

LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE IN OUR LIKENESS

Yes, O Lord, You are our Father. We are the clay, You are the Potter; we are all the work of Your hand (Isa. 64:8). There are many reasons I have gathered information about God, His Word and the human condition. What does the human condition mean? This explanation was taken from the article “The Human Condition” written by Phil Willcox for the Lightbulb Moment Blog:

“The most fundamental element of us is our humanity, for all of us. However, looking even just at that Wikipedia introduction, that can encompass so many things – where I am in my life and career journey, my gender and health, my religion, or lack of, what philosophies or values drive me, what I read, how I see other people from my perspective and so much more.

It must also, therefore, be about how we relate with other humans, either those that mesh well with our perspectives, or those that don't. Perhaps especially those that don't, as

there are always challenges in life and some we don't have an easy choice about walking away."

All of the above gives just a glimpse into how our relating with others can bring about the development of codependent traits and emotional trauma. No one is exempt. For what this world promises is resistance in many forms – distractions, hurdles, interference and indifference – will surely be encountered; BUT GOD, He metes out grace in abundance for those whose choice it is to receive mercy and find grace to help in times of need (Heb. 4:16).

Times when natural inclinations would lead to decisions to walk in the steps of the world – deception, greed, lust and manipulation; to follow ungodly principles – kill, steal and destroy.

So I offer this for you to ponder, if willingness makes it possible for us to adapt to changes brought about by calamity and sorrow, can we even begin to imagine the changes that could be brought about and experienced if this same willingness to adapt was applied to the opposite of calamity, which is Godsend, manna and windfall.

Willingness is essential if we are to overcome the obstacles, hurdles, distractions and interferences so we can unite and wave a banner proclaiming:

Our Eternal Life Matters



Now you may think of course ‘I know eternal life matters;’ however, is our way of living communicating this same message? Ironically, over 90% of how we communicate is nonverbal. A very small percentage is applied to the interpretation of the spoken word. Therefore, much more meaning is being conveyed by “Paralanguage” by the tone, emphasis and pace of our voice. As well as, the non-verbal messages we communicate, which include everything from facial expressions to body posture. When our verbal and nonverbal messages contradict one another what is known as a communication “double-bind” occurs.

How often have the words we’ve spoken been totally misconstrued? Many times I’ve said that is not at all what I meant to say. Consider what is being inferred by this statement “double-bind.” A twofold portion of being fettered, hampered, entangled, twisted and knotted.

Thankfully, God is always inviting us to turn for His Word of Truth will provide relief. In Zechariah God says:

“Come back, return to the stronghold the place of safety, all you prisoners who still have hope! I promise this very day that I will repay double for each of your troubles.”

Zech. 9:12 NLT

When we turn to God, He sends help from heaven to rescue us (Ps. 57:3a). I speak from experience God worked good for my husband and myself in every mess we set before Him. Of course, patience is key because certainly whatever the mess it occurred over time.

When God is given time to work in our behalf surely His miraculous power will be witnessed. When faith is placed in God’s Word of Truth (accuracy, trustworthiness, reliability) the manifest presence of Christ Jesus will always be made known. For example, in Psalm 43:3 Jesus is the Light and Truth God sends out to lead us; to bring us to God’s holy hill and His dwelling (AMP).



I’d also like to mention how many times I thought of ways in which God could help us. Not once did I come close to predicting how He would intercede in our behalf. I remember how upset I was with my

husband. So much so that I thought God should have been ticked off at him also. I wouldn't have been the least little bit upset if He bounced a frying pan off my husband's head because just maybe it would knock some sense into him. God did the exact opposite and blessed Harry abundantly so He could not only know his self-worth, but know how much worth he has to God.

I came to realize though I couldn't actually see Jesus in the flesh, I could see God's Word. I could know with my knower Jesus was not only teaching me, but revealing Himself to me. Kathie, you want to know what faith is? Well, God wants you to have the confident assurance, like a title deed for property that belongs to you, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen and the conviction of their reality (certainty, truth, existence) Heb. 11:1 AMP. I didn't have to allow doubt or anger to cause me the discomfort of wavering from one opinion to another. I knew I too would be amazed as those who once sat with Jesus because He taught them as One who had authority, not as the teachers of the law (Mark 1:22).



Jesus didn't have to surmise or second guess or suppose or speculate because He is the Word of God. Faith gives the Word substance to do

for us as Jesus did for those who turned to Him. He continues to have mercy on those who come to Him and to God, for He freely pardons; indeed, He generously forgives. However, He also warns:

“My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts, and My ways are far beyond what you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so My ways are higher than your ways, and My thoughts higher than your thoughts.” Isa. 55:7-9 NLT



With this in mind, I learned the importance of giving Jesus the same respect and consideration as He offered me. I was given ample time to make these royal messes; therefore, it was only fair that I should give God time to work for my renewal and recovery for this is the first half of that promise to receive a double portion.

Yes, God’s Word says:

“Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, and instead of humiliation you will shout for

joy over your portion. A double portion and everlasting joy will be yours.”

Isa. 61:7

The second portion speaks of prosperity. The Word of God says:

“Beloved that you may prosper in every way and your body may keep well, even as your soul keeps well and prospers.”

:

“I came that you may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).”

3 John 2, John 10:10 AMP



Unfortunately, we become double-bound in shame, dishonor and confusion guilty of doing as we please while speaking idle words (Isa. 58:14). A person who puts on a false appearance or acts in contradiction to their beliefs or feelings would fit this definition of a hypocrite. That person was me. I was engulfed in so much fear I lost myself trying to accommodate others in order to receive their acceptance and approval.

Jesus confronted the religious leaders and scholars accusing them of being hypocrites who nullified (canceled, voided, overrode) the Word of God for the sake of their tradition – their pomp and ceremony.

“These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.”

Matt. 15:6-9

In other words, they were guilty of doing as God’s fallen archangel Lucifer coveting honor and prideful glory.



Though unaware, I was guilty of the same behavior seeking approval and validation from others. At the very young age of 3 ½ fear, rejection and abandonment entered my heart. I never would have understood the impact this had on my life without God’s help.

Being double-bound by my own thoughts and feelings to such negativity ensured the development of learned behaviors that kept me striving to do, to be better, to try harder because doesn’t perfection mean being free of criticisms, flaws and faults.

Attempts to prove our worthiness and boost our self-esteem; instead, how often feeling shame and confusion because the value of opinion is as “fool’s gold” worth virtually nothing.

Everyone has an opinion. The last I heard its monetary value was one penny, “A penny for you thoughts?” Yet, we place our own opinions and those of others in such high esteem. As a result, we are left with the unanswerable question ‘Why?’ This simple question encompasses the huge vastness of what matters, which is so unique and complex because it speaks to our individuality.



Amazingly, God knows everything about us. I know this may be a difficult concept to wrap one’s head around. However, as a puzzle God brings us piece-by-piece until we get the picture. Each piece different and at times unexpected: something someone shares with us, reminders of a book we’ve read or a movie we’ve seen. God is absolutely aware of us and our day-to-day activities.

In Col. 3:11-12 Paul can still be heard saying: Remember God’s deep love and concern for us. He wants us to share in relationship with Him

in a new kind of life. A life where a person's nationality or race or education or social position is unimportant such things mean nothing to Him.

What matters to God is you have faith in His Son Who is equally available to everyone. Think about this - God has chosen you. When that really sinks into your heart, into your soul you won't have to worry about what people think, and work so hard to make a good impression.

Yes, your feelings may get hurt, and the memory of an insult or offense may be lurking in the shadows of your heart. But, of this you can be confident you are in possession of God's tenderhearted mercy and loving-kindness.

Beloved, trying to change someone's opinion is God's job, and it is not an easy one. So be prepared to be patient, to be quiet and allow kindness and mercy to work in you and for others. For words have the power to wedge that insult or offense deeply into our heart (TLB).



Remember this parable Jesus shared:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied. The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

Matt. 12:24-30



Generally speaking throughout God's earthly kingdom good and evil agendas, intentions and motivations are dwelling side-by-side; however, evil will definitely not gain entrance into God's heavenly

kingdom. The Word of God sets this parable before us at a very personal level.

Through Jesus God sends His Spirit to seal our spirit so the kingdom of heaven can dwell within every person when their faith is placed in Jesus. Through the Word of Truth Holy Spirit will continually work to help us recognize the error and deception that gained entrance into our soul.

Our spiritual being is sealed by Holy Spirit, Who plants seeds of love and goodness and faithfulness...so we can grow in knowledge and awareness and understanding of God and His Word and also of ourselves.

Holy Spirit works not to harm us; instead, for Good to flourish in our soul as the bad just withers away. He doesn't poke or prod or pull us in different directions. He simply points to the Truth. If a person is wise they will realize the error is dwelling somewhere within them. But, if not they can keep right on walking round that mountain of self-assurance.

God dealt with sin once for all through Jesus Who made atonement for everyone. A Life- giving gift that must be received because it is impossible to earn.



This article written by Mike Livingstone tells us the Hebrew word for forgiven literally means “lifted off.” Sin is a burden that weighs us down; however, when confessed God lifts it off our shoulders, rolls it away so it can disappear. Sin is the only thing that separates us from God.

<https://goexplorethebible.com/blog/adults/10-things-god-does-with-our-sin-session-11-psalm-321-11/>

This is what God does for us:

1. He forgives our transgressions
2. He covers our sin
3. He does not charge us with iniquity
4. He removes our sins from us
5. He washes away our guilt and cleanses us from our sins
6. He throws all our sins behind His back
7. He sweeps away our transgressions
8. He remembers our sins no more

9. He casts all our sins into the depths of the sea
10. He nailed our sin debt to the cross

1 John 1:7 tells us: If we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus God's Son cleanses us from all sin.

I believe it's necessary for God's children to remember for many have been marked by complacency, which is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary: self-satisfaction especially when accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies.

These days the Church has a similar resemblance to the world. How important to live with Gratitude not complacency. Gratitude works miraculously to make what you have enough.



It's not good enough for gratitude to just be felt or talked about, it needs to be put on display as God did His love for the world to see – the Cross. Yes, as this article written by Christy Pina and Morin Bishop states: God's immense and unwavering love isn't always easy to see or understand. It's in the small things, like the person who asks how your

day's going and actually listens when you answer. And it shows itself in big ways, too, like the guardian angel who appears out of nowhere when your car stops running and happily starts it for you without expecting anything in return.

The Bible verses about God's love serve as a constant reminder that He is always watching, ready to help you in any way you may need. What the Bible says about God's love ranges from His fierce protection of His followers to the promise that His love will never falter or fail, no matter what. So, take comfort knowing that these Bible verses about God's love prove He is always in your corner.

““The mountains may shift, and the hills may be shaken, but My faithful love won't shift from you, and My covenant of peace won't be shaken.”

Isaiah 54:10

- **The Good News:** No matter how the world changes around us, He is always there, guiding us through it all.

“But You, My Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy; You are very patient and full of faithful love.”

Psalms 86:15

- **The Good News:** We will make mistakes, but just like the people in our lives who love us, God will give us grace and forgiveness. (*I believe mistakes are not meant to belittle or shame they are a necessary reminder that gives clear evidence – we need a Savior*)

“The Lord your God is in your midst – a Warrior bringing victory. He will create calm with His love; He will rejoice over you with singing.”

Zephaniah 3:1

- **The Good News:** The Lord is your biggest supporter. When you succeed, He succeeds. He’s always cheering you on.

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us in that we should be called God’s children, and that is what we are! Because the world didn’t recognize Him, it doesn’t recognize us.”

1 John 3:1

- **The Good News:** What a blessing it is to be considered one of God’s children, whom He loves the same way any parent loves their child.

“Know now the Lord your God is the only true God! He is the faithful God, who keeps the covenant and proves loyal to everyone who loves Him and keeps His commands — even to the thousandth generation!”

Deuteronomy 7:9

- **The Good News:** God will protect His children for eternity with His forever unwavering love.

“I pray that you’ll have the power to grasp love’s width and length, height and depth, together with all believers. I pray that you’ll know the love of Christ that is beyond knowledge so that you will be filled entirely with the fullness of God.”

Ephesians 3:18-19

- **The Good News:** Because God loves you so much, you are also capable of love in deeper and stronger ways each day.

“But let all who take refuge in You, O Lord, celebrate. Let them sing out loud forever! Protect them so that all who love Your name can rejoice in You. Because You, Lord, bless the righteous. You cover them with favor like a shield.”

Psalms 5:11-12

- **The Good News:** Those who believe in Jesus and follow His teachings are guaranteed His shield, and can sleep knowing they are never alone.

“God destined us to be His adopted children through Jesus Christ because of His love. This was according to His goodwill and plan and to honor His glorious grace that He has given to us freely through the Son whom He loves.”

Ephesians 1:5-6

- **The Good News:** Regardless of your relationship with your biological parents, you can take comfort in the fact that you are one of God’s children.

I shared 8 Scriptures from this article 28 Bible Verses to Remind Us of God’s Love because Biblically the number 8 signifies Resurrection and Regeneration. It is the number of a new beginning.

<https://www.womansday.com/life/inspirational-stories/g28832117/bible-verses-about-gods-love/>



God invites us to join Him and experience new beginnings. Holy Spirit blesses us with insight and discernment so we can be freed from every

bad and imperfect tendency, proclivity and habit we have acquired from the father of lies.

The enemy speaks his native language as a liar (John 8:44) so shifting shadows like fear and jealousy and contention can slither into our heart to bring about rivalries, selfish ambition and confusion. For surely then, there will also be disorder (unrest, disharmony, rebellion), and all sorts of vile and evil practices (James 3:16 AMP).

However, a sincere desire to work with Holy Spirit gives Him permission to nourish and fortify our spirits with living water, while washing our souls with Truth so we can experience rebirth and renewal as a citizen of God's heavenly kingdom. Making it possible for us to hear Jesus say:

“You have stayed with Me in times of trial and trouble. And just as My Father has granted Me a Kingdom, I now grant you the right to eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom.”

Luke 22:28-30 NLT

And of this you can be confident, Holy Spirit began this good work in us and will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Phil.

1:6). Beginning when a simple choice is made, to do as God commands: Believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and to love – by honoring and respecting and appreciating – one another (1 John 3:23).



So I share information about Codependency because this is a disease of pleasing, of doing and controlling, of fixing for and taking care of which results in angry outbursts and emotional trauma.

God calls us to enjoy fellowship with Him, with Jesus, with Holy Spirit and with others so that through His Word we can be encouraged in heart and united in love.

That we may know and have the full riches of complete understanding of the mystery of God, Christ Jesus, in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge so we are not deceived (Col. 2:2-3) or cause division.



If we could work together not competing against one another; instead, collaborating with each other we would definitely move and live and

keep in step with Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:4). During an interview this was said, “We work to see others to do their best.” Could you imagine what could be accomplished, if this attitude was not only on a football field but in our churches?

Everyone who loves is born of God, and experiences a relationship with Him (1 John 4:7 Message). So whatever you do, do it for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31), and surely you will learn to love God more and more (1 John 2:5 TLB). Because, with this attitude working to see God’s will be done there would be no question that He’d bring about the very best in and for us.

Love for God’s Word ensures we are clothing ourselves with Jesus (Rom. 13:14). With knowledge of God’s Word of Truth, Holy Spirit will always prompt us so we no longer work to gratify the desires of our sinful nature (Rom. 13:14); instead, build up the Church, by encouraging and comforting one another for we are the body of Christ (1 Cor. 14:12).

~

How often we ask God to turn and heal us, deliver us, help us, hear our prayer, give us, save us and then....Choose to ignore what God asks of us:

“Today, right now turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. Refrain from anger and turn from wrath, do not fret or worry – it leads only to evil.”

Ps. 34:14, Ps. 37:8

Anger is a diagnostic indicator of Codependency. Why? As Scripture says, the trouble is with us. We are full of ourselves in possession of a sinful pride-filled nature. Unable to understand ourselves; unable to do what is right; instead, doing what we hate. Knowing perfectly well when we have done the wrong thing because our conscience is heavy laden with guilt and shame, remorse and regret (Rom. 7:14-16 TLB).

And unfortunately, hurting people hurt people.



In order to stay in step with Holy Spirit there is a decision to be made – turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God. Then we are exchanging currency with Him in which He is familiar – Faith. With

faith in Jesus it isn't just the hope of eternal life that can be procured, but time and opportunity to co-labor with Holy Spirit as we work out our own salvation (Phil. 2:12 AMP).

Faith in the triune God, a loving, life-changing Higher Power, sets us upon a solid foundation believing Father, Son and Holy Spirit will always be there with us and for us because the Word of Life is dwelling in us.

God bestows His Word of Truth, Christ Jesus, so Holy Spirit can reveal what is absolutely essential - clarity. During my life BC (before Christ) I had no hope of realizing how powerful the things we talk about, but give no spiritual significance to. Like - love and fear, hope and pessimism, faith and infidelity...

As a result, for many God is not appreciated for the good to be enjoyed; however, a great deal of ridicule is extended for the bad. Why? Satan, the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see the Light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4), Who says:

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. They are ruined because they don’t know what’s right and true. Backs have been turned and revelation rejected.”

“Darkness covers the earth, and deep darkness the peoples; but, the Lord will rise upon you, and His glory will appear upon you.”

Hos. 4:6 NKJV, Hos. 4:6 Message, Isa. 60:2 NASU



The Bible is historical giving accurate accounts of people and events that have occurred throughout time. The Bible is theological providing accurate accounts of God’s interactions with mankind. The Bible can be tangibly held in our hands; however, when opened the touch of God’s Word will be felt at the very depths of our soul.

When that first couple dwelt within the paradise of Eden, the glory of the Lord could be felt upon them because of the spiritual connection they shared with God, the Source of Good (Ps. 119:68 Message), Who freely gives. That we may prosper and be in health, even as our soul prospers (3 John 2).

However, disobedience caused a spiritual shifting to occur not only by turning our world upside down so death and loss and sorrow would be personally experienced, but it shifted our very being. Scripture tells us God is love (1 John 4:8); but, as a statement, irregardless of its accuracy, it becomes tainted by personal interpretation.

Why? Sin! The sin of the source of evil, Satan himself, is pride, which we've inherited. Pride has set our focus on the trinity of me, my "self" and I. As a result, personal interpretation prevents us from receiving the depth of meaning from statements such as "God is love." Why? The meaning may be revealed, but the (essence, crux, spirit) can only be displayed when personally searched out.



Pride is the spiritual connection we share with the source of evil. As a result, arrogance, stubbornness and complacency has hardened our heart just as surely as plaque hardens our arteries. Human hands have plundered and pilfered and exterminated thereby advancing the kingdom of evil on the earth. As Scripture says, what is the source of the wars and fights among us? Don't they come from the cravings that are at war within us (James 4:1 ASB)?

The Lord called out to the crowd then, and continues to call out to us now, come and hear:

“Listen and try to understand, you are harming your souls by what you think and say. It is the thought life that pollutes making you unclean. From within, out a person’s heart, come evil thoughts of lust, theft, murder, adultery, wanting what belongs to others, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, pride and all other folly.

“All these are vomit from the heart. There is the source of your pollution.”

Mark 7:14-22 TLB, Mark 7:23 Message



When we become familiar with the Word of God, great possibilities lie ahead so, Arise from the depression and prostration in which circumstances have kept you – rise to new life! Shine! Be radiant with the glory of the Lord, for now your Light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you! (Isa. 60:1 AMP)

Whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the blinders are taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Cor. 3:16-17). Though there may be so-called gods both in heaven and on earth, and some people actually worship many gods and many lords.

We believe there is only one God, the Father, Who created everything, and we live for Him. And there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom God made everything and through Whom we have been given life (1 Cor. 8:5-6 NLT). Therefore, since we have been given such a hope, we can be very bold.

We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the people from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. Their minds like ours had been, were dulled by the sin of pride, which covers the heart like a veil (2 Cor. 3:13-14). We hold to the testimony of Jesus. We worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy (Rev. 19:10).

Everyone who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3). Therefore, know Jesus died to sin once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God (Rom. 6:10).



We each come to the Lord with idols we have worshiped instead of God. An idol is any possession, any person, any desire we have given more importance to rather than to God. There were people who with their own eyes witnessed the signs and wonders Jesus did, and yet refused to believe in Him (John 12:37).

Yet, this same disciple testified of these things, and wrote about these things so we could know his testimony about Jesus is true. He wrote so we would know there were also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one-by-one, that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written (John 21:24-25 NKJV).

So don't be confused or deceived or misled by anyone who speaks of their own philosophies and beliefs instead of Christ Jesus they are not serving for the Lord's sake. God said:

“Let Light shine out of darkness”

He made His light shine in our heart to give us the Light of the knowledge, so we could know the glory of God is seen in the face of Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 4:5-7).



Sadly there are many Christians who have been sinning against the Lord. Doing what the world considers to be wrong; not only causing others to stumble in their faith, but causing unbelievers to be appalled by such blatant hypocrisy.

If we believe in God we should be in agreement with His Word, Christ Jesus, not fear or doubt or deception. We should be living a lifestyle that glorifies the Lord. For surely what He has accomplished for us is deserving of our dying to sin and pride and a heart's desire to savor what is evil.

By no means are we to go on sinning! We are to serve the Lord for the glory of God by counting ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

Do not exalt your prideful self by offering the parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness. Rather, offer yourself to God humbly as one who understands what His love for us cost. He sent His one and only Son to bring us back from an eternity of death to all that is Good, to give us Life.



Let us live for God in His Word with a heart that is glad and a tongue that rejoices because our body will also rest secure. God has not abandoned mankind to the grave. He revealed to the world His Holy One did not see decay.

God has given the world His Word so the Lord could make known the path of Life. Our heavenly Father offers everyone time and opportunity to be filled with joy in His presence; with eternal pleasures at His right hand (Ps. 16:9-11) where Jesus sits exalted.

God invites everyone to come and feast on the abundance of His house. He gives Manna from His Word and Holy Spirit to provide us drink from His River of delights. For with God is the Fountain of Life; in His light we see light.

God pours out His love and grace upon the world; His love and righteousness continually dwell in those who know Him. May the foot of the proud not come against us, nor the hand of the wicked drive us away. For we shall see how the evildoers lie fallen – thrown down, not able to rise (Ps. 36:8-12).



How great is the goodness God has stored up for those who fear Him. He lavishes His goodness on those who come to Him for protection, blessing us before the watching world. For the Lord hides us in the shelter of His presence, safe from those who conspire against us; God's Word shelters us in His presence, far from accusing tongues. Praise the Lord, for He has shown us the wonders of God's unfailing love (Ps. 31:19-21 NLT).

Yes, love the Lord with all your heart and soul and strength and mind, all you godly ones! For the Lord protects those who are loyal to Him, but He harshly punishes the arrogant; so be strong and courageous all you who put your hope in the Lord (Ps. 31:23-24 NLT).

For God welcomes us back with success and prosperity – body, soul and spirit. He places a crown of finest gold on our head. When asked

to preserve our life, He grants our request so the days of our life stretch on forever.

The victory God has given us in the Lord brings us great honor, for Christ has clothed us with His splendor and majesty. Father, you have endowed those who know You with eternal blessings, and given us joy in the presence of Your Word. For we trust in the Lord!

The unfailing love of the Most High will keep us from stumbling!

The Lord will capture all God's enemies. His strong right hand will seize all who hate Him. When the Lord appears they will be thrown in a flaming furnace. The Lord will consume them in His anger; fire will devour them. Though they plot against the One Who is Good, their evil schemes will never succeed.

They will turn and run when they see the arrows of God's Word aimed at them. The Lord has risen in all the resurrection power of God's Holy Spirit. With music let our heart be heard singing as we celebrate the mighty acts of our eternal Father (Ps. 21:3-13 NLT).



God has given us the responsibility to take care of own interests, and also the interests of others (Phil. 2:4). But, when we reach a point where we can see that using our will is not enough to make a change we let go and let God. We trust the process God has devised: ASK – SEEK – KNOCK. God’s Word gives this assurance:

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; those who seek find; and to those who knock, the door will be opened.”

Matt. 7:7-8

I know, easier said than done. How many times I gave something to God, and took it back time after time. James 4:17 tells us it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it. This implies deliberation and choice.

That quite often may not be the case. We are very unique and complex creations as is our decision making process. For example, my intentions may be for doing good; however, my motives and decisions are affected by learned behaviors, beliefs and opinions that have been swayed by error and deception that only the Light of Truth can expose.

God reveals deep and hidden things; He knows what lies in darkness, and Light dwells with Him (Dan. 2:20).



Learned behaviors can be self-destructive, like self-shaming. For many this has become a normal way of talking to themselves. Self-shaming is not an effective way of changing ourselves or dealing with our mistakes. For the use of unfair, discriminating, arrogant and hurtful words don't go in one ear and out the other they penetrate to the depths of our soul. Such negative impacts cause us to shame ourselves for not being _____ enough.

So many things we blame ourselves for, and sadly, have done so from childhood. We can't grow or change ourselves or others using shame.

Our spiritual growth is hindered by beliefs and feelings that are not facts. Why? They've been tainted by deception and error. To be able to speak the truth we must gain insight into ourselves.

There are things in which we are unaware, things that we hide and keep in secret, and things about ourselves we don't like or even respect. So to do as Eph. 4:15 directs speak the truth in love, we need

God to help us reconcile those reasons we've allowed our thoughts and opinions and emotions to be swayed by doubt, fear, confusion, disbelief, shame, rejection...possibly since childhood.



God pointed to Codependency, which I have learned affects everyone. Shawna Freshwater, Ph.D. wrote of traits, characteristics and signs and symptoms of Codependency. All of which cause the development of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral patterns that affect an individual's ability to have a healthy, mutually satisfying relationship with oneself and others.

They are maladaptive patterns that may be causing you distress and interfering with your physical and emotional health, peace of mind, and relationship with God, with self and with others. Codependency Traits: What, How, When are the Traits Formed? By Shawna Freshwater, Ph.D. <https://spacioustherapy.com/codependency-traits-what-how-when-formed/>

Below I have listed a few characteristics of Codependency from the above mentioned article:

- Hyper-aware of other people's problems and needs in the form of care-taking, controlling, advice giving, and over-worrying about others.
- Demanding, controlling, and perfectionistic. You want things to be done a certain way and may resort to telling others what to do and how to do it.
- Hyper-critical of others because they often don't live up to your high expectations.
- Your high expectations also make it hard for you to ask for or accept help from others.
- Stressed out or anxious when things don't go exactly and perfectly as planned.
- Hyper-focused on predictability, structure, and certainty – things you probably didn't have in your childhood family.
- Self-critical; unrealistic expectations for yourself. Self-talk is often harsh about your imperfections and mistakes.
- Your self-criticism is a result of your low self-esteem and the harsh criticism you've received from others during childhood.
- You feel responsible for everything and everyone, even other people's happiness, but deny your own happiness and needs

From the narcissist to the people-pleasers some or all of these may sound familiar. I have included references and articles that are very informative. When we are in relationship with God, as we gather information and gain knowledge He will bring resolution because He wants us to receive and know and keep possession of His peace.

That in every circumstance and situation we would have God's peace, which transcends understanding. Peace that will guard our heart and our mind because our faith and trust rest in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:7), God's Word.



So you see there are many reasons to make the decision to TURN:

- Taking this third step of faith with Holy Spirit means: “We make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, to His Word, Jesus Christ”
- This step is an act of faith that our loving, life-changing Higher Power will be there for us as we turn our life over to His care

- The purpose - to help you see more clearly how you live life according to your own will -- rather than turning your will and your life over to God our Higher Power
- We are responsible for acting in our own best interest regarding our lives, making sure that we are taking care of ourselves without offending other people in that process
- It is our responsibility to make an effort at change
- We work at changing regardless of our Higher Power
- When we reach the point where we can see that using our will is not enough to make a change take place, we can take this step of faith and turn to God
- When we are in a state of powerlessness and become aware that we can't change any further, we then turn our will over to God to assist us in changing, and we let go of determining how we're going to change or even if we're going to change
- This is a "Letting-Go" step



I encourage you to continue taking new steps in search of a deeper relationship with God. Put into practice godly principles taking 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



- Acknowledge by saying, “I’ve done all I can. I can’t do the changing that I know I need to do. Therefore, I turn myself over to Your will for me. If I change it will be because it is Your will, or You are preparing me for the necessary change. If I don’t change, I will live in that experience and learn to embrace myself in my perfect imperfection.”

Paul told us, “So I would not become too proud of the wonderful things that were shown to me, a painful physical problem was given to me. This problem was a messenger from Satan, sent to torment me and keep me from being too proud. I begged the Lord three times to take this problem away from me. But He said to me:

“My grace is enough for you. When you are weak, My power is made perfect in you.”

2 Cor. 12:7-9 NCV



- This step - making the decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God - is third in the order of steps because if we truly must take the first step - that God exists and we matter to Him; we admit that we are powerless, and in some way our lives had become unmanageable - then we become aware of our disease to please or gamble or shop or eat or binge....we have a tendency to feel overwhelmed with how “sick” we are
- Taking step two - we come to believe that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity - we see that in some ways our behavior is self-defeating even to the point of insanity

- At this point, step three - making this decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God - keeps us from being overwhelmed by what we learned in steps one - admitting God exists and we matter to Him; admitting we are powerless and in some way our lives had become unmanageable - and step two - came to believe a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity
- We say, in effect, "I turn my skewed reality and my codependent life (leaning on, trusting in and relying on myself and other people instead of God) over to God to deal with. I can hardly stand to even acknowledge my codependence right now."
- We turn our will and our lives over to the care of addictive substances and compulsions
- We turn our will and life over to the care of other human beings
- We have spent many years trying to impose our own plans onto the scheme of things
- It is time to remove ourselves from anyone or anything's control (including our own control issues), and place ourselves in the hands of an extraordinarily loving God

- We can tell God every day to -- “Take it, take all of it – who we are, what’s happened to us, where we shall go, and how we’ll get there.”
- This step of faith – turning our will and our lives over to the care of God - does not mean we resign ourselves to a bunch of should of’s and ought to’s, and don self-pity
- This step of faith – turning our will and our lives over to the care of God - in no way implies a continuation of martyrdom
- The exciting thing about this step – turning our will and our lives over to the care of God - is it means there is a purpose and a plan – a great, perfectly wonderful, usually enjoyable, and worthwhile plan that takes into account our needs, wants, desires, abilities, talents and feelings – intentionally designed for each of our lives
- This is good news for us, because we may believe we are a mistake, and there is nothing significant planned for our lives
- We have been stumbling around, trying to make the best out of being here when we learn: We are here to live as long as we are alive, and there is a life for each of us to live
- Before renewal and recovery the majority of us spent most of our lives turning our will and our life over to the care of other people

- The rest of the time we work at getting others to turn their will and lives over to us
- Now is the time to learn to do something different: Turn our will and life over to God
- Though it is important for us to grow in our understanding of God, it is more important to know that God understands and cares about us
- Many imagine God's will is a place where we are expected to be more, do more, give more and not ask for anything in return
- You may even call every unpleasant, distressful circumstance that happens to you, "God's will"
- Taking these steps of faith helps us to reevaluate our ideas about God and His will, because we will most likely discover they have to do with the deprived, restricted way we have learned to treat ourselves
- There are many confused ideas about what it means to surrender to the care of God
- Those of us who battle with issues of control have a hard time giving up, giving in and letting go
- We blame God because we become victimized, and refuse to take care of ourselves

- The third step – turning our will and lives over to the care of God - will help us find ourselves
- This step of faith can set us free
- This third step along our spiritual journey is the “God and Us” part of the process
- Like so many, you may be convinced your life was and is a mistake, and it has no purpose
- The third step – turning your will and your life over to the care of God - tells us differently that we are not a mistake, and there is a purpose for our lives
- In this step we make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, a decision to live our life with God’s help, and each of us has a life to live
- In this third step we are making a conscious decision to place ourselves and our lives, our internal affairs and external circumstances, over to the care of God
- It is in this third step that we make the decision to take responsibility for our lives, and allow others to do the same for themselves

- In step three – turning our will and our life over to the care of God - we do what needs to be done to let God restore us to sanity, we turn ourselves over to His care – our part is to learn to take care of ourselves
- Some of us struggle with the concept of God due to what we have been through before finding our way to these steps – how could a loving God allow this to happen in my life
- Our heavenly Father desires the best for us, as do those who love us, but He will not interfere with the choices and actions that cause us pain, and the onset of the consequences that they accrue
- God designed a process for change so when the decision is made to take these steps of faith it gives Him time and opportunity to work in our lives when we: ASK – SEEK – KNOCK
- This third step – turning our will and our lives over to the care of God - helps us to realize if we stay open, and begin with whatever amount of belief or disbelief we possess things will work out
- This step of faith helps us to realize that surrendering is not failure
- This step – turning our will and our lives over to the care of God - will help us endure the emotional phase of surrender, when

memories rise like flood waters revealing times when we were afraid to say no

- During this step of faith we are encouraged to take care of ourselves, to stand up for ourselves, to say no when we want to say no, realizing by doing so lightning won't strike us dead
- This step will help us realize our relationship with God will have a lot to do with feeling better about ourselves and not feeling alone
- We may not start living happily ever after, but we can start living our own lives – and they will start getting better
- We may trudge through this process of renewal and recovery, from leaning on and trusting others, feeling afraid and uncertain about where we are going – but we now have the faith and hope to realize we are going somewhere different than we have ever been before
- We may struggle and work at changing our behaviors – the caretaking, the controlling, the low self-esteem
- We begin to watch ourselves in relationships, and learn how to behave in ways that will leave us feeling less victimized
- This step of faith – turning our will and our lives over to the care of God - will help us realize we will always get into trouble when

we think we're the power – which may mean butting into other people's lives, caring more about what is happening to others than caring about what we think and feel

- This step will help us realize it is safe, now, to let go of our need to be in control – we can go to God as our Source, our Creator, our Inspiration, our Guidance and our Direction – we hold ourselves accountable for our behavior and choices
- This step helps us to develop a relationship with God and with ourselves based on trust
- This step declares that God is an essential part of our renewal and recovery
- Though we may practice a certain religion, this step is about us coming to terms with a personal relationship with God – because God knows our heart, and He understands our healing needs
- Some may believe the lie that God is malicious because their parents were emotionally unavailable to them all their lives
- Some may believe the lie that God is not punitive, He will not discipline or correct, because our spouses stuff was abusive to us
- This step of faith will help us to trust God, trust ourselves, do what's in front of us that needs to be done, trust those who will give us reality checks

- By taking this step you will find that these two concepts will be of tremendous help -- acceptance and gratitude
- Gratitude can be practiced even when it is difficult to surrender, when we are struggling with what is going on, when we resist or deny reality
- Gratitude can be practiced as we seek knowledge of ourselves and God and of His will:
 - For it is God Who equips you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ. (Heb. 13:21)
 - God predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved (Eph.1:5-6).
 - God appeared in visible form and became Man (Jesus) to take away (upon Himself) sins, and in Him there is no sin (1John 3:5).
 - God made Jesus, Who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21).

- And this is the will of God, that everyone who beholds His Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and Jesus will raise them up on the last day (John 6:40).
- Gratitude can be practiced when we can't see the good in what's happening, when we think we know best and no one is listening, when we don't know what to do next, or when we know what we want to do next, but just can't do it
- We can be grateful though we have been hurt and made sorrowful, because the pain caused you to repent and change your ways, which is according to the will of God and produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death (2 Cor. 7:9-10)
- For everyone who commits (practices) sin is guilty of lawlessness, for (that is what) sin is, lawlessness (the breaking, violating of God's law by transgression or neglect -- being unrestrained and unregulated by His commands and His will) 1 John 3:4 AMP.
- Gratitude can be practiced when we feel deprived, unloved, uncared for, abandoned and left out of life

- For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16).
- God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them. He made Jesus Who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:19)
- When the decision is made to take this step of faith – turning our will and our lives over to the care of God – we are making the decision to practice self-care so we can discover the immense transformational powers of Gratitude
- Therefore, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect (Rom. 12:2).
- This is why Jesus gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father (Gal. 1:4). NASU.

- Gratitude will help us feel better while stressful things are happening, and when things are going good
 - Thank (God) in everything (no matter what the circumstances may be, be thankful and give thanks), for this is the will of God for you (who are) in Christ Jesus (the Revealer and Mediator of that will) 1 Thess. 5:18 AMP
 - Blessed is the Lord Who has not left you without a Redeemer (Ruth 4:14 NASU)
- Gratitude helps us to enjoy the good
- Let those who want to enjoy life and see good days (good -- whether apparent or not) keep their tongue free from evil and their lips from guile (treachery, deceit). Let them turn away from wickedness and shun it, and let them do what is right. Let them search for peace (harmony), and seek it eagerly (1 Peter 3:10-11 AMP).
- A major part of our problem is we tend to focus on the negative, focus on the "What's wrong with this picture," - Gratitude empowers and increases what's right in our lives

Dear God, I have tried to do it all by myself on my own power, and I have failed. Today I want to turn my life over to You. I ask You to be my Lord and my Savior.

I ask that You help me think less about me and my will. I want to daily turn my will over to You, to seek Your direction and wisdom for my life. Please continue to help me overcome my hurts and habits and may that victory over them help others as they see Your power at work in changing my life. Help me to do Your will always. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen