

**THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH
COMPLETED
IN ALL THEIR VAST ARRAY**

Day and night the heavens tell the glory of God, what a marvelous display of His craftsmanship. Without a sound or word, silent in the skies, their message reaches out to the whole world. God placed the sun in the heavens, and it moves across the sky as radiant as a bridegroom (Ps. 19:1-3).

The Lord God is a sun and shield no good thing does He withhold (Ps. 84:11). He wants to share His joy and peace, His love and glory with you. The Lord is our light and our salvation the stronghold of our lives (Ps. 27:1). Our God is a consuming fire (Heb.12:29) of whom shall we be afraid, of whom shall we fear?

Jesus is the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2), the Bridegroom Who clothes us with garments of salvation, and arrays us in a robe of righteousness (Isa. 61:10). In Matt. 25:5 we're told the Bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all slumbered and slept. So the Lord cautions:

“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man will come.”

Matt. 25:13



A wedding is a celebration of love and commitment, of honor and hope, of trust and faithfulness, a new way of life. We are told in Isa. 62:5 as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you. When Jesus told the parable of the Ten Virgins He was speaking of those who converted to Christianity. They understood Jesus to be our Bridegroom. Who said:

“I remember the kindness and devotion of your youth, how eager you were to please Me as a young bride, how you loved and followed Me.”

Jer. 2:2 NLT

Unfortunately, what powers our fallen nature is a heart eager to please its own desires. Five of those women were foolish and had not properly prepared for the Bridegroom’s arrival. Their connection to the Head was lost (Col. 2:19). Did they not realize Jesus is the Head over every power and authority (Col. 2:10)?

Because their heart still wielded power and authority they thought it would be okay to ask the other five to share their oil with them; but, to gain wisdom is a crown for the wise; while the effort of the foolish, yields only what the world is full of - foolishness (senselessness, absurdity, delusion, mania, rage, irrationality, unreasonableness...) Prov. 14:24 NLT.



When Holy Spirit is unable to wield His sword, which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17), then it's only natural that negativity would make its presence known among us. And the forms in which it manifests are as countless as the stars because abusiveness, complacency, disrespectful judgments, unrealistic and unmet expectations are involved. Jesus warned about being unprepared:

“This is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.”

“Therefore keep watch, because you don't know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner

of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.”

Matt. 24: 39-44



Because we are social creatures we enter relationships with our own unique set of values, opinions, feelings and beliefs, but also expectations. Contentions are destined to occur. Wills clash. Controlling and emotionally manipulative behavior happens to fill (meet, comply with, work out) a need, a want, a desire, a yearning for someone/something to satisfy (bring about, quench) provide relief.

Sadly, because negativity is such a common factor relationships become shredded by high-pressured behaviors – betrayal, jealousy, accusations, use of guilt, criticism and avoidance, anger, manipulation...

What makes this all so heartbreaking we think and feel and believe justifications can be made to defend the wrong choices that we make.

God is not only aware of our compulsions, habits, tendencies, desires...He knows the why, when, where, what and how they came about. How can He be heard when our BUTs are too big, and His Word has little room inside?



Since childhood we have adapted and adjusted, imagined and brooded over thoughts and feelings that are responsible for establishing a system of core beliefs that govern the decisions and responses we make in regard to how our needs and expectations and those of others will be met.

When the most excellent Way of Love (1 Cor. 12:31) is not being followed, the thorns and snares lying in the paths of wickedness cannot be avoided. However, those who guard their soul with God's Word of Truth will stay from them (Prov. 22:5).

Of course, communication is key. If we are not communicating with God through His Word, how can Holy Spirit unlock what is essential - understanding? Knowledge is required! And we think we know ourselves, but there are things not easily explained since we don't fully understand them ourselves. So responses such as "I am who I

am” are given, but in no way can that adequately explain words and actions when they’re emotionally charged.

Yes, communication is essential, but so too is accountability! Prov. 18:19 tells us, when a person is offended they are harder to win over than a strong city, and their contentions separate them like the bars of a castle (Prov. 18:19 NASB).

Why? That’s a great question. As a matter of fact, it’s so great ‘Why’ has the power to keep us behaving as a victim. If only we could go back in time we would behave differently. What can I do to fix the problem? How many of us have pointed the finger to blame someone else? Playing the victim is something many of us have done without even realizing it.



I encourage you to continue taking new steps in search of a deeper, more intimate relationship with God. Start putting into practice principles for taking steps toward renewal and recovery to become more God-dependent instead of being Co-Dependent.

- The first key: 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



Why? Because unfortunately, playing the victim rarely gets anybody what they want. Furthermore, people that believe they are victims tend to push friends, family and coworkers away. Wouldn't it be wonderful if hindsight was 20/20.

Only God can better help us understand the “Why.” However, He will only disclose what pertains to our individual lives. Why? Prov. 11:13 gives the perfect answer, “He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy and faithful in spirit keeps the matter hidden.”

God is absolutely trustworthy and faithful in all matters, and especially the matters of our heart, even when and maybe especially when we tend to do as Adam play the victim, blaming God and others. God will always point us to His Word so we can better understand how essential our need for Truth.

However, I would be remiss if I didn't say; unfortunately, many people have been victimized. No one desires to be deceived or abused or taken for granted, and yet in some way, by some means this happens to everyone. However, we don't have to answer the roll call as a victim. Pain is inevitable, but misery is optional!



Even the wise fall victim to persecution; in this way, we are refined and cleansed and made pure until the time of the end, for the

appointed time is still to come (Dan. 11:35 NLT). Through faith we are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

So in this we can greatly rejoice! Though now for a little while we may have to suffer pain and grief in all kinds of trials. These come so that our faith, which is of greater worth than gold, for it perishes even though refined by fire. Don't let your faith in God and His Word perish in the fires of affliction; instead, let your faith be proved genuine so it may result in praise, glory and honor when Christ Jesus is revealed

(1 Peter 1:5-7).

Therefore, consider it a sheer gift, beloved by the Lord, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. Under pressure your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way (James 1:2-4 Message).

You may or may not have seen the Lord, but do you love Him? Do you believe He is God's Word, which you may or may not look at? Are you afraid and worrying about what you are/or may suffer? Do

you need healing, deliverance from evil's influence or is salvation a matter not yet dealt with? God's Word says:

“Don't be afraid, just believe!”

“I touched the eyes of many and sight was restored. Do you believe that I am able to restore sight to the spiritually blind? Know that according to their faith it will be done!”

“Why dwell in fear and worry and confusion? Your heavenly Father knows you and what is needed. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all things will be given to you. Therefore, don't worry about tomorrow, let tomorrow worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Matt. 5:36, Matt. 9:28-29, Matt. 6:33-34



First Thessalonians 5:22 tells us to avoid every kind of evil. Well, I can tell you there were things I did without thinking, that I have since learned were harmful to myself and the relationships I shared with others. Without faith in God and His Word and Holy Spirit I don't even like to think where I would be. Why? There were a couple times

in my life, when I came to what seemed the end of the road. When I had done all I could do, and the faith I had in myself and others seemed to simply evaporate.

How overwhelming when negativity fills our thoughts and feelings seemingly pushing us to surrender to dread, being unable to see beyond hopelessness, helplessness and despair. Yeah, there were a couple times, when I allowed those unanswerable 'Whys' to plague me, and steer my thinking toward self-harm.

Thankfully, I had an idea that took me years to credit to Holy Spirit, Who prompted me to seek knowledge of the Lord. I didn't know Jesus was the One Who could remove doubt and confusion and deception because He is the Word of Truth. I didn't know Jesus was the One Who could reconcile and renew and rejuvenate because He is the Word of Life. I didn't know Jesus is the One Who could restore my soul and free me from the clutches of fear because He is the Way to peace and joy and true contentment.



There is a remarkable transformation that occurs within us when we truly realize we have been made right in God's sight by faith in His

Word, His promises. We can enjoy real peace with God because of what Jesus has done for us. Because of our faith in God and His Word, our Lord Christ Jesus, brings us into this place of grace, a place of highest privilege.

With faith in God and His Word and Holy Spirit we can stand confidently and joyfully while looking forward to actually becoming all that God has had in mind for us to be.

We can also rejoice when we run into problems and trials, for we come to know that they are good for us – they help us learn to be patient. And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time we apply our trust in Him, in His Word, until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady.

Then, when that happens, we are able to hold our heads high no matter what happens and know that all is well, for we know how dearly God loves us, and we feel this warm love everywhere within because God has given us Holy Spirit to fill our heart with His love (Rom. 5:1-5 TLB).

I will be eternally grateful that I heeded Holy Spirit's prompting so I could come to know the Word of God, is my Lord Christ Jesus. There was so much new to think about and proclaim. And these new thoughts and proclamations made it possible for me to overcome the dread (discouragement, distress and foreboding), for God gave me His Word in which to hope and trust and reverence.



When we truly realize we were utterly helpless, with no way of escaping the penalty and consequence of our prideful behaviors, that Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners who had no use for Him at all.

Think about it, even if we were good, we really wouldn't expect anyone to die for us, though, of course, that might be barely possible. But God, He showed His great love for us by sending Jesus to die for us while we were still sinners.

And since, by His blood He did all this for us sinners, how much more will He do for us now that He has declared us not guilty and given us the power of His Spirit of Grace.



When we accept this gift of faith from God, Jesus will save us from all His Father's wrath that is yet to come. And since, when we were His enemies, we were brought back to God by the death of His Son, what blessings He must have for us now that we are His friends, and He is living within us!

Right now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God - all because of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done in dying for our sins - making us friends with God (Rom. 5:6-11 TLB).

God's Word empowers us so we can really test everything, and hold onto and proclaim and be grateful for the good (1 Thess. 5:21). God sends His Holy Spirit to live in us to help us remember what we've heard from His Word, so we can keep godly Wisdom as the pattern of sound teaching as we grow in faith and trust and love for Christ Jesus. Holy Spirit will help us to guard the good deposit of God's Word, which has been entrusted to us (2 Tim. 1:13-14).



Paul instructed us, “Think about God’s Word, for Holy Spirit will bring you understanding. Don’t ever forget the wonderful fact that Jesus Christ was a man, born into King David’s family; and that He was God, as shown by the fact that He rose again from the dead. It is because I have preached these great truths that I am in trouble here, and have been put in jail like a criminal. But the Word of God is not imprisoned.”

“I am more than willing to suffer if that will bring salvation and eternal glory in Christ to those God has chosen. I am comforted by this truth, that when we suffer and die for Jesus it only means that we begin living with Him in heaven. And if we think that our present service for Him is hard, just remember that someday we are going to sit with Him and rule with Him.”

“But, if we give up when we suffer, and turn against the Lord, then He must turn against us. Even when we are too weak to have any faith left, He remains faithful to us and will help us, because He cannot disown those who are part of Himself. He will always carry out His promises to us.”

“So remind yourself of these great facts, and don’t argue over unimportant things. Such arguments are confusing and useless and even harmful. Work hard so God can say to you “Well done.” Be a good workman, one who does not need to be ashamed when God examines your work. Know what His Word says and means. Steer clear of foolish discussions that lead people into the sin of anger with each other. For things will be said that can burn and hurt for a long time to come,” 2 Tim. 2:7-17 TLB.



There are things that we have said and done, and things that have been said and done to us that burn and have hurt for a long time. Yes, bad things happen that affect the way we think, feel and even believe, but we don’t need to play the victim.

David chose five stones before he went to slay that giant. We too can choose stones from heaven’s Rock quarry. Choose five Scriptures that are encouraging and comforting and uplifting. Instead of saying how fearful or upset or worried...you are, profess how amazing God and His grace. Know the power of God’s grace is made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). God helped those whose stories are recorded

in the Bible, and He will also help those who trust His Word because He shows no partiality (Job 34:19).

Even those who worked against you Lord, though they lacked spiritual revelation about Who You were, they professed You spoke and taught what is right. For You teach the way of God in accordance to the truth (Luke 20:21). So that in all things we can be more than a conqueror through You. Nothing is able to separate us from the love of God that is in the Lord (Rom. 8:37-39).

And though our heart may be fearful God has given us His Word of Truth:

“Be strong, do not fear, your God will come, He will come with a vengeance; with divine retribution He will come to save you.”

Isa. 35:3-4

Proclaim God’s Word with your mouth, with all your heart and soul, “Lord, I believe you are with me standing at my side, giving me strength. You will deliver me. Lord you will rescue me from every evil attack, and bring me safely to Your heavenly kingdom,” 2 Tim. 4:17.



Yes, David choose five stones, but he only needed one to see that giant fall, for the Lord of Heaven's Armies was by his side. Because David lived according to his faith, he experienced the Lord at his side fighting for him. That shepherd boy rose to prominence exalting God with the Psalms he wrote and with the music he played and with so many choices that he made to give glory to the Lord.

It's amazing how our thinking and decisions and behavior will be altered, when they are meant to bring glory to the Lord. When God's Word is proclaimed by the choices that are made, you give yourself time to personally experience as David did, ample opportunities to taste how good the Lord truly is.

There is no want to those who fear Him for those who trust in Jesus are blessed by God (Ps. 34:8-9). God will meet not some of your needs, but ALL your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19).

You know, when a child asks for something that might harm them, they must be told "No" even if a fuss is made. Well there are things we want and desire that God must also say "No." A desire, a want, a longing has the power to turn us in the wrong direction. Our own

heart has this power. When we realize our essential need - a Savior - our heart can be subdued by God's Word, Christ Jesus, for this is from Whom we receive all Truth and godly Wisdom.



Long ago a choice was made, an error in judgment that allowed evil to taint not only the world but also our very soul. We use a coin - heads you win, tails you lose - however, this can't prevent bad choices. The desire of God's heart is to make us the head and not the tail so we will always be at the top, never at the bottom (Deut. 28:13a).

However, to share in a relationship with God there is no need to flip that coin, for a simple choice doesn't have the strength of commitment. A choice requires a decision for something to be done; however, a commitment is a pledge that will affect every choice we make.

Here are a few words that are synonymous with commitment for they are alike in meaning and significance: allegiance, attachment, constancy, devotedness, loyalty, faithfulness, steadfastness, trustworthiness, reliability, promise, word, pact, force, covenant...All of this and so much more God offers and expects from us.



A choice is a determination, inclination, alternative selection, preference, partiality, cherry-picked, adequate, passable, traditional, standard, free-will, which is definitely God given. Yes, God has given us power – free will – to make choices that me, myself and I prefer, or to make a commitment that requires not just give thought, but make decisions that demonstrate an allegiance to another.

God's Word tells us, it's not who we are, not what we say and do that counts. Your true being brims over into true words and deeds (Luke 6:45 Message). The person who chooses to do good, brings good things out the good stored up in their heart; but those who choose to do evil, brings evil things out of the evil stored up in their heart, for out of the overflow of their heart their mouth speaks (Luke 6:45).



In Matthew 26:41 the Lord instructs His disciples:

“All of you must keep awake. Pay attention and be cautious. Watch and pray that you may not come into temptation, for

the spirit may indeed be willing, but the flesh is weak.”

When a commitment is made to another, a pause should occur to decide the course that will keep us following the most excellent Way of Love (1 Cor. 12:31) instead of running into trouble.

When we allow our thoughts and feelings to focus on self-interest, impulsive – compulsive, obsessional, uncontrollable, instinctive, mechanical, unwitting, fickle, erratic, arbitrary, romantic, volatile – choices will be made.

Our way of thinking can actually have us doing what the Lord’s Prayer asks not to be done, lead us into temptation (Matt. 6:13). The first thing that must be known and understood, God does not tempt anyone, nor can He be tempted by evil.

When a person is being tempted it is by a thought, their own or someone else’s. They are enticed and drug away to do what is impossible - satisfy the yearnings of a tainted heart. These desires are ignited by thoughts to do what is wrong, by wishes that are unfit and corrupt - contaminated by self-interest and counterfeit (inauthentic, meant to mimic, queer, mock, double-dealing, empty, hollow, meaningless, untruthful) faith (1 Tim. 1:5 Message).



A person of perverse heart does not know spiritual prosperity; they fall into trouble for their tongue is as deceitful as their heart (Prov. 17:20). A tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. And the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting the entire body. It can set a person's whole life on fire, for hell itself sets a tongue on fire.

People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and fish, but no one can tame the tongue, for it is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. Sometimes it praises the Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth (James 3:5-10 NLT).



Beloved, don't be misled, our thoughts, our tongue, our own heartfelt-desires are where temptation comes, and leads to the birth of sinful actions, and afterward to the death penalty decreed by God (James 1:14-16 TLB). The objective of God's Word of Truth is that all believers

would be filled with Love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience and genuine faith.

But some people have missed this whole point. They have turned away from these things and spend their time in meaningless discussions. They want to be known as teachers of ritual and tradition, but they don't know what they are talking about, even though they speak so confidently.

We know the Law is good when used correctly. For the law was not intended for people who do what is right, it is for people who are lawless and rebellious. For people who are ungodly and sinful, who consider nothing sacred and defile what is holy, who kill parents or commit other murders.

The law is for people who are sexually immoral, or who practice homosexuality, or are slave traders, liars, promise breakers, or who do anything else that contradicts the wholesome teaching that comes from the glorious Good News entrusted to us by our blessed God (1 Tim. 1:5-11 NLT).

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Everyone is tempted to do what is wrong, even Jesus, Who after forty days and forty nights of fasting when He was weakened by hunger the tempter came to tempt Him three times. First he said, “If, you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” But, Jesus said:

“It is written, ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Matt. 4:1-4

Jesus knew that all that is in the world, which tempts mankind does not come from the Father, but from the world itself. The devil knew this Man, Christ Jesus, was famished so he tempted His flesh knowing how easy it is to sway someone to fall into temptation and satisfy the cravings of their flesh (1 John 2:16a AMP).



When this didn't work, the devil took Jesus to the holy city, and had Him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If, you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “He will command His angels concerning You, and they will lift You up in their hands, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.”

Jesus answered him:

“It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” Matt. 4:5-7

Jesus knew this enemy of God’s was trying to incite a prideful response, for the pride of life – assurances in one’s own resources or in the stability of earthly things – causes many to succumb to temptation (1 John 2:16b AMP).



Jesus wasn’t a bit surprised that Satan knew Scripture, for the Lord knew His nemesis masquerades as an angel of light. Yes, it should not be a bit surprising when the self-serving masquerade as servants of righteousness. God’s Word assures their end will be what their actions deserve (2 Cor. 11:15). When someone is not familiar with the Word of Truth, they can be easily duped by someone who misquotes or misinterprets God’s Word.

With knowledge and understanding of God’s Word, Christ Jesus, every kind of evil can be avoided, when a commitment is made to hold onto the good, and not to quench Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19-20),

or smother the fire of the Kingdom-Life that Holy Spirit ignites within us, to transform us from the inside out.



Holy Spirit cleans house – making a clean sweep of our lives. He’ll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false He’ll put out with the trash to be burned (Luke 3:16-17 Message). When the Word of Life is known, the Lord can guard you in all your ways for Truth exposes all deceit. The devil did what he usually does – be deceitful – for when he quoted from Psalm 91 he deliberately excluded the intent of God’s Word for us.

“If you make the Most High your dwelling – even the Lord, Who is my refuge – then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the cobra; you will trample the serpent.”

“Because he/she loves Me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue them; I will protect them, for they acknowledge My name.

They will call upon Me, and I will answer them. I will be with them in trouble, I will deliver them and honor them. With long life will I satisfy them, and show them My salvation," Ps. 91:9-16).

Yes, God has given power to His King; He has increased the strength of His Anointed One (1 Sam. 2:10 NLT). For the foundations of the earth are the Lord's; upon them He has set the world. He will guard the feet of His saints, but the wicked will be silenced in darkness. It is not by strength that one prevails; those who oppose the Lord will be shattered (1 Sam. 2:8-10). It will be said, 'In the Lord alone are righteousness and strength (Isa. 45:24).



There is a great King and High Priest, the Lord Christ Jesus, Who has gone through the heavens. God gives us a great and precious faith to hold onto firmly. For this King and High Priest is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, for He Himself has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.

With faith in Jesus, we can approach the Throne of Grace with confidence, knowing God will bestow mercy, and we will receive the power of His grace to help us in our times of need (Heb. 4:14-16).

The devil tempted Jesus that third time by taking Him to a very high mountain to show Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if, You will bow down and worship me.” Jesus said to him:

“Away from Me Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him **only**.’”

Matt. 4:8-10

The Lord was well aware the tempter was trying to tantalize His mind with greedy longings for the eyes are very lustful (1 John 2:16c AMP).

The Lord has said:

“IF you pay attention to God’s Word, to the directives of the Lord, and carefully follow them; if you do not allow your heart to turn you aside from what is good and right in God’s sight; then, you will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out. But, if you choose to follow

what seems good and right in your own sight, you are giving evil time and opportunity to curse you when you come in and to curse you when you go out.

Deut. 28:6, Deut. 28:19



I have done what seemed the good and right thing to do, as most everyone does. I have not only seen but experienced bad; however, I couldn't see those evil forces working to curse me. Bad is going to happen. In this world that is inevitable, but we can't see how God is working in all things so Good can be made apparent. Rom. 8:28 says, We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

How many times we isolated and kept secrets because there was no one who seemed to care; no one we believed could be trusted. But there is One we can always turn to anytime, anywhere. For day after day the Lord carries us along. Blessed by the Lord – our Savior, our God! He's God-for-us, He's God-Who-saves-us.

Lord God knows all, and loves us. He knows death's ins and outs. What's more, He made heads roll, split the skulls of the enemy as He marched out of heaven, saying:

"I tied up the Dragon in knots, put a muzzle on the Deep Blue Sea."

Ps. 68:19-23 Message



May God arise, may His enemies be scattered; may His foes flee before Him. As smoke is blown away by the wind, may He blow them away. God revealed His Word:

"This is My Son, Whom I love, Whom I have chosen, with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!"

Mark 9:7, Luke 9:35, 2 Peter 1:17

Great was and is the company of those who proclaim Him. So sing to God, sing praises to His name, extol Him Who rides the clouds – His name is the Lord – rejoice before Him (Ps. 68:1-2,11,4).



I share God's Word so Jesus can be known for it is the love of Christ that constrains (reins in, impresses, restrains) holds us back from temptation and sin (2 Cor. 5:14).

The Lord does not want us to be harmed. So proclaim God's Word, "Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of Death;" (the Lord wants you to know Him personally so your voice will be heard, and your actions will reveal a steadfast faith in God's Word): "I will fear or dread no evil, for You, Oh Lord, are with me. My Good Shepherd! Your rod to protect, and Your staff to guide, they comfort me."

"You, O Lord, prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup runs over. Surely, Your goodness, mercy and unfailing love shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord, forever." Ps. 23:4-6.



So stop evaluating yourself and others from a human point of view. At one time we have thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we have gotten to know Him. Anyone who

belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

When it is believed that Christ died for all, then it is also believed that those who make more than a decision; instead, a commitment, have also died to their old life. Jesus died for everyone so that those who receive His new Life will no longer live for themselves (2 Cor. 5:12-15a NLT) in love with the things of this world.

How then could the love of the Father be in them? For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of their eyes, and the prideful boasting of what they have and do – comes not from God, but from the world. When it is known and believed, the world and its desires will pass away, but those who do the will of God live forever (1 John 2:15-17).

All of this is a gift from God, Who brought us back to Himself through Christ. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people's sins against them; instead, that we could become ambassadors of heaven so through us God can make His appeal known. We speak for Jesus when we plead, "Come back to God." For God made Christ, Who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin so

that we could be made right with our heavenly Father through Him (2 Cor. 5:15b-21 NLT).



There's a question we ask people when we evangelize. Who is your favorite celebrity? If you were to knock at their door would they invite you in? No, because you are not known to them. There are people with knowledge of God or Who they believe Him to be, but is that enough to receive an invitation to enter His Kingdom?

John wrote, if we obey what God has told us to do, then we are sure that we know Him. If we say we know God, but do not obey His commands, we are lying to ourselves. Truth is not working in us. But, when we obey God's teaching, His love is truly working in us. This is how we know that we are living in Him. If we say we live in God, we must live as Jesus (1 John 2:6 ERV).

Do you want to stand out? To be the greatest, then step down. Be a servant. Those who think themselves great will be disappointed and humbled when the wind gets knocked out of them. But if you're content with being humble, simply being yourself, your life will count for plenty for you shall be exalted (Matt. 23:11-12 TLB/Message).

Especially in bad situations, if we believe God will definitely make good apparent, we will not be dissuaded from exalting all the good God has done for us. The enemy works so bad things will occur to depress and discourage and distress. But God, He works right through the bad so we can bear fruit for good works so that even when trouble and upset occurs we can see to it that God is glorified.



Luke tells of a time when Jesus sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, and was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs.

When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at His feet, shouting at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torture me!” For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

When the demons had gone, the man begged to go with Jesus, but the Lord sent him away, saying:

“Return home and tell people how much God has done for you.”

Luke 8:26-29,28-39

Come and see what God has done for you, how awesome His works in man's behalf (Ps. 66:5). There's a song I heard on K-LOVE sung by Tasha Layton, "LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE" that speaks of God's awesome works for us and in us:

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

Look what You've done
How could you fall so far?
You should be ashamed of yourself
So I was ashamed of myself

The lies I believed
They got some roots that run deep
I let 'em take hold of my life
I let 'em take control of my life

Standing in Your presence, Lord
I can feel Your diggin' all the roots up
I feel Yah healin' all my wounds up
All I can say is, "Hallelujah"

Look what You've done, look what You've done in me
You spoke Your truth into the lies I let my heart believe
Look at me now, look how You made me new
Oh, the enemy did everything that he could do
Oh, but look what You've done

On the cross, in the grave
With a stone rolled away
All my debt, it was paid
Look what You've done
In my heart, in my mind
In my soul, in my life
With my hands lifted high, I'm singing

Look what You've done, look what You've done in me
You spoke Your truth into the lies I let my heart believe

Look at me now, look how You made me new
Oh, the enemy did everything that he could do
Oh, but look what You've done

On the cross, in the grave
With a stone rolled away
All my debt, it was paid
Look what You've done
In my heart, in my mind
In my soul, in my life
With my hands lifted high, I'm singing
Look what You've done



God gives us knowledge of Truth so we can be strengthened with all power (Col. 1:11). Not just the power of faith, but the power of kindness and gentleness, the power of peace and patience, the power of faithfulness and self-control, the power of joy and goodness, the power of Love (Gal. 5:22).

God is good, and He empowers us with hope and grace giving us strength so we too can delight in weakness and insult, hardship and

persecution and difficulty for when we are weak, through God's Word we are made strong (2 Cor. 12:10). How can we not be encouraged and comforted and strengthened when we know that according to God's glorious might we are given great endurance to persevere in faith.

How could we not give back to God joyful thanks, when He has qualified us to share in such a glorious inheritance in His Kingdom of Light? When we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we can profess God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness. He has brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in Whom we have redemption. God has bestowed His grace upon us, for He has forgiven our sins (Col. 1:13-14).

Thankfully, when we are fearful or feeling depressed or sad or lonely, when we have been or are hurting we can profess God is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). He will rescue me from the dominion of darkness. No good thing will God withhold from those who walk along His paths, for Jehovah God is our Light and our Protector. He gives us grace and glory (Ps. 84:11 TLB).



God sent His Word so we can remember there is goodness we receive from His Word of Truth that encourages and uplifts, comforts and supports. Jesus is the Word of Truth. Jesus is God's Word of Life. Through the Lord we receive faith and hope and confidence in God, Who has begun a good work in us. Of this you can be certain our heavenly Father will continue that good work to completion until the day the Lord returns (Phil. 1:6).

God gives knowledge of Himself and His Word and His Spirit of Truth so we can be successful in our stand against evil. However, we need knowledge of ourselves, and how our fallen nature works against us. God knows us and our circumstances so He offers His personalized assistance.

Good can be accomplished by sharing our testimony; however, when God speaks to us personally, the power of Good working within us is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine (NIV). Yes, far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of - infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts or hopes (Eph. 3:20 TLB).



God knows every concern we have, and every issue we're struggling with, and He prompts us to seek out information that will be beneficial. God wants no one to be victimized. God's desire was and is and will continue to be that no one would be victimized, but sadly, since that has not been the case articles such as this one may be insightful. "Victim Mentality: How We Hold Ourselves Back by Blaming Others," by Allay Cooks-Campbell. This article was posted on the website BetterUp <https://www.betterup.com/blog/victim-mentality#:~:text=A%20victim%20mentality%20is%20when,or%20situations%20are%20their%20fault>.

A victim mentality is when someone feels that bad things keep happening to them no matter what. The root of this mentality is the belief that none of the circumstances or situations are their fault.

There are three core beliefs underlying the victim mentality:

- Bad things just happen to me, no matter what I do.
- Bad things are other people's fault, not mine.
- I can't change what happens, so there's no point in trying.

You may hear yourself or someone else utter one of these phrases, but often, the attitudes accompanying victimhood are much more subtle. After all, no one goes around broadcasting that they have a

victim complex, and they're less likely to think of themselves that way. Look for these innocuous signs:

- Puts themselves down constantly, even if they say they're "joking"
- Doesn't look forward to anything about the future
- Angry or resentful of others' good fortune
- Tells the same negative stories over and over
- Minimizes positive events or good news, whether from themselves or others
- Self-pity and a strong sense of entitlement
- Often defensive and sensitive to criticism
- Lacks empathy for other people's problems
- Overly concerned about "keeping score" and fairness
- Always has a reason why a proposed solution "would never work"
- Seems preoccupied with past traumas
- Believes everyone else has it easier than they do
- Extremely risk averse
- Obsesses over negative situations, but seemingly uninterested in solving them
- Never accepts personal responsibility or criticism from others, no matter how gently it's phrased

- Quick to judge others, seeing them as either friends or enemies

While it can be hard to sympathize with someone who is so defensive, many of these traits are developed as a result of traumatic experiences. These individuals often feel that people are untrustworthy or out to get them. Because of this, they keep their guard up, harping on negative events to avoid emotional vulnerability.

- No one is born a victim. A victim complex isn't a personality trait – it's learned behavior. In fact, victim syndrome could be considered a type of learned helplessness. Learned helplessness is a phenomenon in psychology where people who have traumatic experiences feel that they can't escape it, no matter what they do.
- Here are some circumstances that might result in developing a victim mentality as a coping mechanism:

Trauma

If a person has experienced a traumatic situation in their youth, they may feel like life is inherently difficult and there's nothing they can do to make it better. This is a key way that learned helplessness develops. Victims may feel that no one understands them or that they can't trust anyone to help them.

Manipulation

Some people enjoy the attention and sense of control that victimhood brings. Even though they feel like they lack control over the circumstances in their life, they thrive on the validation and sympathy from others. Being able to get other people to stop and help them – or at the very least, feel sorry for them – helps them retain a sense of importance and control.

Lack of accountability

People may respond to low standards or expectations by playing the victim. Whether because someone else has always stepped up to take responsibility, or because people don't expect much, being "out of control" becomes comfortable. Victimhood provides anonymity and protection. When you're never at the wheel, things are never your fault.

Avoidance

Sometimes we are more afraid of our own success than we are of our failure. Giving up responsibility for ourselves and our actions makes us feel like we don't have to be accountable for what we say we want. Chasing our dreams requires a degree of vulnerability,

resilience, self-confidence, and willingness to grow – none of which you need if you just play the victim card.

When you give up responsibility for your life, that's not all you give up. Victim syndrome is associated with decreased well-being, poor social connections, and self-destructive behavior. Here are several behaviors and thought patterns you may notice or experience that have their roots in victim syndrome:

- Difficulty sustaining personal relationships
- Feeling guilty, ashamed, or inadequate
- Feelings of languish or being “stuck” in life
- Inability to feel pleasure or positive feelings
- Hopeless about the possibility of change or getting help
- Fear that everyone is out to get you or will take advantage of you
- Inability to enjoy successes when they do occur

Ironically, recognizing the symptoms of a victim mentality in your own life may make you feel more hopeless. Remember, though, that no one is born a victim. Victim syndrome is a learned pattern that

helps us cope with trauma. The way to release it is to find other ways to make yourself feel safe and in control.

Take responsibility for your life

The opposite of victimhood is accountability. While your circumstances may not be your fault, they are your responsibility. That doesn't mean that you caused it. It just means that you have the ability to respond to your circumstances and change the outcome.



How many of us have blamed our little sister or brother for breaking a family heirloom? How many of us have pointed the finger at our co-worker for screwing something up at work? Playing the victim is something many of us have done without even realizing it.

Unfortunately, playing the victim rarely gets anybody what they want. Furthermore, people that believe they are victims tend to push friends, family, and coworkers away.

Let's look at 14 signs that someone is playing the victim card and what they need to do instead.

Card # 1. Shirks Responsibility

Someone struggling with a victim-mentality refuses to take responsibility for the circumstance that they are in. Instead, they point the finger to make others feel guilty, or simply ignore their role in perpetuating the problem.

What's the remedy here? Every circumstance, situation, and event in life offers an opportunity for growth. They may not be completely responsible for what has occurred, but they can always ask if they contributed somehow.

Asking this question invites a person to be responsible, mature, and cooperative. Plus, it will help them avoid similar situations in the future. Accountability is essential because it ensures you're making progress toward your goals. Accountability also encourages honesty and responsibility, which are critical components of a healthy, prosperous lifestyle.



There's a time Luke wrote about when Jesus and His disciples were on their way to Jerusalem. They came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed them into her home. Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's

feet, listening to what He taught. But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to You that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

But Jesus said to her:

"My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken from her."

Luke 10:38-42 NLT

We don't know if this was a behavior Mary routinely displayed – shirking responsibility. However, being willing to learn what God's Word says is a responsibility no one should be willing to shirk. For though we are well aware there are many reasons someone can fall victim to foul play, we may not be as well aware to what God's Word says.

God sees the trouble and grief people cause. He takes note of it and will punish them (Ps. 10:14a NLT). Yes, the eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good (Prov. 15:3). The victim commits themselves to the Lord (Ps. 10:14b Fire Bible), for they are aware of how important it is to place their trust in God's Word of Truth. Many come to

realize, though God's presence may not be felt, God's Word is ever present encouraging, supporting, comforting, teaching – God will test a person so everything that is in their heart can be known (2 Chron. 32:31). Jesus said to Martha ;

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

John 11:40

Have you ever met a strong person with an easy past?

Don't quit before the miracle happens

~

Card # 2. Frozen in Their Life

Victims believe that they are at the mercy of everyone and everything around them. Usually, a victim will not make progress or advance in their life because they perceive that they feel powerless. As a result, their life is stagnant.

If you were to ask them why, they would respond by giving you a laundry list of reasons why they are stuck. The real sticking point here is the victim will not usually tell you what they plan to do about their lack of progress in life.

In order to fix this, they need to see that small behaviors or changes in their attitude can reap big rewards. Encourage them to make a list of small, achievable steps that can be taken towards a goal in their life. Hold them accountable and ask them to hold themselves accountable, too, in order to get them out of the role of victim.



John wrote of a time when Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days. Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches. Crowds of sick people – blind, lame or paralyzed – lay on the porches. One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him, and knew he had been ill for a long time, He asked the man:

“Would you like to get well?”

“I can’t, sir,” the sick man said, “for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.”

Jesus told him:

“Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!”

Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking (John 5:1-9 NLT).

Thirty-eight years is a very long time to be stuck in the circumstances of life. John wrote, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers (3 John 2).

I don't know if you also struggle with being stuck in a circumstance of life. I do know God wants us to be in health – spiritually, physically, emotionally, mentally, financially and socially – so we can not only become prosperous in our endeavors, but that our soul prospers because we have endeavored to know His Word of Truth.

That man met Jesus and was healed. Scriptures tell us large crowds would gather around Jesus. How did they know to come when there were no TV's or radios at their disposal? How powerful word of mouth? That paralyzed man heard of Jesus and his faith was apparent. He got right up and walked.

Paul told us, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ (Rom. 10:17). Faith in God, in His Word and in the power of Holy Spirit to transform our thinking, our perspectives, those feelings and beliefs that keep us stuck is key to finding the willingness to Ask, to Seek, and to Knock.

God has given us His Word so we can receive faith and hope and love for Him and for ourselves and our future. God's Word doesn't just address our spiritual needs but also our physical needs. Truth is not only the cure; Truth is the medicine. And we know medicine can taste bad, and have a bitter after-taste. Truth about ourselves can be difficult when encountered, but Truth is the best remedy for every ailment.

So accept the Lord's invitation and Ask because you will receive; Seek because you will discover; Knock and the door will be opened (Matt. 7:7). Then you can begin to do as God's Word instructs:

"Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment."

John 7:24

Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over,

It became a beautiful butterfly

Zen Proverb

Faith is not belief without proof, but Trust without reservation



Card # 3. Holding Grudges

The victim likes to hang onto old grievances, and make other people feel bad about their actions. They carry these grudges around like weapons, just in case anyone ever tries to hold them accountable for something. A victim will bring up old memories and events in which they were probably legitimately hurt, but they use them as reasons why they can't make changes to their attitude, their life, or their circumstances in the present.

To move forward and curb this behavior, it needs to be understood that keeping grudges is only holding themselves down. The victim needs to recognize that freeing others of blame is actually returning power back to themselves.

~

Mark wrote of a time when Jesus and His disciples were leaving Bethany. Jesus was hungry, and noticed a fig tree in full leaf a little way off, so He went over to see if He could find any figs. But there were only leaves because it was too early in the season for fruit. Then Jesus said to the tree:

“May no one ever eat your fruit again!”

The disciples heard Him say this (Mark 11:12-14 NLT).

The next morning as they passed by the fig tree Jesus had cursed, the disciples noticed it had withered from the roots up. Peter remembered what Jesus had said to the tree on the previous day and exclaimed, “Look, Rabbi! The fig tree you cursed has withered and died!” Jesus said to them:

“Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, ‘May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and it will happen. But you must really believe it will happen, and have no doubt in your heart. I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you’ve received it, it will be yours. But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too.”

Mark 11:20-25 NLT

By all appearances, that fig tree was bearing fruit; however, the appearance was false. Isaiah wrote of false appearances. There are people who come near to the Lord with their mouth, and honor Him with their lips, but their heart is far from Him. Their worship of Him is made up only of rules taught by men (Isa. 29:13).

The Lord said to the prophet Ezekiel:

“People show up, and sit in your company. They listen to you speak, but don’t do a thing you say. They flatter you with compliments, but all they care about is making money and getting ahead. To them you’re merely entertainment. They love to hear you talk, but nothing comes of it.”

Ezek. 33:30-32 Message

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters

Compared to what lies within us

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Easing God Out – Let go of your EGO

~

Card # 4. Trouble Being Assertive

The victim does not truly believe they can control their life, so they have difficulty stating what they need, desire, or deserve. Their life will usually involve repeating patterns of submissiveness and passivity. This pattern is detrimental to self-esteem and personal development. The victim generally fails to break this pattern and suffers from potential anxiety or depressive disorders.

What's the remedy here? A first recommendation is to seek help from a professional psychologist, counselor, or life coach. This is a chance for the victim to turn the direction of their life around.

Ultimately, learning to be assertive is not a quick fix. It will take time, practice, learning, failing, and trying over and over. In the end, however, he/she will no longer feel that gnawing sense of helplessness and self-pity that has kept them down for so long



Luke wrote of a time when Jesus was surrounded by the crowds. A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding, and she could find no cure. Coming up behind Jesus, she touched the fringe of His robe. Immediately, the bleeding stopped. Jesus asked:

“Who touched Me?”

Everyone denied it, and Peter said, “Lord, this whole crowd is pressing up against you.” But Jesus said:

“Someone deliberately touched me, for I felt healing power go out from Me.”

When the woman realized that she could not stay hidden, she began to tremble and fell to her knees before Him. The whole crowd heard her explain why she had touched Him, and that she had been immediately healed. He said to her:

“Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”

Luke 8:42-48 NLT

Though this woman was verbally nonassertive, she acted with assertiveness. According to the law, a woman having a flow of blood was considered ceremonially unclean, and was made to reside away from others. This woman lived like this for twelve years, helpless and hopeless until she heard about Jesus. Through Jesus the penalties of the Law are reversed, and the contamination of this world had no effect on Him. The woman did not make

Jesus unclean – He made her clean! (from Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, PC Study Bible Formatted Electronic Database Copyright © 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All Rights reserved.)

Let your hopes, not your hurts, shape your future

Robert H. Schuller

FAITH = Fantastic Adventure In Trusting Him



Card # 5. They Feel Powerless

This could be a shadow behavior, meaning the victim does not outwardly show that they feel powerless. Instead, the victim will try to be manipulative, coercive, and underhanded in getting what they need.

You may have dealt with someone who displays this kind of behavior. Usually, the victim is someone that is suspicious of others, feels insecure, and constantly needs to know the latest gossip.



Matthew wrote of a time when Jesus had dismissed His disciples, and went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there

alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, being buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

During the fourth watch of the night (3-6am), Jesus went out to them walking on the lake. When the disciples saw Him walking on the lake they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them:

"Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

"Lord, if it's You," Peter replied, "tell me to come to You on the water."
Jesus said:

"Come."

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But, when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught Him saying:

"You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God,"
Matt. 14:23-33.

Christ never failed to distinguish between doubt and unbelief

Doubt is can't believe. Unbelief is won't believe

Doubt is honesty. Unbelief is obstinacy

Doubt is looking for light. Unbelief is content with darkness

Henry Drummond

H-O-W = Honesty, Open-mindedness, Willingness



5. They Feel Powerless (Yes, this is repeated but I went with it, my thought maybe it needed to be repeated. The story is different.)

This could be a shadow behavior, meaning that the victim does not outwardly show that they feel powerless. Instead, the victim will try to be manipulative, coercive, and underhanded in getting what they need.

You may have dealt with someone experiencing this kind of powerlessness. Usually, the victim is someone that is suspicious of

others, feels insecure, and constantly needs to know the latest gossip while playing the victim.



Luke wrote of a time when Jesus was speaking, and someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," he said. "Don't bother the teacher anymore." Hearing this Jesus said to Jairus:

"Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed."

When He arrived at the house of Jairus, Jesus did not let anyone go in with Him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother. Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. Jesus said:

"Stop wailing, she is not dead but asleep."

They laughed at Him, knowing that she was dead. But He took her by the hand and said:

"My child, get up!"

Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. Her parents were astonished (Luke 8:49-56).

*Jesus' whole life and mission involved accepting
Powerlessness, and revealing in that
Powerlessness the limitlessness of God's love*

Henri J.M. Nouwen

If God seems far away, who moved?



Card # 6. They Don't Trust Others

This issue is not only a problem of not trusting others. This is a problem of the victim not believing they are trustworthy themselves. The victim makes the assumption that other people are exactly like them: untrustworthy.

To help this issue, the victim must examine the evidence. There are trustworthy people in the world and people that want the best for you. It is the job of the victim to begin revising their old assumptions about people instead of always playing the victim.



John told of a time when Jesus was talking to a Jewish religious leader, Nicodemus, a member of the sect of the Pharisees. Jesus said:

“What I am telling you so earnestly is this: Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, they cannot enter the Kingdom of God. So don’t be surprised at My statement that you must be born again! Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it will go next, so it is with the Spirit.”

Nicodemus asked, “What do you mean?” Jesus replied:

“You, a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things? I am telling you what I know and have seen – and yet you won’t believe Me. If you don’t even believe Me when I tell you about such things as these that happen here among men, how can you possibly believe if I tell you what is going on in heaven?

“Only I, the Messiah, have come to earth and will return to heaven again. And as Moses in the wilderness lifted up the bronze image of a serpent on a pole, even so I must be lifted up upon a pole, so that anyone who believes in Me will have eternal life.”

“For God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son so that anyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal

life. God did not send His Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it."

"There is no eternal doom awaiting those who trust God to save them. But those who don't trust Him have already been tried and condemned for not believing in the only Son of God."

"Their sentence is based on this fact: the Light from heaven came into the world, but they loved the darkness more than the Light, for their deeds were evil. They stayed away from that Light for fear their sins would be exposed, and they would be punished. But, those doing right come gladly to the Light to let everyone see they are doing what God wants them to."

John 3:5-21 TLB

When you make a commitment, you create hope,

When you keep a commitment, you create trust

John C. Maxwell

Let God and Trust God



Card # 7. They Don't Know When Enough Is Enough

In relationships, victims have no sense of limits. They don't know when to say enough is enough. They have a hard time creating boundaries, both for themselves and others.

To begin fixing this, boundaries are crucial. What is the maximum they are willing to take in a relationship, or in any given situation? It is the responsibility of the victim to decide these boundaries for themselves.

If you are a friend or loved one, you should also set boundaries with the "victim." Decide how much of their victim behavior you're willing to put up with before you bow out.



Matthew told of this teaching of the Lord's:

"If someone has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders off, doesn't he leave the ninety-nine and go after the one? And if he finds it, doesn't he make far more over it than over the ninety-nine who stay put?"

Your Father in heaven feels the same way. He doesn't want to lose even one believer.

"If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell them – work it out between the two of you. If they listen, you've made a friend. If they won't listen, take one or two along so the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If they still won't listen, tell the church. If they won't listen to the church, (treat them as a Gentile or a tax collector). Confront them with the need for repentance, and offer again God's forgiving love."

"Take this most seriously: A yes on earth is yes in heaven; a no on earth is no in heaven. What you say to one another is eternal. I mean this. When two of you get together on anything at all on earth and make a prayer of it, My Father in heaven goes into action. And when two or three of you are together because of Me, you can be sure that I'll be there." Matt. 18:12-20 Message

Enough is Enough

Seriously, be strong and know when enough is enough.

*Take your stand, speak up and refuse to let others hurt you. Throughout your
lifetime some people will discredit you,
Disrespect you and treat You poorly
For no apparent reason at all.*

*Don't consume yourself with trying to change them
Or win their approval.*

*And don't make any space in your heart to hate them.
You don't have control over what others think about you,
But you do have control over how you decide
To internalize their opinions.*

*Leave them to their own judgments. Let people love you
For who you are, and not for who they want you to be.
Or let them walk away if they choose.*

*They can't harm you either way;
It's their understanding that is faulty,
Not yours!*

(Published in a Few Words, Rama Krishna)

*Be strong enough to let go, and patient enough
To wait for what you deserve*

~

Card # 8. They Argue a Lot

The victim has trouble choosing their battles. To them, every battle is a war. They feel that they are under attack all the time and have a hard time realizing that not everything is about them.

What's the remedy here? The victim needs to realize that a difference of opinion or a piece of criticism is not necessarily about them. It could very well be about the other person. The victim must recognize they have a choice over whether they allow themselves to enter into petty arguments and decide what it is worth to them.



John wrote what he heard Jesus say:

"I am the Good Shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know Me - just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father - and I lay down My life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to My voice, and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd."

"The reason My Father loves Me is that I lay down My life - only to take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay down My

life of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from My Father."

John 10:14-18

John wanted the world to know that Jesus was no victim: huge crowds followed the Lord, and He healed them all. He warned them not to make Him known, so that what God spoke through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

"Here is My Servant Whom I have chosen, My beloved in Whom My soul delights; I will put My Spirit on Him, and He will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not argue or shout, and no one will hear His voice in the streets. He will not break a bruised reed, and He will not put out a smoldering wick, until He has led justice to victory. The nations will put their hope in His name."

Matt. 12:15-21 Apologetics Study Bible

Discussions are always better than arguments.

*An argument is to find out **who** is right,*

*And a discussion is to find out **what** is right*

(www.loveandsayings.com)

Say what you mean, but don't say it mean



Card # 9. They Feel Self-Pity

Victims have a habit of pitying themselves. Their mirror reflects a defenseless child that cannot fend for themselves. Since other people do not usually show them sympathy or empathy, they try to give it to themselves, only to potentially appear immature to others. This further traps them and keeps them playing the victim.

The victim needs to recognize that all people have tough days and experience bad events. Even the luckiest people experience unfortunate events. They must learn to avoid thinking that they are the only person in the world that experienced sad, difficult, or unfair circumstances.



Matthew told of a parable Jesus shared:

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day, and sent them in his vineyard.”

“About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the market place doing nothing. He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went.”

“He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. About the eleventh hour he went out, and found still others standing around; He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’ They answered, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ So He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.”

“When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going to the first.”

“The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius; so when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ‘These men who were hired last worked only one

hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'"

"But the landowner answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Matt. 20:1-16

*You are braver than you believe
You are stronger than you seem
You are smarter than you think
You are loved more than you'll ever know*

*Pride isn't always manifested as arrogance.
Many times it is self-pity.
Pride is a self-fixation that can manifest itself
In a million different ways*

Jared C. Wilson

*Humility is not thinking less of yourself,
But thinking of yourself less*



Card # 10. They Constantly Compare Themselves to Others

The victim usually struggles with the habit of comparing themselves to others negatively. The truth is that we are all lacking in some respect compared to others, so it will always be easy to engage in this behavior or train of thought.

In order to improve this, the victim needs to change their view. They must recognize that they have good qualities and likely have experienced privileges, too. This will also help their mental health overall.



Luke told how the crowd grew larger and larger, and Jesus said to them:

“The people who live today are evil. They ask for a miracle as a sign from God. But no miracle will be done to prove anything to them. The only sign will be the miracle that happened to Jonah. Jonah was a sign for those who lived in Nineveh. It is the same with the Son of Man. He will be a sign for the people of this time.”

“On the judgment day, you people who live now will be compared with the Queen of the South, and she will be a witness who shows how guilty you are. Why do I say this? Because she traveled from far, far away to listen to Solomon’s wise teaching. And I tell you that someone greater than Solomon is right here, but you won’t listen!”

“On the judgment day, you people who live now will also be compared with the people from Nineveh, and they will be witnesses who show how guilty you are. I say this because when Jonah preached to those people, they changed their hearts and lives. And you are listening to someone greater than Jonah, but you refuse to change!”

Luke 11:29-32 ERV

Comparison is the thief of Joy

Teddy Roosevelt

*You can’t think yourself into a new way of living,
You have to live your way into a new way of thinking*



Card # 11. They See Life as Always Lacking

Even when something good happens, the victim will seek out what's lacking or what's missing. The victim will complain about complaining, and then complain that they can't stop complaining.

Instead, they should count their blessings. The victim needs to treasure each good thing in their life and develop a new habit of being positive and optimistic through gratitude. They should aim to be the most thankful and hopeful person they can be.



John wrote of the time when Jesus said:

“He who feeds on My flesh, and drinks My blood dwells continually in Me, and I in like manner dwell continually in him.”

“Just as the living Father sent Me, and I live by the Father, even so whoever continues to feed on Me (God's Word) taking Me for their food, and is nourished by Me shall live through and because of Me.”

“This is the Bread that came down from heaven. It is not like the manna which our forefathers ate, and yet died; he who takes this Bread for his food shall live forever.”

Jesus said these things in a synagogue while He was teaching at Capernaum. When His disciples heard this, many of them said, ‘This is a hard and difficult and strange saying (an offensive and unbearable message). Who can stand to hear it?’ (Who can be expected to listen to such teaching?).

But Jesus, knowing within Himself that His disciples were complaining and protesting and grumbling about it, said to them:

“Is this a stumbling block and an offense to you? (Does this upset and displease and shock and scandalize you?). What then will be your reaction if you should see the Son of Man ascending to the place where He was before?

“It is the Spirit Who gives life – He is the Life-giver; the flesh conveys no benefit whatever – there is no profit in it. The words – truths – that I have been speaking to you are Spirit and Life. But still some of you fail to believe and trust and have faith.” Jesus knew from the first who did not believe and had no faith and who

would betray Him and be false to Him. Jesus said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted them by the Father."

John 6:56-65 AMP

*If you don't light any candles,
Don't complain about being in the dark
F.A.I.T.H. - FORGET ABOUT IT TRUST HIM*



Card # 12. They Are Critical

The victim has a need to put others down and find fault in people in order to feel good about themselves. By doing these things, they get a fleeting sense of superiority by playing the victim.

What's the remedy here? The victim should take all their energy and use it to build others up. This will reflect back on them in a positive way, too.



John wrote of the time when Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn He appeared again in the temple courts where all the people gathered around

Him, and He sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group, and said to Jesus. "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do You say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing Him.

Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with His finger. When they kept on questioning Him, He straightened up and said to them:

*"If anyone of you is without sin,
Let him be the first to throw a stone at her."*

Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her:

"Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

"No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you."

“Go now and leave your life of sin.”

When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said:

“I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the Light of Life.”

John 8:1-12

*It is usually best to be generous with praise and
Cautious with criticism*

(Author Unknown)

Difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations



Card # 13. They Think They Are Perfect

Ironically, when there is a chance that a victim could be caught in an error, they suddenly become perfect. This arrogance and narcissism closes the victim off from having truly trustworthy and cooperative relationships.

Instead of thinking this way, they need to remove the word “perfect” from their vocabulary and accept that they are human and naturally imperfect. In fact, the victim needs to realize that the more they own

their mistakes and failings, the more others will gravitate towards them.



Matthew wrote of the time when a man asked Jesus this question, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" Jesus replied:

"Why do you ask Me about what is good? There is only One Who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments."

"Which ones?" the man inquired.

"Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself."

"All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"

"If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me."

When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Then Jesus said to His disciples:

"I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said:

"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Matt. 19:16-26

*Understanding the difference between healthy striving and
Perfectionism is critical to laying down the shield*

And picking up your life

Brene' Brown

The only person you are destined to become

Is the person you decide to be



Card # 14. They Cut People out of Their Life

If a victim faces a difficult or challenging moment with someone in their life, they're likely to respond by cutting someone out of their life. This highly emotional behavior creates chaotic relationships.

The victim needs to recognize their pattern of cutting people off, as this usually doesn't lead to the resolution of problems and conflict. They could always take a different, more positive approach, such as letting people know their feelings instead.



John wrote of a time when Jesus said:

"If the world hates you, remember that it hated Me first. The world would love you as one of its own if you belong to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you."

“Do you remember what I told you? A slave is not greater than the master. Since they persecuted Me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to Me, they would listen to you. They will do all this to you because of Me, for they have rejected the One Who sent Me.”

“They would not be guilty if I had not come and spoken to them. But now they have no excuse for their sin. Anyone who hates Me also hates My Father. If I hadn't done such miraculous signs among them that no one else could do, they would not be guilty. But as it is, they have seen everything I did, yet they still hate Me and My Father. This fulfills what is written in their Scriptures: 'They hated Me without cause.'”

“I will send you the Advocate – the Spirit of Truth. He will come to you from the Father, and will testify all about Me. And you must also testify about Me because you have been with Me from the beginning of My ministry.”

“I have told you these things so that you won't cut Me out, and abandon your faith. Remember, you didn't choose Me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so the Father will

give you whatever you ask for, using My name. This is My command: Love – honor, respect, appreciate – one another.”

John 15:16-27&16:1 NLT

Heavenly Father, You alone are the One Who

Never abandons me

CHRISTIE

Don't depend too much on anyone in this world

Even your own shadow leaves when you're in darkness

IBN TAYMIYYAY

Christian Maciel who wrote, *14 Clear Signs Someone is Always Playing the Victim*, wrote this as the bottom line: In the end, playing the victim doesn't get you anywhere. The victim will end up facing painful consequences in their life and relationships if they don't change their behavior by taking constructive criticism and turning it into positive action.

As with most things in life, alternative options are there. We just have to be willing to look for them and make a start.

<https://www.lifehack.org/287448/14-signs-someone-always-playing-the-victim>



If insight, understanding and revelation are desired, God will not turn the focus toward another. I can't help but think how our life experiences have had both an affect (impact, influence that causes a change), and an effect (what powers the result, outcome, consequence) on the complex design of who we are. There is so much involved, and so much has been accumulated since childhood.

For instance, as children we played with building blocks that were fun to stack, but much more enjoyable to watch as they fell down. Since childhood we have been doing the same with thoughts and feelings. Countless words at the direction of emotion went into the construction of our opinions and beliefs; that is, until a new experience came along making it necessary for adjustments or repairs to be made.

While the effects of trauma may cause the image we have of ourselves, our relationships, the world and even God to crumble, there is only one who enjoys watching us fall down.



I'm not aware of the distance or events of your life's journey, or all that has been compiled and stock-piled in your soul; however, God is

aware of every intimate detail that has gone into the construction of who you are.

Intimacy speaks to communing with someone at a heart level. It is an invitation: Come “IN-TO-ME-SEE.” And because this is a fallen world, a place where evil dwells and has ample time and opportunity, it can cause a heart to become dis-eased or possibly diseased by its negativity.

Here are a few deficits that occur in a heart working to please self: craftiness, cunning and double-dealing; fraudulence, insincerity and self-righteous; menacing, deviousness and underhandedness, all of which affect our opinions, our character and our reputation.

Circumstances and events can foster unsound thinking and emotional instability. Unforgiveness, resentment, bitterness, anger, hatred, offense, guilt, shame – yes, their fumes are toxic to others, but their poisonous venom works within causing the health of our body and soul to be affected (gnawed at, devastated, broken down) until it ultimately fails.

So much negativity causes the development of self-destructive habits, behaviors, desires, tendencies...that are responsible for all the abuse, perversion, hurt, harm and deadly force that is being perpetrated in our lives and in our world.



The only one who truly finds our failures, our hypocrisy and our illnesses and heartache enjoyable is the great dispenser of evil himself, Satan. God is the “Giver” of good, even when we are totally unaware or unwilling to admit His graciousness and compassion. James 1:17 tells us whatever is good and perfect comes to us from God, the Creator of all light, and He shines forever without change or shadow (TLB).

Unfortunately, everyone in some way has been adversely affected by the disease to “Please,” Co-dependency and traumatic developments that so often occur within the relationships we share. I once thought working to please others was an unselfish motivation. I have since discovered people-pleasing is actually a self-serving behavior that works to satisfy the heart’s desire with this motive: To influence, manipulate and persuade others.

The reason all this occurs – Pride. Here are a few quotes on the subject:

- Pride comes in looking at ourselves, meekness comes through looking at God - Billy Graham
- It was pride that changed angels into demons; it is humility that makes men as angels - Saint Augustine
- Pride will cost you everything, but leave you with nothing
- Pride is spiritual cancer: it eats up the very possibility of love, or contentment or even common sense – C.S. Lewis
- Pride tasteless, colorless and size-less, yet it is the hardest thing to swallow
- God sends no one away except those who are full of themselves - Dwight L. Moody
- If you are discouraged it is a sign of pride, because it shows you trust in your powers - Mother Teresa
- Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall - Prov. 16:18 NKJV
- Disobedience and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. Stubbornness and pride as the sin of worshiping idols - 1 Samuel 15:23 NCV
- As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud person is always looking down on things and people; and,

of course, as long as you are looking down you cannot see something that is above you – C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

- Most relationships fail because couples fight with pride more than they work with love



Because of pride and fear, deceit and denial, disorder not only arises in our world but in our psyche – our soul – intellect, will and emotions. Just as everybody’s personality is uniquely affected by character deficits, so too the causes are as unique as well.

There is no clear reason why some people develop the feelings and behaviors associated with personality disorders, and others don’t. Most researchers believe that a complex mix of factors seems to increase the risk of developing or triggering experiences that include: environmental and social circumstances, early life experiences and genetic factors.

The environmental and social circumstances we grow up in and the quality of care we receive can affect the way our personality develops.

A person may experience difficulties associated with personality disorders if they've experienced:

- An unstable or chaotic family life, such as living with a parent who is an alcoholic or who struggles to manage a mental health problem
- Little or no support from your caregiver – this may be especially hard if you've experienced a traumatic event or situation
- A lack of support or bad experiences during your school life, peer group or wider community, such as bullying or exclusion
- Poverty or discrimination
- Some form of dislocation, such as migration from abroad



Our experiences when growing up can affect our personality in later life. If you had a difficult childhood, you might have developed certain beliefs about the way people think or act and how relationships work. This can lead to developing certain strategies for coping which may have been necessary when you were a child, but which aren't always helpful in your adult life.

If someone has been given a personality disorder diagnosis they are more likely than most people to have experienced difficult or traumatic experiences growing up, such as:

- Neglect
- Losing a parent or experiencing a sudden bereavement
- Emotional, physical or sexual abuse
- Being involved in major incidents or accidents
- Often feeling afraid, upset, unsupported or invalidated

Not everyone who experiences a traumatic situation will develop these problems. Not everyone who develops a personality disorder will have suffered a traumatic experience.

Personality is very complex, and researchers currently don't know much about what makes up our personalities and to what extent genes play a part in this.

Some elements of our personality are likely to be genetic. We are born with different temperaments – for example, babies vary in how active they are, their attention span and how they adapt to change.

While some experts believe genetic inheritance may play a part in the development of personality disorder, others point out that it is difficult to know whether similarities in temperament and behavior have been handed down the generations genetically or through the behavior children were modelled as they grew up.

This information was taken from the article, "What Causes Personality Disorders," which was posted on the website Mind and published in January 2020.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/personality-disorders/causes/>



I don't have a degree in counseling or psychology. I have lived my life trusting and relying on myself and others. And, like others who struggle with issues that arise, mine have been fear, rejection and abandonment - confusion, disorder and dysfunction.

As a result of life experiences and years of studying God's Word, I now realize how amazingly restorative (good, wholesome, remedial, rejuvenating, advantageous, strengthening, rectifying, reviving...) the gifts that God bestows.

For centuries people struggled with what seems to come so naturally, so God brought forth His resolution – Deliverance, Salvation, and Healing of fear, deception and disbelief – which we receive through His Son, Christ Jesus.

Yes, in the past God spoke many times and in various ways to our forefathers through the prophets. And now in these final days, He has spoken to us through His Son.

God promised everything to His Son as an inheritance. Through Jesus He created the universe. The Son radiates God's own glory, and expresses the very character of God, Who sustains everything by the mighty power of His Word.

When His Christ had cleansed us from our sins, the Son sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven. Jesus became as much superior to the angels as the name He has inherited is superior to theirs (Heb. 1:1-4).



Yes, God sent His Son for our salvation to cleanse our sins away. He sends us His Spirit of Truth to work within for our deliverance (regeneration, reconciliation and recovery) from the disorder this world generates, so our inner healing can begin.

John the Baptist told his disciples: God's Word, Christ Jesus, must increase, but I must decrease. The Lord, Who comes from above is far above all others; he who comes from the earth belongs to the earth, and talks the language of earth (his words are from an earthly standpoint). Christ, Who comes from heaven is far above all others, far superior to all others in prominence and in excellence.

It is what Jesus has actually seen and heard that He bears testimony to, and yet no one accepts His testimony (no one received His evidence as true). Whoever receives the Lord's testimony has set their seal of approval to this: God is true. (That person has definitely certified, acknowledged, declared once and for all, and are themselves assured that it is divine truth that God cannot lie).

Since He Whom God has sent speaks the words of God (proclaims God's own message), God does not give Him His Spirit sparingly or by measure, but boundless is the gift God makes of His Spirit!

The Father loves the Son and has given (entrusted, committed) everything into the hand of Jesus. And those who believe in the Son have eternal life (John 3:30-36 AMP).



Matthew wrote of time when Jesus was amazed after He heard an officer say, “Lord, I am not worthy to have You come into my home. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed. I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, ‘Go,’ and they go, or ‘Come,’ and they come. And if I say to my slaves, ‘Do this,’ they do it.”

Jesus turned to those who were following Him and said:

“I tell you the truth, I haven’t seen faith like this in all Israel! And I tell you this, many Gentiles will come from all over the world – from east and west – and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven. But many Israelites – those for whom the Kingdom

was prepared – will be thrown into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

“Go back home. Because you believed, it has happened.”

And the young servant was healed that same hour (Matt. 8:8-13 NLT).



David who also had great faith in the Lord wrote: Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed are those who take refuge in Him,” Ps. 34:8. “Praise the Lord, O my soul! All my inmost being, praise His holy name! Praise the Lord, O my soul! And forget not all His benefits – Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, Who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s. The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed (Ps. 103:1-6).

David wrote of what he learned about the Lord through experience. David was not validated as a son by his earthly father, but His heavenly Father called him out of the isolation of shame and neglect

and rejection, and into the very chambers of His heart. Why? God gave the most amazing reason:

“I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after My own heart.”

“He will do everything I want him to do.”

God revealed the faith and trust He had in David (Acts 13:22).



David made his share of mistakes. We each get caught up by life and circumstances and mistakes in judgment are made. Even the faith and trust I have in someone can be and has been diminished by what they have done to me or another. Thank God we have a Savior Who will call us out of the dark shadows cast by “self” – loathing, narcissism, conceit, smugness, pretense, selfishness...so we can enter His warm embrace.

In the world it is so easy to get pumped up with pride, but when the fall that God has warned happens, how much good will be experienced? First Samuel tells us David knew where good would always be found. After returning from battle, David and his men

found their camp destroyed by fire and their families taken captive. They wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep.

David experienced additional distress because the men were talking of stoning him. They were bitter in spirit because of the loss of their families. BUT, David moved his and theirs out of the way, and found strength in the Lord their God, Who instructed David to pursue them, for you will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.

David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken. Nothing was missing. David brought everything back including all the plunder. David not only made a statute and ordinance for Israel that all would share alike; he also bestowed gifts from the plunder of the Lord's enemies to his brethren throughout the land (1 Sam. 30:1-31). David had a heart after God, and was not ashamed to let everyone know it.



Though I also experienced fear and rejection and abandonment at a young age, my heart was far from the Lord. I didn't have faith and trust in Jesus, God's Word was just ignored. Only because of the grace of God, I was not reeled into that waterless pit, for there was so much in the world that I was caught up in.

I used to believe it was okay to do this or that because I'm not hurting anyone. That wasn't quite true. I hadn't considered myself. Having a good time may be appealing, but the worldly tendencies and philosophies are all consuming. The distress, the heartache became so great I had difficulty finding a reason to hope. So I planned a way to escape that overwhelming sense of despair that occurs, when the pain and upset of so much failure just accumulates.

Now I can testify that God never stopped working to draw me to Himself. At the time I didn't realize how He brought people and circumstances together that would grab my attention so I could start to think a little differently.

I will be eternally grateful because within that waterless pit there is no presence of Good. There is no more time or opportunity to experience love or joy or peace, goodness or kindness or gentleness. Only an eternity of drowning in regret!



There are many reasons people do things that even they consider heinous. War is one of those reasons. How difficult to reconcile that

person who was sent into battle, with the person who emerges during war. The effects of such traumatic experiences don't just materialize post-war they make their appearance known while in the going through.

The following are some of the most common symptoms of PTSD:

- Feeling upset by things that remind you of what occurred
- Having nightmares, vivid memories, or flashbacks of the event, which causes a person to feel as though it's happening all over again
- Feeling emotionally cut off from others
- Feeling numb or losing interest in things you used to care about
- Feeling constantly on guard
- Feeling irritated or having angry outbursts
- Having difficulty sleeping
- Having trouble concentrating
- Being jumpy or easily startled

It's not just the symptoms of PTSD, but also how a person may react to them that can disrupt their life. They may:

- Frequently avoid places or things that remind them of what happened
- Consistently drink or use drugs to numb their feelings
- Consider harming themselves or others
- Start working all the time to occupy their mind
- Pull away from other people and become isolated

https://www.maketheconnection.net/conditions/ptsd?gclid=CjwKCAjwrZOXBhACEiwA0EoRD_zSSacf7MvcOCkCFqDwo1w4M5s0cmACoLVWmIz_jP92ZS3nwesazBoCUTkQAvD_BwE

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, there are four types of symptoms:

- **Re-Experiencing**
 - Flashbacks. A person may find themselves reliving a traumatic event. This could include physical symptoms such as a racing heart or sweating
 - Bad dreams. This might include dreams related to the event
 - Frightening thoughts
- **Avoidance**
 - Avoiding thoughts, feelings, places, activities or objects that remind them of the traumatic event

- **Arousal and Reactivity**

- Being easily startled, feeling tense, having trouble sleeping

- **Cognition and Mood**

- Experiencing negative thoughts, feelings of guilt or blame, or loss of interest in activities

https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/mental-wellness/veteran-ptsd-treatment-support-resources?gclid=CjwKCAjwrZOXBhACEiwA0EoRD99npzKnTytFf1GSJR3uKJGUHoAjheBjzGtN4C-X6CILQjCLmUMeAxoCMPoQAvD_BwE



There are so many things in life that are out of our control. So when traumatic events occur we are often unable to protect ourselves. We may not have to protect ourselves from a physical attack for emotional or psychological shock to occur.

Almee Daramus says emotional shock is a reaction a person may have to an upsetting unexpected event that makes it difficult to function.

When an intense stressor must be confronted, a rush of overwhelming emotions may be experienced. Emotions that are not readily

understood or responded to that can cause a body to go into a state of shock.

Emotional shock is often part of the fight or flight response, a normal but painful way our brain reacts to something it sees as a threat to our well-being. When our brain is unable to process the situation, it freezes in an effort to protect our mind and body. The symptoms of emotional shock can include:

- Denial
- Numbness
- Disassociation
- Panic
- Anger
- Breathlessness
- Headache
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Lightheadedness
- Muscle tension
- Increased heart rate
- Tightness in the throat or chest

- Inability to speak or move
- Difficulty rationalizing, thinking or planning
- Loss of interest in surroundings
- Inability to express emotion

<https://www.verywellmind.com/emotional-shock-definition-symptoms-causes-and-treatment-5214434>



Alice Boyes, Ph.D. states, psychological shock occurs when a surge of strong emotions and a corresponding physical reaction is experienced in response to a stressful event. Symptoms:

- The hallmark symptom of shock is feeling a surge of adrenalin
- Feeling jittery or physically sick, like you're going to vomit or have diarrhea
- Your mind will likely feel very foggy, or like you can't think straight
- You may feel out of body
- Your chest may feel tight
- You may feel a disconnection from what's happening, like you're watching a movie of events unfolding rather than actually being there

- You may feel intense anger and want to scream or yell
- You may feel like you want to run

These symptoms are all part of the body's acute fight, flight or freeze response. Your body prepares you for fast action not thought; therefore, it's hard to think straight. If quick action isn't necessary, you may be tempted to make a poor decision. Like the urge to run when you shouldn't, or the urge to fight.

These urges don't suggest you're a bad person it's just our natural fight or flight response. When time is given for our brain to respond then rational thinking can take over. Why? A surge of stress hormones are released into the bloodstream and it takes time – perhaps a few hours – for your body to get back to its normal state.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/in-practice/201803/what-is-psychological-shock-and-5-tips-coping>



I share this information because events do occur that cause emotions to become so overwhelming, they rob of us of the necessary time to think rationally. Unfortunately, there are doors we walk through that

give the world we once knew as comfortable and safe and secure a totally different perspective.

When a traumatic situation occurs it's normal for fear and shame and guilt to be experienced. It is also normal for anger and accusation to point fingers of blame at ourselves and others and even God. Yes, sadly devastating events occur that can change the view of our world, but they can also change how we view ourselves.

When the unpredictable and uncontrollable occurs so too does the seemingly impossible - protecting ourselves against the onslaught of our own assaultive thoughts and emotions that bombard us with the continual would've, could've, should've questioning.



Sadly, this is within the design of our nature to foster negativity even when its effects are harmful to ourselves and others. For two and a half years PTSD went undiagnosed, and I found myself not only struggling with erratic and at times irrational behavior, but the negativity even caused nightmares to disrupt my sleep. I didn't know what was happening to me. How confusing to be both conflicted and goaded by emotion.

My husband actually called the police on me one time. He did this at the advice of a physician. I can't even begin to adequately describe how bizarre my thinking was. The Sunday prior to that phone call, I was desperate to keep my husband with me so I agreed to be evaluated at a hospital that had a psychiatric unit. This will probably come as no surprise things went from bad to worse. I sat there humiliated and ashamed while they talked as though I wasn't even there.



You know there's a "Christianize" saying, "If all you have is Jesus then that's all you'll ever need." Well, when everything about yourself and your life is in such disarray this saying seems more than a little condescending.

When problems occur, we make it a goal, we are purpose-driven to learn and understand for surely with the right fix things will get better.

I was purpose-driven reading and decreeing God's Word. I was seeking the assistance of two counselors, one for our marriage and the other for personal counseling.

From the very beginning of our sessions, the counselor compared what I experienced to a third degree trauma of a soldier. Yet, PTSD was never mentioned, that is until the Lord answered my question. I can't explain why it took so long for me to decide to ask the Lord, "What are we going to do about this?" However when I did, I got up off that couch to Google PTSD.



The first thing I had to learn the effects of trauma can and will cause debilitating symptoms, and they can occur in anyone not just soldiers. There was no doubt in my mind, after understanding my struggle was with PTSD that the Lord would heal me.

It took time, but there is empowerment when we're in possession of knowledge of Truth, for then we can gain better understanding. I knew, heck everybody knew there was something wrong with me, but the help I was searching for came from the Lord.

God's Word gives faith and hope and assurance:

"With God nothing is impossible"

“Whatever you ask for in prayer, having faith and really believing you will receive.”

Luke 1:37 AMP, Matt. 21:22 AMP



When a person is in a pinch, gripped by a problem or emotional upheaval, words of kindness, of compassion... can be grasped as tightly as a hold a climber uses to ascend those difficult terrains. Yes, God’s Word provides secure leverage whether a toehold or a foothold until we are anchored by faith giving homage to the Lord by honoring God’s Word with our willingness to obey.

Jesus navigated the different terrains of the earth. God’s Word, full of grace and truth, became flesh and made His dwelling among us. The Author and Perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2a) reveals the unseen, what is eternal (2 Cor. 4:18b).

Someone came to Jesus with this question: Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?

“Why ask Me about what is good? There is only One Who is good. But to answer your question – if you want to receive eternal life, keep the commandments.”

Which ones, the man asked.

“You must not murder or commit adultery. You must not steal or testify falsely. Honor your father and mother. Love your neighbor as yourself.”

I’ve obeyed all these commandments. What else must I do, the young man asked?

“if you want faith that is perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.”

Matt. 19:16-21 NLT



That was the last thing the young man expected to hear. And so, crestfallen, he walked away. He was holding on tight to a lot of things, and he couldn’t bear to let go. As Jesus watched him go, He told His disciples:

“Do you have any idea how difficult it is for the rich to enter God’s kingdom? Let Me tell you, It is easier for a camel to go through the needle’s eye than for the rich to enter God’s kingdom.”

The needle Jesus was speaking of was the Needle Gate, a low and narrow entrance found in the wall surrounding Jerusalem. It was purposely small for security reasons. At night, after all the gates were closed, a camel could go through this small gate, when any saddles or packs were stripped off, only then could it crawl through on its knees. The Word of God always brings controversy, but will also always reveal it’s what hides in darkness that forces us to crawl on our knees.

The disciples were staggered by what Jesus had said. They asked:
Then who has any chance at all?

“No chance at all if you think you can pull off entering God’s kingdom by yourself. Every chance in the world, if you trust God to do it! With God everything is possible!”

Matt. 19:22-26 Message, Matt. 19:26b NLT



God's Word causes discomfort because Truth challenges us to think, to feel, to believe so we can trust in the Lord with ALL our heart, and not to lean on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5), for what is seen is only temporary (2 Cor. 4:18b). God is Spirit (John 4:24). He is eternal as is His Word. Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever (Heb. 13:8).

And the gifts God bestows are precious. Take for instance the gift of time to be spent on adventure, to be wasted while in search of illusive pleasures or to be wisely invested for there's the unseen yet to be faced – our eternal future.



There's the gift of life. God has placed what is unseen within us – a spirit, a soul - intellect, emotion and free will. Here are a few things that people have said regarding life:

- As far as I can tell, there are three guarantees in life: Death, taxes and someone deciding they don't love you anymore – Ryan O'Connell

- There are no guarantees in life. The simple twists of fate and the breaks of the game are the two maxims that define so much of the success and failure in life – Bill Walton
- Life is like therapy, real expensive and no guarantees
- In life there are no guarantees, but probabilities – Tom Clancy
- Life is full of surprises. When your day is wonderful, cherish it. When it becomes difficult, stay strong. There are no guarantees on how many days you have left so be grateful for each and every one of them – Roger Lee
- In life there are no guarantees, only opportunities and what we do with them... Seize the moment and embrace the opportunity... You will be grateful you did – unknown
- God has opened the door of opportunity, all you have to do is walk through it, for He has made known publicly His readiness to forgive and give new life starting right now – St. Paul



LIFE IS A SONG
LOVE IS THE MUSIC

RIVER OF GRACE

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=839632123346114>

There is a place, far from this worried world

Where freedom awaits

That burden you've got locked inside

Oh how you tend to hide

So won't you go there with me, down to the riverside

Where the water runs free

And you can let your heart swing open wide

Won't you swing it open wide?

'Cause baby, you weren't made to carry such a load

Lay it down and we can watch it go

Down the river of grace, the river of grace

And all it takes, is a little bit of faith

And Jesus comes, and carries it away

Down the river of grace, the river of grace

Here's the beautiful thing, that river runs inside you

And you can go anytime

And it's there your Saviour waits for you

Yeah, He's waiting there for you

'Cause baby, you weren't made to carry such a load

Lay it down and we can watch it go

Down the river of grace, the river of grace

And all it takes, is a little bit of faith

And Jesus comes, and carries it away

Down the river of grace, the river of grace

Cast your every care, cast them way out there

In the river deep, in the endless supply

And feel your heart rise up, from that cleansing flood

So clean and free, so true and alive

So true and alive, so true and alive

'Cause baby, you weren't made to carry such a load

Lay it down and we can watch it go

Down the river of grace, the river of grace

And all it takes, is a little bit of faith

And Jesus comes, and carries it away

Down the river of grace, the river of grace

He's got it, baby, He's got it, baby
Won't you let your heart sweep away
He's got it, baby, He's got it, baby

Song By Christy Nockels