejection of the existence of a fact or reality. In other cases, it might involve admitting that something is true, but minimizing its importance. Sometimes people will accept reality and the seriousness of the fact, but they will deny their own responsibility and instead blame other people or other outside forces.

## 3. Repression and Suppression

Repression acts to keep information out of conscious awareness. However, these memories don't just disappear; they continue to influence our behavior. For example, a person who has repressed memories of abuse suffered as a child may later have difficulty forming relationships.

Sometimes you might do this consciously by forcing the unwanted information out of your awareness, which is known as suppression. In most cases, however, this removal of anxiety-provoking memories from awareness is believed to occur unconsciously

#### 4. **Sublimation**

Sublimation is a defense mechanism that allows us to act out unacceptable impulses by converting these behaviors into a more acceptable form. For example, a person experiencing extreme anger might take up kick-boxing as a means of venting frustration.

#### 5. **Projection**

Projection is a defense mechanism that involves taking your own unacceptable qualities or feelings and ascribing them to other

people. For example, if you have a dislike for someone, you might instead believe that they do not like you.

Projection works by allowing the expression of the desire or impulse, but in a way that the ego cannot recognize, therefore reducing anxiety.

## 6. **Intellectualization**

Intellectualization works to reduce anxiety by thinking about events in a cold, clinical way.

This defense mechanism allows us to avoid thinking about the stressful, emotional aspect of the situation and instead focus only on the intellectual component. For example, a person who has just been diagnosed with a terminal illness might focus on learning everything about the disease in order to avoid distress and remain distant from the reality of the situation and their feelings about it.

## 7. **Rationalization**

Rationalization is a defense mechanism that involves explaining

an unacceptable behavior or feeling in a rational or logical manner, avoiding the true reasons for the behavior.

For example, a person who is turned down for a date might rationalize the situation by saying they were not attracted to the other person anyway. A student might blame a poor exam score on the instructor rather than their own lack of preparation.

Rationalization not only prevents anxiety, but it may also protect self-esteem and self-concept. When trying to explain success or failure, people tend to attribute achievement to their own qualities and skills while failures are blamed on other people or outside forces.

## 8. **Regression**

When confronted by stressful events, people sometimes abandon coping strategies and revert to patterns of behavior used earlier in development. For example, an individual fixated at the oral stage might begin eating or smoking excessively, or might become very verbally aggressive. A fixation at the anal stage might result in excessive tidiness or messiness.

## 9. Reaction Formation

Reaction formation reduces anxiety by taking up the opposite feeling, impulse or behavior. An example of reaction formation would be treating someone you strongly dislike in an excessively friendly manner in order to hide your true feelings.

10. Researchers other than Freud have continued to describe other methods of reducing anxiety. Some of these defense mechanisms include:

- **Acting Out**: Coping with stress by engaging in actions rather than acknowledging and bearing certain feelings. For example, instead of telling someone you are angry with them, you might yell at them or throw something against the wall.
- **Aim Inhibition**: Accepting a modified form of their original goal. An example of this would be becoming a high school basketball coach rather than a professional athlete.
- **Altruism**: Satisfying internal needs through helping others. For example, someone recovering from a substance might volunteer to help other people in recovery as a way to deal with drug cravings.
- **Avoidance**: Refusing to deal with or encounter unpleasant objects or situations. For example, rather than discuss a

problem with someone, you might simply start avoiding them altogether so you don't have to deal with the issue.

- **Compensation**: Overachieving in one area to compensate for failures in another. For example, someone who feels insecure academically might compensate by excelling in athletics.
- **Dissociation**: Becoming separated or removed from your experience. When dealing with something stressful, for example, you might mentally and emotionally disengage yourself from the situation.
- **Fantasy**: Avoiding reality by retreating to a safe place within your mind. When something in your life is causing anxiety, you might retreat to your inner world where the cause of the stress cannot harm you.
- **Humor**: Pointing out the funny or ironic aspects of a situation. An example of this might be cracking a joke in a stressful or traumatic situation.
- **Passive-Aggression**: Indirectly expressing anger instead of telling someone that you are upset, for example, you might give them the silent treatment.
- **Undoing**: Trying to make up for what you feel are inappropriate thoughts, feelings or behaviors. For example, if

you hurt someone's feelings, you might offer to do something nice for them in order to assuage your anxiety or guilt.



While defense mechanisms are often thought of as negative reactions, we all need them to temporarily ease stress and protect self-esteem during critical times, allowing us to focus on what is necessary at the moment.

Although we may knowingly use coping mechanisms to manage anxiety, in many cases, these defenses work unconsciously to distort reality.

The greatest problems arise when defense mechanisms are overused in order to avoid dealing with problems. In psychoanalytic therapy, the goal may be to help a person uncover these unconscious defense mechanisms and find better, healthier ways of coping with anxiety and distress.

Defense mechanisms can serve a helpful role by protecting your ego from stressing and providing a healthy outlet. In other instances, they



might hold you back from facing reality and can act as a form of self-deception.

Information taken from the article, “20 Common Defense Mechanisms Used for Anxiety,” written by Kendra Cherry, medically reviewed by Steven Gans MD, and posted on the website Verywell Mind.

<https://www.verywellmind.com/defense-mechanisms-2795960>



Awareness is key to our peace of mind, to our inner joy and happiness. These are things that money cannot buy, and no one can take from us. These are what God wants us to have in our possession. But it isn't just peace it's calmness, serenity, comfort, ease, amity, sweetness and light, and contentment.

It isn't just joy it's delight, enjoyment, pleasure, triumph, heaven, rapture, glory and contentment.

It isn't just happiness it's cheer, gladness, appropriateness, relevance, connection, validity, comfort and contentment.



Contentment is being satisfied, pleased, grateful, at peace. I have a little plaque that reminds me that Gratitude makes what I have enough. There was a time if someone would have asked me what I had enough of it sure would not have been Gratitude.

Receiving awareness of God helped me to truly understand His thoughts are nothing like my thoughts. And His ways are far beyond anything I could imagine (Isa. 55:8 NLT).

Doing what seems natural, those normal things we do keep us anxiety-laden, dissatisfied, discontent. There's always something else that's wanted. There's always a desire that has to be satisfied.

Mistakes are made, and we berate ourselves. Consciously and unconsciously we work to hide our shame, our guilt, our imperfections, our fears. And what does all this effort accomplish – reality is distorted, we deceive ourselves so our flaws, our character deficits are not easily discerned or readily admitted.

Who but God would ask us:

“Why do you keep looking at the speck in someone else’s eye, and pay no attention to the beam that’s in your own?”

Matt. 7:3 Goodspeed

We want to conceal, but God removes layer – be real – after layer – be truthful – after layer – look in the mirror.



Yes, at times it’s difficult to look at certain things about ourselves. Isn’t this the reason why we hide things from ourselves, from others, from God? Why? Fear! What power it has over us. Fear in a dangerous situation is normal. Phobias, however, go beyond normal fear and are irrational. The fear could be animal, object, place or situation. Many times the source of the fear poses no actual threat or danger, but the person is overwhelmed by fear nonetheless.

People with specific phobias will do everything they can to avoid what is causing their fear, even when doing so greatly interferes with their daily lives. When faced with phobia, they will experience intense anxiety, which is sometimes debilitating. Information taken from:

<https://www.therecoveryvillage.com/mental-health/phobias/list-of-phobias/>



You should know, the Kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power (1 Cor. 4:20). He does not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of calm and well-balanced mind (2 Tim. 1:7 AMP).

God gives us grace. More and more grace, the power of Holy Spirit to strengthen us so we can fully meet and stand against all such evil (James 4:6 AMP), which torments us.

How much time have we spent mulling over thoughts and feelings to not only be overwhelmed by emotion, but consumed by fear or anger or hatred...How much more shame and guilt and regret can a person carry? Like any other parent, God watches as we make self-destructive choices.

He warns us, be careful:

“This power of choice, this permission and liberty to do as you please, which is yours, does not somehow become a hindrance that can cause you to stumble or even give you an

impulse to sin. Keep in mind, the spirit may indeed be willing, but the flesh is weak.”

1 Cor. 8:9 AMP, Mark 14:38 AMP



Start mulling over God’s thoughts and feelings. Come close to God, and He will come close to you (James 4:8 AMP). Be subject to God (James 4:7a AMP). Whatever you do, do it all for His glory (1 Cor. 10:31). God doesn’t need us to do all things for His glory, we need to work at whatever we are doing for the Lord, not for ourselves or anyone else (Col. 3:23).

Why? This is how we will become aware of those unconscious things we do that actually work to frustrate and impede our progress. When we work at whatever we do with all our heart for the Lord, then God can reveal the motives and motivations that cause us to keep trying. And trying sets us up for failure. The key is to just do it!

Resist the devil, stand firm against him, and he will flee from you (James 4:7b AMP). Jesus said:

“When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the One I claim to be, and that I do nothing

on My own. The One Who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do what pleases Him.”

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.”

John 8:28-29, John 15:5



So lift up holy hands in prayer without anger and disputing, hands free from sin and resentment (1 Tim. 2:8). Lift up your soul to the Lord with trust in God. For no one whose hope is in the Lord will ever be put to shame. The Lord will show you His ways and teach you His paths. He will guide you in His Truth and teach you, for He is God our Savior (Ps. 25:1-4).

So whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (Col. 3:16-17). Yes, thank God because of the grace which He bestows on us in Christ Jesus, so that in Him in every respect you are being enriched, in full power.

God does not want us to consciously fall behind or lack in any special spiritual endowment – which we receive by the power of divine grace, and operates in our soul by Holy Spirit.

God wants to establish you in faith and hope and love. To keep you steadfast, give you strength and guarantee your vindication; He will be your warrant against all accusation or indictment so that you will be guiltless and irreproachable in the day of our Lord Christ Jesus.

God is faithful – reliable, trustworthy, and therefore ever true to His promise, and He can be depended on; by Him we are called into companionship and participation with His Son, Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:4-9 AMP). It's as we co-labor in a relationship with the Lord that we gain freedom, for God always offers us the Truth.

God will do everything He can to help us gain power and authority over whatever is working against us.

There are so many things that we do overeat, gamble, shop, work, avoid, mistrust, hate, lie...that cause ourselves and others pain and sorrow and regret. It is said that depression is anger turned inward.



God sends us keys that are integral for our overall well-being – peace of mind, emotional balance, physical awareness and spiritual fortitude so instead of striving we can thrive in this fallen world.

There are so many things to discover, this one has great importance: When a thought comes, one when you say to yourself ‘Why didn’t I think of this before,’ then give God the credit. It’s amazing to realize how eager Holy Spirit is to help us, for He knows that our tendencies can become addictive.

And addiction causes us to develop chronic, compulsive needs not only to indulge in a substance, but a behavior or activity that ultimately results in the formation of a habit. Whether viewed as good or bad we are inclined to continue doing things that lead us into what can be deemed irrational, when common sense, good judgment and wisdom are severely lacking.

Why does it seem deception is our first course of action – denial, avoidance, lying, minimizing, excusing, comparing, blaming....Why not seek Truth? How can believing fear be the answer? Fear is the



problem! Fear of failure, fear of the unknown, fear of addressing our weaknesses, fear of discovering we're wrong .

Our strengths can actually be our greatest weaknesses. So would that mean our weaknesses could become our greatest strengths? I say yes! Why?

With God all things are possible!

Matt. 19:26

Nothing is impossible with God!

Luke 1:37



The Apostle Paul experienced God working so much good in him and through him that he knew he could gladly boast about his weaknesses, because then Christ's power would be resting on him. The Lord had assured him:

“My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.”

Of all things to share with us, Paul said, “This is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties; for when I am weak, then I am strong,” 2 Cor. 12:9-10).

There is grace to be found in the words of the wise (Eccl. 10:12 Message). There is strength to be received from those things we consider our weaknesses.



We run from vulnerability. Let’s not allow complacency, pride or self-importance to prevent us from seeking transparency. God’s Word says:

“I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, whoever commits and practices sin is the slave of sin. Now a slave does not remain in a household permanently, forever; the son of the house does remain forever.”

“So, if the Son liberates you, makes you free, then you are really and unquestionably free, for I tell the things which I have seen and learned at My Father’s side. Your actions,

your behaviors reflect what you have heard and learned from your fathers.”

“If God was your Father, you would seek the Truth and the Way and the Life, this is Who I am. No one comes to the Father accept through Me. The words I say are not My own, but are from My Father Who lives in Me, and does His work through Me.”

“If you love Me, and heed Me, God’s Word, I will ask the Father and He will give you another Comforter, Who will never leave you, Holy Spirit. The Spirit is He Who leads you into all Truth.”

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. I tell you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. Surely, in this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world!”

“Everyone who believes in God’s message, that God is in Me and I am in the Father, may also be in Us. I want those the Father has given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see

My glory. The glory the Father gave Me because He loved Me before the creation of the world.”

“Though the world does not know the Father, I know Him, and those who believe know the Father has sent Me. I have made Him known to them, and I will continue to make the Father known in order that the love He has for Me may be in them and that I Myself may be in them.”

“Don’t allow your heart to be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may also be.”

John 8:34-38 AMP, John 14:6-16 TLB, John 14:1, John 16:33, John 17:20-26, John 14:1-4 NKJV



God’s Word always offers us a reason to be hopeful, a reason to change the way we think.     (INSET YOUR NAME HERE)    . My grace, My favor and loving-kindness and mercy, is enough for you, sufficient against any

danger, and enables you to bear up under trouble; for My strength and power are made perfect, fulfilled and completed, and show themselves most effective in your weakness (2 Cor. 12:9 AMP).

So fear not nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage (Josh. 10:25 AMP). The Lord has extended His grace and good favor to you. The hand of God is on you so be brave and of good courage. Let God's Word fill your heart until it is stout and enduring. Yes, wait for and hope for and expect the Lord (Ps. 27:14 AMP).

David wrote Psalms to the Lord. Treated as an outcast by family, God brought that young shepherd boy into the shelter of His own flock. Though the enemy worked to discourage and destroy and kill him, David's faith and hope and love for the Lord grew strong as did His relationship with God. Through mistakes and misjudgments and conflicts God's grace and favor was on him because David set his heart after the Lord.

“The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be  
afraid? When evil men advance against me, when my  
enemies attack me they will stumble and fall. Though an

army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.

One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord, and to seek Him in His temple.

In the day of trouble He will keep me safe in His dwelling; He will hide me in the shelter of His tabernacle and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at His tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the Lord.

Hear my voice when I call, O Lord; be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says, 'Seek His face!' Your face, O Lord, I will seek."

Psalm 27:1-8 AMP



David's heart was changed and his mind transformed as he traveled on a spiritual journey with the Lord. David embraced God's process of change:

ASK – It will be given to you

SEEK – You will find

KNOCK – The door will be opened to you

Everyone who asks receives; those who seek find; and to those who knock, the door will be opened (Matt. 7:7-8). Be as David, embark on a spiritual journey with the Lord. Take steps of faith, even if they are new steps for you. Believe that God exists, that you matter to Him and He has the power to help you recover from the missteps you have taken.

Those times when self-destructive and foolish talk was heeded, causing us to do the same things over and over expecting a different result.

The steps we take to gain knowledge and understanding of God, of self and the world in which we live are meant to lead us into experiencing a Power greater than ourselves. Who renews and restores our sanity, the well-being of our body, soul and spirit. 2 Tim. 1:7 attests to this fact, for God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of Power and of Love and of a Sound Mind.

- By taking this step of faith we come to believe that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity
- As a result of admitting our powerlessness, we can move from chaos to Hope
- Hope comes when we believe that a Power greater than ourselves, can and will restore us to sanity so we stop doing the same things again and again
- God's Spirit of Grace will provide us with power, where we were powerless over our addictions and compulsions, bad habits and behaviors
- God's Word can restore order and meaning to our lives
- God can and will restore us to sanity
- This step of faith that God can and will renew us and restore our sanity is a step out of our darkness and our bad habits and behaviors
- This is a step into healing, and realizing we have choices – we don't have to think it's necessary to control, or feel trapped in our depression or fears
- The greatest realization about this step of faith, is that no matter what we want and need done in our lives, we do not have to do it by ourselves – we don't have to use our will to change ourselves –



we don't have to try so hard – we can turn to the Word of God, Christ Jesus, a Power greater than ourselves and begin to think differently

- We don't have to begin with a complex understanding of God's Word
- We don't have to begin with detailed ideas about what we want accomplished in our lives and how that should happen
- We can start where we are, with whatever amount of belief or disbelief we have
- We start by believing that we can, and will be renewed and restored to sanity
- We open ourselves to the help, loving care, guidance and power of God
- We come to believe we will be healed, and the tools we need to be healed will come into our lives
  
- God is fundamental to our renewal and recovery
- God's Word is fundamental to the --- mental, emotional, cognitive, spiritual --- the soul-level change and healing we are seeking
- We do certain things to change, but essentially, we are changed, and it is a spiritual process

- We can take these steps with our fears, prejudices, needs, and desires, and still find renewal and recovery
- Because of our experiences with people, we may come into this process of renewal and recovery with contorted, fearful and sometimes rigid and shame-based understandings of God
- Because of our experiences with people, we may fear God
- Because we have experienced unpleasant dealings with a person or people, we may have reservations about certain religious denominations
- Some people come seeking renewal and recovery because an experience with someone in a religious system had the same destructive impact on them as a dysfunctional family system
- A relationship with God will help us experientially understand -- we don't have to force or control our recovery, our being renewed
- Coming into relationship with God will help us experientially understand -- we can do our best to work through these steps of faith, and peacefully allow change to happen
- During this step, as we come to truly believe in God being a Power greater than ourselves, we can get through situations around us, within us or both

- This step of faith will help us come to believe that we can develop a sane, gentle and kind approach to ourselves, life and others, no matter what our past and present circumstances
- This step means we no longer have to limit our future by our past
- Our first step of faith - admitting we are powerless over our addictions and compulsive bad habits and behaviors, and that somewhere, somehow our lives became unmanageable
- This is our first step toward success, which begins this process of moving us from denial into acceptance and freedom
- This second step of faith gives us hope and light
- We can become grounded on that new level of believing God can and will restore us to sanity, by doing this we create the space for change to happen - We Stop Empowering the Problem
- Working this step simply means thinking of God, a Power greater than ourselves can and will restore us to sanity - and giving it whatever degree of validity you can at that moment

- Work this step and think about God's Word, a Higher Power restoring you to Sanity when those old, negative thoughts, beliefs and fears begin to control you
- Work this step and think about Holy Spirit, a higher Power just waiting to restore you to sanity with Truth when you get tangled up in emotions of shame, ridicule, self-hatred....



Seeing yourself as God sees you  
Seeing through God's eyes

Steve Merryman wrote: God gives us a new clarity when we come to Him. We begin to see life a whole lot better. We see ourselves. We see our problems. We see our past, our present, our future. Everything gets a little clearer the closer we get to God

In Matthew 6:22 the Message Bible says, "Your eyes are windows into your body. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with Light."

God is not talking about physical eyes and physical light. He's talking about spiritual insight. He's talking about seeing in a new way -

spiritually. The Apostle Paul calls it seeing with the eyes of your heart -seeing from God's perspective.

In fact, Paul prayed this prayer for us in Ephesians, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which God has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints and His incomparable great power for us who believe (Eph. 1:18-19).



It is so important for us to see ourselves as God does. Scripture says, "As a man thinks in his heart so is he," Prov. 23:7. If you see yourself as a loser you're going to lose a lot in life. If you see yourself as a victim, you're going to let other people victimize you during your life. If you see yourself as a failure in life, you're going to fail often. What you see, and what you believe is what you get.

In Matthew 12:35 Jesus said:

"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things."

The way we think determines the way we act. And what we see comes out in our lifestyle. Our beliefs determine our behavior. The problem is a lot of stuff you believe is just false. It's just not true. Often we're acting on false or inaccurate information about ourselves.



Do you remember growing up and going to the fair and in the fun house they had those crazy wavy mirrors? When you look at those funhouse mirrors, as you look at the image of yourself is the image clear or distorted? It's distorted because they're not perfect mirrors, they're imperfect.

When you were growing up the adults around you were the mirrors of your life. They reflected back to you how you began to see yourself. The problem is there are no perfect adults so as a result all the images that you got of yourself, even from people who loved you, were distorted.



We all grow up with an inaccurate picture of ourselves because some adult tells us something as a kid and we think, 'This is an adult,

he/she must know.' And we tend to believe it whether it was right or wrong, said in anger, said in jest, or said in hurtfulness.

We internalize that and put it in our memory bank and we've operated on that false information for years and years. It's not true or accurate but we've allowed it to shape who we believe we are.

We have to start seeing from God's point of view. We have to look with God's lenses because we all grow up with these distorted images that we get from our parents, our teachers, from other people and our problems.

Some of us can remember things that were said to us twenty or thirty years ago. 'You're never going to amount to anything..' and you just filed that away. You've been acting on that information for a long, long time.



Everybody has wounds. Everybody has emotional scars. Everybody! So how do we get rid of them? How do we deal with the past? There is no magic potion. It's the miraculous that occurs when we learn to look from God's perspective.

The Truth in this message is one of the most important truths you can ever learn. If you really grasp what it means to see yourself as God sees you, it will change your life. Jesus said:

“You will know the Truth and the Truth will set you free.”

John 8:34

When we learn to see ourselves the way God sees us it makes all the difference in the world.

We’re going to look at God’s view of you – five things that God says about you because of His grace. If you have accepted Jesus Christ into your life, you’ve accepted the power of God’s grace.



God says I see you very, very differently than the way you see yourself and that’s our prayer, “Lord, that today we’ll not only see You, but that we’ll begin to see ourselves through Your eyes.”

Because of His grace:



## 1. God says “I see you as ACCEPTABLE”

Titus 3:7 CEV says this, “Jesus treated us much better than we deserve. He made us acceptable to God, and He gave us the hope of eternal life.” One of the most hurtful things in life is rejection. When you’re rejected by a parent, a spouse, a boyfriend, a girlfriend, a teacher, when you’re rejected nothing hurts you more.

As a result we spend most of our lives doing everything we can to avoid rejection. We want acceptance more than anything else in life. We want acceptance from our parents, our peers, our neighbors, from people we respect, and sometimes from people we don’t even like.

We buy things we don’t need with money we don’t have to impress people we don’t even know. Why? This need to be accepted is so profound it drives most everything in our lives. It drives the kind of clothes you wear, the kind of car you drive, the kind of house you buy, the career you choose. So many of our decisions in life are really based on this desire for approval; the desire to be accepted, to be recognized, to be significant.

~

People will do the craziest things just to be accepted. Do you remember when you were a kid and somebody would dare you? “I dare you to do...” and you did it because you wanted to be accepted in the crowd. You wanted to be accepted as cool, as hip. ‘Steve’s a really rad dude!’ And you wanted everybody to like you so you did some really stupid stuff – just in order to be accepted.

There’s a myth about acceptance and its’ this: If I can just get everybody to think I’m perfect they will all accept me. So we put on this mask and we walk around like we’ve got it all together, that everything’s in fine condition and we’re really totally balanced, that we are perfect and think everybody’s going to accept us.

Three things: One, nobody believes it. Two, you aren’t ever going to be perfect. Three, even if you were they still wouldn’t accept you.

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Acceptance is not based on how perfect you are. It’s based on the other person’s maturity and love. Scripture tells us Jesus was

perfect and yet it says He was despised and rejected by men. Even Jesus was not accepted by everybody.

The one-minute you get Crowd A happy with you, Crowd B gets upset with you. You just can't please everybody. Even God can't please everybody. Somebody's praying for rain. Somebody else is praying for sunshine. Who's He going to listen to? Only a fool would try to do what even God can't do.

But we want to be accepted and we want to be loved, we want people to see our value. God says I settled this a long time ago. Titus 3:5-7 (LB) tells us, "God saved us, not because we were good enough to be saved, but because of His kindness and grace by washing away our sins. All because of what Jesus Christ our Savior did (not because of what we did but because of what Jesus did) so that He could declare us good in God's eyes."

~

I don't care what you've done. I don't care how many times you've done it or where you've done it. I don't care how many things you've done wrong in your life if you have invited Jesus Christ in your life God says there is goodness in this person.

I don't care how much bad you've done in life, if you've accepted the grace of God, God say:

“I look at you and I say there's goodness in her,  
there's goodness in him.

You are acceptable to Me.”

Not because of your own merit but because of God's grace. You may have accepted God, you may have accepted Christ. But do you realize Christ has accepted you?

Many of you are like me in that even though I have been a Christian for a long time sometimes I forget that God has accepted me. In our minds we are still trying to earn God's favor. We treat Him like an unpleasable parent. “I'm just never good enough for God. I've got to do more. I've got to rush more. I've got to hurry more because I'm never good enough.” God says:

“You are good in My eyes because of Jesus.

You are acceptable to Me.”

God has already accepted you. He won't accept you any more than today or any less than today because it's based on His grace.



You know as a kid you loved to be chosen. It's good to be chosen for an award, to be chosen for recognition. It's fun to be chosen for a promotion. It's fun to be chosen and singled out. You remember when you'd go out at P.E. or recess and they'd have two captains choosing teams and they're choosing the people. If you got chosen first you felt really good. And you were praying, "Oh, God, please don't let me be chosen last," because it hurts to be rejected. We all want to be chosen. We all want to be selected because it gives you a lot of confidence. Being chosen does a lot for your self-esteem.

1 Peter 2:9 (LB) says, "You have been chosen by God Himself." There is not a Higher Authority than that One, folks! God chose you to be His child, to love you and to live with Him for eternity. Not everybody's going to get to do that. You've been chosen. You've accepted Christ into your heart. You've accepted the grace of God. You have been chosen to spend eternity with God and

that's better than anything else in the universe. You talk about something to build your self-esteem!

~

Some of you grew up with unpleasable parents. No matter what you did you just couldn't get their approval. You just knew it. You saw it in your dad's eyes, your mom's eyes and by what they said to you. If you got C's on your report card they expected B's. If you got B's they expected A's. No matter how hard you tried you just couldn't do it right. It always just felt like this little bit of shame, this little bit of put down – never measuring up to my mom or dad's expectations. Today, even still, subconsciously you're trying to earn your parents' approval. "I'm going to prove that I'm worth something!"

~

Some of you, your parents are dead and you're still trying to earn their approval subconsciously. You're working really hard, you're trying to earn it. It drives you. You wonder why you're a workaholic? You're trying to earn that acceptance, that approval. If you had unpleasable parents (or anyone who you tried to please) growing up, let me tell you two very important truths.

One, if you didn't get their approval growing up you are probably never going to get it. Because it's not about you, it's about them. It's their lack of self-worth that's causing them to not accept you. Hurt people hurt people. So it's not really about you. So if they didn't give you acceptance growing up, you're probably not going to get it. You've got to let it go. Just let it go.

The second thing I need to tell you that's even more important is this: You don't need their approval to be happy. You don't need it! You don't need the approval of other people in order to be happy. There are over seven billion people in the world. Is it ok that some people don't like you? I would think so. Especially if it's their hang-up! It's not about you. So let it go. Quit trying to live for the approval of somebody who's never going to give it. Start living for God who says, I already accept you.

This should be your attitude: God likes me and I like me. If you don't like me, what's your problem? If God likes me and He knows everything about me – the good, the bad, and the ugly and still likes me then I'm ok. Stop trying to be a people pleaser. Live for the love and approval of God. Psalm 27:10 says, "Even if my mother and father forsake me the Lord will receive me."



God not only sees you as ACCEPTABLE,

## 2. God sees you as VALUABLE

If you're going to learn to see yourself the way God sees you, you're going to have to see your value. You're not just acceptable. You're worth something. You're worth a lot.

The Bible says this in Luke 12:24 "Look at the birds. They don't need to plant or harvest or put food in barns because God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to Him than any birds." If God takes care of little-bitty birds He's certainly going to take care of you because you are much more valuable.

So let me ask you a question. How much do you think you're worth? I'm not talking about your net worth. I'm talking about your self-worth. Your values have nothing to do with your value, whether you're rich or not. Your net worth and your self-worth are not tied together. If they were you could lose your self-worth in an instant.



~

What is it that creates value? What makes something valuable? Two things: one, who owns it? The owner creates value. If somebody's famous and they own something, something very common can be worth a whole lot. You go to these auctions and they offer stuff that celebrities have had and it's worth a lot. Which is more valuable your tennis shoes or Michael Jordan's tennis shoes? No question. Your car or the Queen of England's car? No question. Who owns it determines its value.

I don't know if you saw this a while back. They arrested some journalists who were trying to smuggle out some of Saddam Hussein's art from some of his palaces. Did you see that art? It was the most goofy looking, stupid stuff... It was like Elvis on velvet, or the dogs playing poker or pool. (If you've got that in your home, I'm sorry!) It was really horrible. But it was Saddam's so people thought it had value.

Whatever your value is depends on whom you belong to. So who do you belong to? 1 John 4:4 (NIV) says, "You belong to God."

It doesn't get any bigger than that. You belong to God! He made you. He created you. He died for you. He saved you. You belong to God. Imagine your worth.

~

A couple of years ago there was a famous Kuwaiti oil sheik whose daughter was kidnapped. He put an announcement over the Internet that said he'd pay any price. She's the daughter of the king.

You are a daughter or son of the King. You are a child of God. And He will pay anything including going to the cross to get you back. Jesus loves you so much that He was willing to die than to live without you." He not only owns you but the second thing that creates value is...what is somebody willing to pay for it?

How much is your house worth? Probably not what you think. It's really worth whatever somebody's willing to pay for it. Let's say I've got a rare baseball card. How much is it worth? It's worth whatever somebody's willing to pay for it. If you've got a piece of art in your house, how much is it worth? Whatever somebody's willing to pay for it.



Look at how much was paid for you. 1 Cor. 7:23 (LB) says, “You have been bought, and paid for by Christ, [with His life.] so you belong to Him.”

The greatest ransom ever paid was for you. God exchanged His own Son for you. Even if you were the only person who ever lived in the world, Jesus Christ still would have come to the earth and died for you. That’s how much value He considers you to be. Jesus did not die for junk. And you are not junk. God says you are acceptable and you are valuable. The cross proves your value.

The people, who told you growing up that you’re worthless, were liars. They were wrong. You are of great value. If God says you’re of value it doesn’t matter what anybody else has said to you.

In Isaiah 43:4 God says:

“You are precious to Me.”

God says in His eyes you are VALUABLE and you are ACCEPTABLE and...

### 3. You are LOVABLE

God sees me not just as acceptable and valuable but lovable, with a deep, deep love. The most famous verse in the Bible talks about this. John 3:16 “For God so loved the world He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

God so loved the world – it doesn't say, God so loved people who are beautiful. God so loved people who are intelligent. It doesn't say, God so loved people who are cool. It doesn't say, God so loved people who are religious. It doesn't say, God so loved people who are perfect – because there aren't any. It says, God so loved the world. That means me, you and everybody that the world considers unlovable. God so loved the world – everybody in it because He made them all. God sent His son Jesus to die for you so He didn't have to live without you. That's the kind of love God has for you.

God says in Isaiah 54:10:

“The mountains and hills may crumble,

but my love for you will never end.”

~

So says the Lord who loves you.

There are two characteristics of God’s love you need to never, ever forget.

1. It is consistent. God is not fickle. He is not erratic. He does not have good days and bad days and good moods and bad moods and bad hair days and says, I don’t like everybody today. God is consistent in His loving. He never stops loving. It’s different than human love. All human love is inconsistent. I heard a woman once say, “My mom was such a moody person I never knew from day to day whether I was going to be hugged or slugged. I didn’t know because I didn’t know what mood she was going to be in.” God is not like that. He doesn’t get moody. He is consistent in His love for you.
2. His love is unconditional. God doesn’t say, I love you if... and here are the conditions. I love you because... and here are the conditions. He just says:

“I love you. Period”

Because, it’s not based on your performance, it’s based on His character. He just says:

“I love you. You’re Mine. I made you. I saved you.  
I bought you. I want you with Me for eternity.”

You wouldn’t exist if it weren’t for God’s love. You never need to ask yourself, Is God going to love me today? Did I pray enough today? Did I do all the right things? Did I cross the T’s and dot the i’s. God will never love you more than He does right now. He will never love you any less than He does right now. His love is consistent and unconditional.

~

There’s a fourth way that God sees you.

#### 4. God sees you as FORGIVABLE

That word – “forgive” – it’s easy, in church we hear it all the time. It’s very easy to pass right by it. We do not realize how forgiven we really are.

Ephesians 1:4 says, "Long ago, even before He made the world, God chose us to be His very own through what Christ would do for us. He decided then to make us holy in His eyes, without a single fault. We who Jesus brings to stand before Him are covered by His love."

What an incredible verse that tells us how forgiven we are by God's love and what He's willing to do in us. Before God made you He knew everything you were going to do in your life. He knew all the mistakes, all the sins. He knew the worst thing you were going to do. There is one thing you will never hear God say, I didn't see that one coming. You'll never hear that. He sees it all. And God Who sees it all says in advance:

"I'm willing to forgive you, no matter what.  
No matter what, I am willing to forgive you."

That is good news.

~

If I receive Christ my sins are wiped out. They are erased. That is what God's grace is all about. And it is such a great gift. We have a tough time receiving it. We have a tough time believing it. I don't know if you heard about the guy who was driving up to Payson to his cabin. Just before he got to his cabin He hit an oil slick and his car slid off into a ravine. The car was totaled. He was alive but scratched up.

He got up and climbed out of the ravine. Just then a storm came over and he got totally drenched. He's climbing up out of the ravine, he's drenched and shivering. He sees his cabin just in time to see a lightning bolt hit it and burst into flames. He looks up to heaven and says, what all of us would say, "Why me, God? Why me?" Then he hears a voice from heaven saying back to him - because some people just really tick me off!

That's not the way God is, but that is typical of what we think about God sometimes. That somehow God is mad at me, that somehow God is getting even with me. We think every little thing that happens in our lives "I must have done something wrong. That's why God's doing this." You go into Taco Bell and order a taco. You get it and it doesn't have any meat in it. You think,



“What did I do? Why is God letting this happen? What did I do?”

The vegetarian sitting across the room that got your taco is thinking, “What did I do? Why is God letting this happen?”

Sometimes we believe that God is this way in dealing with us and it's just as silly as my example. Would God treat His children that way?

~

In Isaiah 43:25 (GN) God says:

“I am the God who forgives your sins.

I do this because of Who I am.

I will not hold your sins against you.”

God doesn't carry grudges. You might. I might. But God does not hold grudges. Romans 8:1 says, “There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

God is not sitting up in heaven rehearsing your sins, looking at them again and again on His own personal Master Snapchat account. He has erased your sins. He doesn't rehearse them. He releases them.



Maybe you're here and you have just recently asked Jesus Christ into your life for the first time, you told Him "I want a relationship with You." Let me tell you what changed in your life when you came to know Christ. You've probably had your whole life a picture of what it's going to be like when you get to heaven, a long line heading up toward the pearly gates. You're in this line hoping that you're going to make it in. You're stepping forward one little step at a time hoping that when you get to the front you're in heaven and not in hell.

You want to hear some incredibly good news? The minute you got to know Jesus Christ it means you don't have to stand in that line any more. You get a fast pass into heaven - you die and "Bam!" you are with Him. You're there. But, there is a judgment for those who don't know Christ. That's why Jesus came into this world so we wouldn't have to face that judgment. You do not have to face that moment. You're already in God's family. You're already in. It's already settled. God has already erased your sins. Take a deep breath and say, "Thank You God! Thank You God that I am forgiven because of what Jesus has done."



Then there's a fifth way that God sees you ...

## 5. God sees you as CAPABLE

Second Corinthians 3:5-6 (TEV) talks about this, "The capacity that we have comes from God; It is He Who made us capable of serving the New Covenant."

There is an epidemic of low self-esteem in America. One study shows that it is the number one problem among women in America. Why is that? Why can't we escape that sense of insecurity?

Remember when I talked about how we replay what people have said about us in our minds over and over again. As we continue to replay those old tapes in our memory of what people said a long time ago about us, we still live by those words 10-20 years later. Studies show the younger you were when you were rejected, the greater an impact it has on your life. And in a sense for some of you, you had people in your life that cursed you. They cursed you with words like, "You don't matter. You're a

failure. You'll never amount to anything. You can't do anything right."

~

So here's the question. How do you release the curse? You don't do it by focusing on the curse. You don't do it by thinking about what they said all the time. And you don't even do it by thinking, "I'm going to prove them wrong." You're still trying to build your life on a negative.

You do it by building your life on a positive. You begin to focus instead on the Truth. You start affirming the Truth. You start believing what God says about you and God says you're capable. I don't care what anybody else says. I don't care what you think. God says you are capable. He has created you for a purpose. He has a purpose for your life. In fact there are two reasons why every one of us is capable.

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1. We are all capable because we have God's Word for insight and wisdom. 2 Timothy 3:17 (NCV) tells us, "Using the Scriptures, the person who serves God will be capable having all that is needed to do every good work." What a gift God has

given us in this book, the Bible. It's given to help us live the kind of life He wants us to live, to make us capable to live that life. That's an incredible gift but He's given us an even bigger gift than that. Not only has He given us His Word, the Bible says...

2. He's given us Himself to make us capable. Maybe you've heard people talk about how God sends His Spirit to us when we trust Him. What does that mean? That means that God sends Himself. He gives us His strength, His ability, His insight. He is willing to come into our lives. That's how much He loves us. Philippians 4:13 says, I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me. I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses inner strength into me. That is I am self-sufficient through Christ's sufficiency.



Through God's Word, through God Himself you are capable. Psychologists say that your self-concept, your self-worth, the way you see yourself is largely determined by what you think the most important person in your life thinks about you. If that's true I want to highly recommend that you make Jesus Christ the most important person in your life. Because in Christ He says you are

VALUABLE, you are ACCEPTABLE, you are FORGIVABLE, you are LOVABLE and you are CAPABLE.

It really doesn't matter what anybody else thinks about you. Who are you going to believe? God? Or that fun house mirror? That imperfect person?

And the bigger question is: Who are you going to live for? The approval of other people? Who aren't going to give it, or they'll be inconsistent. Or will you live the rest of your life for a God Who says you're LOVABLE, VALUABLE, CAPABLE, FORGIVABLE and ACCEPTABLE?

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This story is told by a man named Fred Craddick. I found this online and it helps to illustrate what I'm talking about here. Mr. Craddick tells about the time he was vacationing in Tennessee. Fred and his wife were seated at a table in a restaurant when an old man came up to them and asked, "Are you folks on vacation?" "Yes," said Fred, "and we're having a good time."

"What do you do for a living?" the old man said. Fred was trying to get rid of the guy and he said, "I'm a preacher." "Oh," the old

man said. "Then let me tell you a preacher story." He pulled up a chair and sat down. "I was born an illegitimate child. I never knew who my father was. That was very hard for me. The kids at school made fun of me and they called me names. When I walked around our little town I always felt that people were staring at me and asking that terrible question, 'I wonder who is the father of that little boy.'

I spent a lot of time by myself and growing up I didn't have any friends. One day a new pastor came to town and everybody was talking about how good he was. I'd never gone to church but one Sunday I decided I'd go hear him speak. He was good. So I kept coming back. But each time I went to church I'd come in late and I'd leave early so I wouldn't have to talk to anybody.

Then, one Sunday I got so caught up in listening to the sermon I forgot to leave early. The service ended, people stood up and I couldn't get out the door. Suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder. When I turned that big tall pastor was looking down at me. He asked, 'What's your name boy? Whose son are you?' When I heard that question I just shook.

But before I could say anything the preacher said, 'I know who your family is. There's a distinct family resemblance. Why, you're the child of God.' You know, mister, those words changed my life," he said. The old man got up and left. The waitress came over and asked me, "Do you know who that was?" "No," said Fred. "That's Ben Hooper, two term governor of Tennessee."

A man learned he was the child of God and it changed his life. All the depression and all the wounds and hurts and rejection he'd had through his life was eliminated by the power of God's love. And no longer could people diminish his sense of dignity because he was a child of God.

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Here's some homework for you. Take the verses from this article. Write them on little cards and write above it, "I am Acceptable... I am Valuable...I am Loveable. . .I am Forgivable. . .I am Capable" Start affirming those every day. You take them with you to work or school or wherever. You start to memorize and then internalize those truths, because that's what God sees when He looks at you.

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Father, I thank You that You can heal broken hearts and bitter memories and damaged self-esteem. Thank You that patterns can be erased and reversed. Thank You that You turn nobody's into somebody's. Jesus, I ask You to help people to begin seeing themselves today through Your eyes of love.

Now you pray. In your mind say, "Dear God, help me see myself the way You see me. Thank You for loving me and sending Jesus Christ to die for me so I could be forgiven. Jesus, today I accept Your love and forgiveness. I want to learn to trust You. Help me to care more about what You think of me than what other people think. May the truth set me free."

This article, "Seeing Yourself As God Sees You, Seeing Through God's Eyes," was written by Steve Merryman

<https://www.reunioncommunity.org/post/2017/11/12/seeing-yourself-as-god-sees-you-seeing-through-god-s-eyes>



I encourage you to continue taking new steps while seeking a deeper relationship with God. Start putting into practice the principles for

taking these steps toward renewal and recovery and become more God-dependent instead of being Co-Dependent.

- The first key is to maintain an honest view of reality not only considering particular circumstances and events as substantial, but recognizing the substance of Truth – the Life, the Alpha and Omega, the heart and the spirit as we work on taking steps of faith remembering:
  - God exists and I matter to Him – that God could and would if He were sought
  - Admitting I am powerless – If God is your co-pilot, switch seats
  - Acknowledging in certain areas my life became unmanageable – Sorrow shared is halved; Joy shared is doubled
  - Believing God will restore me with Love, a Sound Mind and Power – Success means getting your BUT out of the way
  - Believing God will help me stay committed to this decision to put all of who I am into His possession and safekeeping – There is no magic in this process of renewal and recovery only miracles

- Believing the Word of God will encourage, support and strengthen me as I make a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself – There is pain in this process. Misery is optional
- Because of God’s loving-kindness I have become willing to admit to God, to myself and another person the exact nature of my wrongs – The road to resentment is paved with expectation
- With Truth as my solid foundation I have become entirely ready to have God remove all my defects of character –  
Courage is faith that has said its prayers
- Having received faith and hope and love for the Surety God has given I humbly ask Him to remove my shortcomings –  
F.A.I.T.H. = Fantastic Adventure In Trusting Him
- Having gained knowledge and insight and understanding I have become willing to make a list of anyone I have harmed, and to make an amends to them all – Just for today I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle my whole life problems at once
- Having gained confidence and trust in God’s refuge I have become willing to step out with the mindset I am doing this with God and for His glory to make my amends whenever possible unless to do so would cause injury to others -

Remembering nothing is going to happen today that you and God can't handle

- I embrace my covenant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by continuing to take a personal moral inventory, and when I am wrong being prompt to admit it – We are not human beings having spiritual experiences; we are spiritual beings having human experiences
- I invest in my relationship with God by communicating through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with Him seeking knowledge of His will and the power of grace to carry that out – If God seems far away, who moved?
- I seek Revival, Restoration and Reconciliation, a spiritual awakening, as a result of taking steps to carry God's message to others and to practice these principles in all my affairs – Worry is a conversation you have with yourself about things you cannot change. Prayer is conversation you have with God about things He can change



- Working this step believing God is our Higher Power, tells us we do not and cannot restore ourselves

- Working this step tells us we may love to control and manage – not because we are bad and defective – but, because we are protective, and feel so afraid of letting go
- This step reminds us we cannot and do not restore ourselves
- This step opens us to a better way – a gentler, kinder way out of confusion, even when we cannot see that way
- Unfortunately, we may know from personal experience that some deeds are so despicable the only sensible thing to do, so it would seem, is to forget they ever happened
- Some pain is so great it would also seem the best thing to do would be to bury it and never bring the subject up again
- Determined to keep our sin and shame under cover
- Motivated by fear to maintain a code of silence that is simply powerless to quiet the internal unrest provoked by criticism that berates and reproaches by rehashing over and over any and all faults and weaknesses
- An ongoing struggle ensues to be strong, to keep up appearances (hiding the true situation and pretending that all is going well) by being a good soldier, while anxieties grow spurring despair and dread to escalate
- All consequences of acting independently from God

- Trauma has a way of emptying out our emotional bank account
- Abuse, neglect, exploitation wounds, damage and destroy in so many ways
- A person can become spiritually bankrupt if the sidekicks of trauma – shame, regret, guilt...-- are allowed to silence them
- Secrecy is powerful
- Secrecy keeps you cornered by your pain – cut off – shut off – alienated -- estranged
- Holding on to secrets keeps the burden of the responsibility on the sufferer not on the person who created the suffering
- Secrets maintain the status quo
- Secrets anchor you in the emotional upset of trauma
- Secrecy is rooted in fear, isolation and shame that ultimately fills you with emotional poison
- Shame is an emotion that cries out “something is wrong with me”
- Shame makes you want to hide -- shame is a breeder of secrets
- Fear preys on the core belief that nothing would be worse than telling the truth
- Rape and incest are unsettling words, but words that demand to be spoken

- The actual deeds of abuse, whether it be sexual, physical, emotional or mental, even social or financial, must be brought out into the light of Truth, not swept under a rug because they keep you anchored in the emotional upset of trauma
- Giving a voice to your story is an essential part of your healing journey
- A person who is being controlled by their pain believes their world would fall apart if the truth were told -- when given a voice truth brings about an opposite outcome
- Why??? Fears fall apart when faced -- secrets lose their potency when you stand tall and tell your story
- Truth does not mind inspection
- Staying in our shame and guilt and remorse will never lead us to healing
- Transformation comes from breaking out of our prisons of despair and isolation
- We can ask for help -- we can receive the support we need
- Working this step means we must muster enough faith and humility to trust that God can and will do this for us

- Working this step teaches us that faith in God is well placed; indeed, far better placed than looking to our own resources

While working this step we begin to acknowledge to ourselves, and to God it is good to know that when it comes to secrets, silence is not golden, and stand firm on this personal decree:

Today I am being provided with the tools to exit from the grip of my emotional trauma. I am being helped to understand that I may need to unload some secrets to leave behind the experiences that have weighed me down for so long. Wisdom and a discerning heart are being bestowed to me so I might make good choices concerning who I share my story with. The right words will be given to me at the right time and the right place. That today the removal of the spirit of fear, which has kept me isolated, has begun. The courage I need to face my secrets and boldly speak the truth has been granted, and by the grace of God I will march forward. Amen. (So Be It)

- We can work this step and think about God as our Higher Power Who is willing to help us detach instead of becoming absorbed in



other people and their issues – what they’re doing or not doing, and the anger and hurt that causes us to experience

- Work this step thinking that God is ready to help you learn to accept your anger and hurt, and not dwell on them to the point of losing focus of yourself
- Work this step believing God will help to bring balance into your life so you are not dwelling on others and their issues to the point of obsession
- Work this step believing God is our Higher Power Who can and will help us when we are tired of those efforts that do not work, when feeling hopeless, when tangled up in unmanageability or compulsive efforts to control something that cannot be controlled

For I do not understand my own actions [I am baffled, bewildered]. I do not practice or accomplish what I wish, but I do the very things that I loathe [which my moral instinct condemns].

I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it. [I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to

carry it out.] For I fail to practice the good deeds I desire to do, but the evil deeds that I do not desire to do are what I am [ever] doing.

O unhappy and pitiable and wretched man that I am! Who will release and deliver me from [the shackles of] this body of death?

O thank God! [He will!] through Jesus Christ (the Anointed One) our Lord! So then indeed I, of myself with the mind and heart, serve the Lord, but with the flesh the law of sin.  
Romans 7:15-24 AMP

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.

God sent His own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in the body of Christ God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for those, who no longer follow our sinful nature; instead, follow Holy Spirit. Romans 8:1-4 NLT

