



**CROSSROADS**  
**FULL GOSPEL**  
**BIBLE COLLEGE**

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Crossroads Full Gospel  
International Ministries

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*Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses*

*We acknowledge the additional works of the various Scholars and Bible Commentaries used in conjunction with the College material. This is not to say that we agree with all their theology, but we certainly value their contribution to the Body of Christ.*

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*This correspondence teaching book has been prepared for, and is available to, anyone who has accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, according to Romans 10:9-10:*

***ROM 10:9 That if you shall confess with your mouth that Jesus is your Lord, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.***

***ROM 10:10 For with the heart, faith is exercised, resulting in righteousness (rightstanding with God); and with the mouth, open acknowledgement is made of your salvation (action with your faith).***

*If you have been a Christian for a period of time, some of the information contained in the first two studies may seem basic. Remember that they have been designed primarily for new Christians. You may enjoy reviewing and studying basic truths just for the Word's sake. But we have also found that older Christians are sometimes lacking in the knowledge of God's basic principles and that for others it is an opportunity to revise the fundamentals of God's Word: 2 Peter 1:12-13, 3:1-2. In any case, we require all students to complete all the studies in the Christian Studies Series One. As you do so, we feel sure that with the help of the Holy Spirit, you will even learn new things in God and be built up in faith.*

*We prefer head pastors of local churches to be in control of distributing and correcting the studies. However, when this is not possible, the College will take responsibility for distributing and correcting the studies.*

*This teaching syllabus is available to anyone desiring to search God's Word for the treasure it contains. Remember, however, it is also part of the Lord's plan to have every Christian affiliated with a local church, and the teaching material is not meant to be used as a substitute for commitment to a local church and its programs. For scripture instructs us:*

***HEB 10:24 And let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities: (Amp.)***

***HEB 10:25 Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people; but admonishing - warning, urging and encouraging - one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching (the return of our Lord Jesus Christ). (Amp.)***

## **CHRISTIANITY**

*Christianity is not a religion but rather a personal relationship between you and God - a father and son/daughter relationship. This personal relationship comes into being through the new birth (spiritual regeneration) which is itself brought about by the power of God, through your faith in receiving Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.*

*Christianity is not a creed, a set of doctrines or a body of ethics, even though many doctrines have been derived from God's Holy Word and the world's finest ethics have sprung from its principles.*

*Neither is Christianity a science, a philosophy, or a system of theology. It is the divine revelation of a union between man and God through Jesus Christ, revealed to man by the Holy Spirit. It is the reality of God's promise to each person, experienced through union with Himself. For we have been legally reunited with God, and we experience the reality of our salvation so that we can approach our heavenly Father crying "Abba Father" (Daddy).*

***ROM 8:15 For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father".***

***GAL 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, "Abba, Father".***

*This is the glorious message of the gospel of Jesus Christ - for we serve not a dead prophet but a risen Lord.*

## **STUDYING GOD'S WORD**

*We know that God is omniscient, having all knowledge, including foreknowledge of the destiny of mankind. Our approach and thinking when studying God's Word should therefore be in the light of the following:*

*The present and final outcome of mankind was known by God even before the book of Genesis was written. With this foreknowledge, God's Spirit, over centuries of time, chose, directed and anointed people to write down His Word (His covenant with mankind) for the benefit of mankind.*

*The Bible is therefore the divinely inspired, infallible and authoritative written Word of God, and we need to study it as such: 2 Timothy 3:16-17.*

*The Lord holds His Word in high esteem and we should do likewise. It is our "Manual of Life" and has been designed by God to provide the answer to our every need. We should thus reverence its teachings and principles and apply them to our lives as if it is the Lord Himself Who is actually speaking to us. For He does this through His written Word.*

*The Bible has been divided into two sections - the Old Testament and the New Testament - and together these two parts make up the complete written Word of God. We should study all of God's Word, for through the Old Testament, we can gain a thorough understanding of what has been given to us in our Covenant of Redemption today, expressed through the pages of the New Testament. Also contained within the Old Testament are many historical accounts which give us physical type-patterns of truths for today especially in regard to the message of the Cross ( The Atonement).*

*Furthermore, God, being in the ever-eternal present, has foreknowledge of who will respond to Jesus and receive salvation through Him. Given this foreknowledge, God has planned everything and has allowed for all things. And He states that He will achieve and accomplish what He has promised in His Word of truth and power, and that His Word will not return to Him void: Isaiah 55:9-11. God's foreknowledge, however, does not influence or lessen His desire to see all men saved and come to the knowledge of the truth: 1 Timothy 2:4.*

## **Method Of Study**

*With the first two studies, study the teaching book and then answer the questions using your study book, study notes and your Bible, etc. to help you. If you have been a Christian for some time and are familiar with basic Christian doctrine, try not to use the study books or your study notes in helping you answer the questions. We recommend a minimum total study time of half an hour to an hour per day. In accordance with this, we have also set time limits for the completion of each study book - please keep to these guidelines so that you can progress at an optimal rate through the syllabus.*

*Note: Many of the scriptural references are not written out. We ask, however, that you look up these scriptures and study them carefully for they will benefit your study and there may be questions structured around them.*

*Post your answers to the questions at the back of the book to the College so they can be corrected. Or if arranged, hand them to your Pastor or persons in charge of distribution. Along with your answers, send \$..... in advance for your next study book.*

*Your corrected answers will be posted or handed back to you, along with your next study book.*

*All correspondence will be treated strictly on a confidential basis, so do not allow condemnation or pride to attack you. For these are two of the main weapons the enemy uses to stop people from growing in the knowledge of God's Word - reject them in the name of Jesus.*

*We have realized not everyone will agree with every viewpoint expressed in the studies. We have, however, designed the studies to accommodate this issue: see study question sheet.*

*To help you study you will require some basic reference books, some could be:*

- 1. A chain reference Bible.*
- 2. A Strong's Concordance (or similar publication) containing a Greek and Hebrew Dictionary of the Bible.*
- 3. A Bible Dictionary.*
- 4. A Bible Concordance.*

5. *An Encyclopedia of the Bible - begin with a small one for historical studies.*
6. *A Hebrew, Greek and English Interlinear Bible.*
7. *A Parallel Bible (4 or more Bible versions in one book).*
8. *An ordinary Dictionary.*

*Start with a chain reference Bible and then add to your study reference library as you can afford it.*

## **GRADES OF STUDY**

*You have the option after completing the second study ("I'm A New Christian, Now What?") to study at an:*

**1. ORDINARY GRADE:** *This means you can answer the questions at the back of each book using your study book, study notes and any other relevant books. You must, however, still try to use your own words in answering the study questions.*

**2. INTERMEDIATE GRADE:** *This means you must answer the questions at the back of each book according to the instructions, but without the aid of your study book and your study notes.*

**Note:** *We strongly recommend that students study, if at all possible, at the Intermediate Grade. For in doing so, they will study at greater depth and retain far more knowledge of God's Word in the long term.*

**3. ADVANCED GRADE:** *At the end of each series, students who are eligible will be given opportunity to apply to do the Advanced Study Questions which cover the whole series the student has just completed. The only students who will be eligible to apply to sit for the Advanced Questions are those who have been studying at an Intermediate Grade. This grade enables students to obtain a Diploma in Christian Studies after successfully completing Advanced Questions in Series One, Two and Three.*

*When answering the Advanced Questions, you will not be able to use your study books or notes. So prepare for this by studying properly and answering the study questions according to the instructions given (see letters concerning how to study).*

## **GENERAL STUDY GUIDE**

**1.** *Firstly read through the study booklet, including all the letters, once or twice as a preliminary exercise. This will help you gain some sort of understanding of the content and the flow of the study material. Read through the questions as well, for this will give you an idea of the depth at which you need to study in order to answer them. Do this only as a preliminary exercise of course.*

**2.** *After this, study the material properly, for just reading your study books over and over will not usually be enough for you to retain information in the long term. Write notes while studying, mark, underline, etc, key points committing important points to memory, expand the studies when you can and revise before doing the questions.*

**3.** *You will be given a time limit to finish the study and included in this period will be an average time you should allow in order to answer the questions.*

**4.** *If you find you are having problems answering the questions, those responsible for distribution can help.*

**5.** *If after the second study you decide to study at an Intermediate Grade, and you find that after the allotted time, you do not feel capable of answering the questions at that grade, then you should answer the questions at the Ordinary Grade.*

**6.** *Remember that it will be entirely up to you how far and at what rate you proceed with this Bible Teaching Syllabus.*

*Note: Please do not lend or pass on the study books to anyone before first checking with your Pastor or persons in charge of distributing the teaching syllabus. The reasons for this are:*

*(a) Only God knows a person's heart and whether or not he or she is ready to receive such teachings: Hebrews 4:12-13.*

*(b) God tells us we should study His Word a little at a time, in a correctly structured order (precept upon precept). Sometimes when a person tries to take in too much knowledge all at once, or studies advanced material before covering basic teachings, that person may become confused: Isaiah 28:9-10.*

*(c) People with wrong attitudes and a lack of understanding may treat God's teachings with contempt and trample over His truths: Matthew 7:6.*

*Remember that through knowing and living God's Word, you and others can have a victorious life in Christ. For God has said in His Word:*

***HOS 4:6 My people (today this is Christians) are destroyed (have gone into bondage) for lack of knowledge (not head or intellectual knowledge, but revelation or heart-knowledge). . .***

***ISA 5:13 Therefore My people (Christians) have gone into captivity (bondage), because they have no knowledge (understanding): and their honourable men (people of authority) are dying (both spiritually and physically) of hunger, and their multitude (people who follow them) are dried up with thirst.***

### ***Today's Faith***

*Remember this: It is not what faith you have today that will determine where you will spend eternity,  
Whether it be in heaven or in the lake of fire with everlasting torment.  
For it is the "substance of faith" you have the day you physically die  
That will determine where you will spend eternity.  
Also, if you need God's power tomorrow,  
It will not be the faith you have today that will release God's power.  
Rather it will be the faith you operate in at that time of need  
That will release God's power;  
If you meet the conditions written in His Holy Word.  
So continue in God's Word,  
It is life to all who find it,  
It is deliverance to all who call upon it.  
God's Covenant (the Bible) has been written as a sign of His love for mankind.  
So allow the truths of His Word to be written onto your heart.  
His love will never fail.  
It is sure,  
It has been tested and proven.  
So stand on it,  
Fasten your feet to it.  
It shall hold thee up,  
For eternity.  
May you have the victory in Christ.*

***“I AM A NEW CHRISTIAN  
- NOW WHAT??”***

***Study 2***

***Christian Foundation Studies  
Series One***

# CONTENTS

I AM A NEW CHRISTIAN - NOW WHAT??.....	1
What Does The Gospel Of Jesus Christ Tell Us ?.....	2
REPENTANCE.....	4
WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP AFTER SALVATION ?.....	6
A Transformed Mind Produces True Repentance.....	9
The Sin Nature.....	10
The Role Of Guilt In The Christian Life.....	13
The Sin Of Pride.....	14
OUR ENEMY TODAY.....	15
GROWING IN THE LORD.....	16
The Church Is God's Vehicle and Christ's Body.....	17
The Importance Of A Home Base.....	19
The Importance Of Study And Fellowship.....	23
MAN'S INHERENT LAZINESS.....	25
TO RECEIVE GOD'S PROMISES YOU MUST OPERATE IN FAITH.....	26
A VICTORIOUS LIFE IN CHRIST.....	27
How Do We Achieve A Victorious Life In Christ ?.....	28
HOW TO PRAY CORRECTLY.....	29
LAYING ON OF HANDS AND THE BLOOD COVERING.....	31
YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN ANYMORE.....	33
The Cross Of Self-Denial.....	34
How Do We Take Up Our Cross ?.....	34
PROTECTING YOUR SALVATION.....	35
God Commands Us To Separate Ourselves.....	37
From Workers Of Iniquity (Sin).....	37
What Is Sin ?.....	37
Works Of Iniquity.....	40
YOU ARE HOLY UNTO GOD.....	41
To Drink Or Not TO DRINK.....	43
The Importance Of Correct Thinking.....	47
The Importance Of Correct Speech.....	49
WHAT SEPARATES PEOPLE FROM GOD ?.....	50



WHAT IS BONDAGE ?.....	52
What Keeps People In Bondage ?.....	54
What Sets People Free ?.....	56
WHAT GOVERNS SUCCESS IN THE LORD ?.....	57
Studying God's Word.....	58
Attitude Towards Study.....	58
Understanding The Bible Versus Understanding Truth.....	59
A Structured Order Of Study.....	61
SOME OF THE FUNDAMENTAL DO'S AND.....	62
DON'TS FOR CHRISTIANS.....	62
GOD HAS COMMANDED ALL CHRISTIANS:.....	63
Tithing Principles.....	63
An example of a church's TITHES AND OFFERINGS envelope.....	65
Back of Envelope.....	65

# I AM A NEW CHRISTIAN - NOW WHAT??

This study will give you an outline of what is required of you as a Christian. It will also show you how to begin claiming your rightful inheritance as a child of the living God. If some of it becomes a little too hard to understand, don't be concerned. Just drink into your spirit that which you can understand. As you continue to study God's Word through this teaching programme, we are sure you will come to comprehend His truths and principles at a deeper level, taking in spiritual food as nourishment for your soul.

Remember that God communicates with us through His Word (the Bible). God will reveal Himself and His thoughts to you via His Word - if you seek the truth contained in it with an open and unbiased heart!

*Background Reading: Colossians 1:12-14*

Let's turn to Romans 10:9-10, where we will begin with the fundamental truths which relate to salvation.

**ROMANS 10:9** That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus (that Jesus is your Lord), and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

**ROMANS 10:10** For with the heart, man believes (faith is exercised) **unto righteousness** (rightstanding with God); and with the mouth, **confession** (open acknowledgement) is **made unto salvation** (action with your faith).

When you became a Christian according to Romans 10:9 and 10, two things happened:

- 1. Jesus became your Lord and Saviour.**
- 2. You became a righteous child of God.** Death and darkness were removed from your spirit, and the Holy Spirit came to dwell within you (1 Corinthians 3:16).

This experience is called "salvation." In other words, you have been saved (past tense). The Book of Colossians tells us that:

**COLOSSIANS 1:13** (God) **Who has delivered** (rescued or saved) **us** (all who have received Jesus as Lord) **from the power** (authority) **of darkness** (spiritual death), **and has** (past tense) **translated** (placed) **us into the Kingdom of His dear Son**

**Salvation in this context** means that through your faith in Jesus and His finished work on the Cross, and your action in making Him Lord and confessing Him as such, you have been taken out of the authority of darkness (Satan's kingdom) and placed into God's

Kingdom. This is the “Gospel” or the good news of Jesus Christ - for the word “Gospel” means “good news.”

## **What Does The Gospel Of Jesus Christ Tell Us ?**

Man’s sin had offended the holiness of God, but through the atoning death of Christ, God is satisfied. This means He is free to show mercy and grant forgiveness to the believing sinner. Therefore the Gospel tells us that:

1. We were born into a state of sin which caused us to be separated from God:

**ROMANS 3:23 For all have sinned** (all are born in a state of sin and are sinners), **and come short of the glory of God** (as a consequence are deprived of God’s saving presence)

2. We cannot save ourselves:

**EPHESIANS 2:8 For by grace you are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:**

**EPHESIANS 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

3. Jesus died on the cross for our sins. He was buried and then raised to life in a bodily resurrection on the third day:

**1 CORINTHIANS 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures** (e.g. Psalm 22:15);

**1 CORINTHIANS 15:4 And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures**

4. The shed Blood of Jesus is the legal agent which allows God to forgive us and cleanse us of sin and its effects:

**HEBREWS 9:22 And almost all things are by the Law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission** (forgiveness of sins).

5. We can be taken out of the state of sin and cleansed of personal sin by repenting of all sin and accepting Jesus’ Lordship:

**EPHESIANS 1:7 In Whom we have redemption** (salvation) **through His Blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace**

**1 JOHN 1:9 If we confess** (and repent of) **our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness** (the results of sin).

6. Jesus has paid the price for us to have salvation of our spirit, soul and body:

**ISAIAH 53:4** Surely He has borne our griefs - sickness, weakness and distress - and carried our sorrows and pain [of punishment]. Yet we ignorantly considered Him stricken, smitten and afflicted by God [as if with leprosy]. [Matthew 8:17.] (Amp.)

**Note:** From Isaiah 53:3, K.J.V., *“The phrase, “Yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted,” proclaims the fact that because He died on a Cross, Israel assumed that He died under the curse of God, because Moses had said, “For he who is hanged is accursed of God” [Deuteronomy 21:23]. What they did not understand was that He was not accursed, neither in Himself was cursed, but in fact was “made a curse for us.” Israel assumed He was “smitten of God,” and, in a sense, He was. He suffered in our stead, actually as our Substitute, which means that the blow that should have come to us instead went to Him. But yet, it was not for His sins, because He had none, but instead was for our sins. He was “afflicted” for us. As stated, He was our Substitute. (E.S.B.)*

**ISAIAH 53:5** But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our guilt and iniquities; the chastisement needful to obtain peace and well-being for us was upon Him, and with the stripes that wounded Him we are healed and made whole. (Amp.)

7. If we have Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, we are to walk in *“newness of life”* through the graces and energies of the Divine Nature. These help us to live the saved life, i.e. to live according to God’s will.

**ROMANS 6:3** Do you not know that all we who were placed in Christ Jesus, in His death were placed? (Wuest)

**ROMANS 6:4** We therefore were entombed with Him through this being placed in His death, in order that in the same manner as there was raised up Christ out from among those who are dead through the glory of the Father, thus also we by means of a new life imparted may order our behaviour. (Wuest)

Other versions read:

**ROMANS 6:4** Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

**ROMANS 6:4** We were buried therefore with Him by the baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious [power] of the Father, so we too might habitually live and behave in newness of life. (Amp.)

**Through accepting Jesus** as your Lord and Saviour, you have been born again (born from above). This means that you have been spiritually regenerated, i.e. your spirit has been cleansed of sin (the sin nature) and the Lord’s saving presence now surrounds your spirit. You have been eternally released from the bondage of spiritual death, and this guarantee is valid now and forevermore, as long as Jesus remains your Lord. Furthermore, sin’s power was crushed and defeated at the Cross of Calvary. We need to focus our minds on this fact and let it become a living reality in our daily lives, as we give God the glory for what His grace is doing in us and through us, day by day.

## REPENTANCE

**2 CORINTHIANS 7:10** For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.*

**Repentance leads to salvation**, but is not something that earns one eternal life. Repentance is not a reward for works, for we are saved by grace through faith. Rather it is an integral part of saving faith. The heart of genuine repentance towards God is not wanting to continue to be led by our own ideas or to continue to follow our own ways. Repentance encapsulates a desire to be led by God - His truths and His ways.

The Holy Spirit will bring conviction of sin and a revelation of who Jesus is. It is up to the individual to respond accordingly. Man must cooperate with God in order to be saved, but salvation is a work of grace from beginning (conviction) to end (repentance and acceptance).

**JOHN 3:18** He that believes on Him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.

**Repentance for the purpose of salvation** is repentance from unbelief in Jesus. By the Holy Spirit's grace, we gain a faith that resides in our heart so that we confess that Jesus is Lord and Saviour of our life. The evidence of salvation is the belief and trust that resides in the heart of the Believer.

**Repentance is only a condition of salvation** and not its meritorious ground. True repentance leads a person to say, I am a sinner and have sinned, and to prove this repentance with a 180° change in direction. Repentance requires true brokenness and humility. Repentance is not asking the Lord for forgiveness with the intent to sin again. Repentance is an honest, regretful acknowledgement of sin with an ongoing commitment to change. Repentance leads us to cultivate godliness while eradicating habits that lead into sin.

The most important thing that repentance does is that it allows the grace of God to influence us and empower us to be able to make that 180° turn, and so to live a different life. This is accomplished by the grace of God acting upon the heart and mind of man to cause man to change and so to please his Heavenly Father. This change of heart and direction cannot take place without man cooperating with the graces and energies of the Holy Spirit.

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***“ . . .Repentance for the purpose of salvation is repentance from unbelief in Jesus. By the Holy Spirit's grace we gain a faith that resides in our heart so that we confess that Jesus is Lord and Saviour of our life. . . ”***

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Ongoing repentance will be needed for the purposes of sanctification of the mind and flesh, as evidenced in 1 John 1:9. Then God's grace for us, as promised in His Covenant for all in Christ, will not be frustrated or blocked.

**1 JOHN 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Sin needs to be dealt with by the Blood through true repentance so that God's grace can forgive, cleanse and empower the Christian to live righteously in Christ.

**The practice of sin** in a person's life will block the grace needed for that person to live victoriously. This is to frustrate the grace of God from touching the Christian so as to empower them (Galatians 2:21). Some serious sins will even fast-track people into unbelief in Jesus, so that they then deny Him as Lord and Saviour in a relational way (1 John 2:4, John 10:27). The book of Ephesians tells us that we are to have our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15), but the message of repentance is a vital part of the Gospel, as scripture tells us.

**MARK 6:12** And they went out, and preached that men should repent (*the Message didn't change, and shouldn't change now*).

### ***Repentance***

*The Message of "Repentance" was the Message that was needed during the time of Christ, and it is the Message that is needed presently. In fact, it has always been needed. Are men any different today than they were then? Is the spiritual need any different now than then? The word "preached" means that they made a public proclamation with gravity, formality, and authority, which demanded it be heeded. In essence, it was "Good News," even though it proclaimed Judgment to those who would not accept. Still, it proclaimed Eternal Life to those who would heed its clarion call. Consequently, it was Good News to the sinner. This Message of Repentance, which demanded a turnabout, was also accompanied with the announcement of Salvation from sin, as provided by the Lord. If one is to notice, the preaching of the Gospel was their great work, to which the miracles were subordinate. If the order is reversed, it ceases to be the Gospel!*

### ***Repentance and faith***

*Salvation demands "Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).*

*Why is it in this order?*

*Repentance comes first because God has been offended by the sin in the lives of unbelievers; consequently, the sinner must repent of that sin. It is not so much the word said, but rather the attitude of the heart. Along with Repentance, there must be Faith evidenced in Jesus Christ relative to what He did at Calvary and the Resurrection in paying the price for man's sins. To be sure, the sinner may understand very little of what Jesus actually did, but there must be Faith extended in some manner, even though little understood, as to what Christ did at Calvary. In fact, as the Gospel is preached and heard,*

*with the Holy Spirit then bringing about conviction, the Holy Spirit will also give Faith to the unbeliever, without which it would not be possible for such a one to be saved.*

*The Scripture teaches total depravity, meaning that unbelieving man cannot know God, cannot understand God, and cannot have any true leanings toward God. Any understanding he thinks he has of the Lord is twisted and perverted.*

*Concerning the unredeemed, the Scripture says, “And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). As should be understood, “dead” is “dead.” Of course, it is speaking of spiritual death. Inasmuch as such a person is dead to the Lord, this means they can have no understanding of the Lord. So whatever it is they must have in order to accept Christ as Saviour; the Holy Spirit has to supply such, which He does! (S.B.C. Mark pg. 191)*

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***“. . .Salvation demands “Repentance toward God,  
and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”. . .”***

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### **WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP AFTER SALVATION ?**

*Background Reading: Romans 12:1-2*

**After salvation**, you need to renew your mind (the way you think) through studying the Word of God, and listening to anointed preaching and teaching. As we have already learned, God’s Word states that we are three-part beings. You are a spirit, you have a soul (spiritual mind) and you live in a body of flesh and bones. While your spirit is made pure at salvation, your mind is not. Yes it is positionally (legally) saved - but for the most part, it takes time to bring our condition (our experience) into line with our position. Let’s face it, many Christians don’t act as though they are saved, but the fact is that they are saved if “in Christ.” This process of bringing our condition (how we live on a daily basis) up to our legal position (of righteousness) is called “ongoing sanctification.” Part of this process takes place through “the renewing of the mind.”

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***“. . .Sin’s power was crushed and defeated at the  
Cross of Calvary. We need to focus our minds  
on this fact and let it become a living reality  
in our daily lives. . .”***

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As a new Christian, much of your thinking, and therefore many of your attitudes and opinions, will still oppose God’s ways and His will in your life. For this reason your mind needs to be renewed or washed with the principles of God, so you can begin to think in the way that God thinks - with help of course from God’s grace, which comes to us through the Holy Spirit.

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:23** And the very God of peace sanctify you (Christians) wholly (entirely); and I pray God (that) your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**EPHESIANS 4:23** And be renewed in the spirit of your mind (this is meant to be a continuous process)

**To have your mind renewed**, you must come to the knowledge of God's Word - the Bible. This means that you need to diligently study God's principles and adopt His way of thinking as your own. To do this you need to work with the Holy Spirit. You cannot do it by yourself because the change involves the heart, not just the head. The renewed mind is therefore a mind which has learned, by God's grace, to live according to His Word - in any area. This needs to be, of course, a continuing process, and this process is called "ongoing sanctification".

**JOSHUA 1:8** This Book of the Law (God's Word) shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night (think about God's Word constantly), that you may observe (be watchful) to do (act) according to all that is written therein: (and this is the promise) for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success.

God's law for us as Christians is to be written on our hearts, and it should govern our behaviour. It can be summed up as follows:- we are to love God with all our heart, mind and strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves (Mark 12:29-31).

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***“. . .As a new Christian, much of your thinking, and therefore many of your attitudes and opinions, will still oppose God's ways and His will in your life. . .”***

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God has revealed many things in His Word that we need to know so we can be empowered by God's grace to fulfil this greatest commandment of all. This then becomes a way of life whereby we love with the love of God.

**JAMES 1:21** Wherefore . . . receive with meekness the engrafted (implanted) Word which is able to save your souls.

**Until our minds are renewed**, we may not know what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God. We may inadvertently do something wrong and thereby sin against God, knowingly or unknowingly. Most basically defined, sin is anything that does not conform to the character and nature of God. Sin is not only doing that which is wrong, in thought, word or deed, sin is also not doing that which is right, morally and spiritually. This means that there are sins of commission - wrongdoing - and sins of omission - not doing right. Without God in your life, positionally and experientially, you will sin. Only through Jesus Christ, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, can we avoid sin and walk in righteousness. Only through yielding to the Lord and seeking His empowerment can we truly do so.



When convicted of sin, we should always come to God through repentance and allow His full blessing back into our lives. If we don't, the enemy will, in some way, take advantage of our wrongdoing. However we have the assurance that:

**1 JOHN 1:9** If we confess (acknowledge then forsake) our sins, He (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (the results of sin).

**God is faithful and just.** So if you have sinned, confess that you have sinned, repent and receive His forgiveness. Then receive your cleansing of all unrighteousness (any consequence of that sin), so that the enemy can have no hold on you. Amen.

**Note:** Once we have truly repented of any sin, turning our back on that sin with the help of God's grace, it is forgiven and forgotten as far as God is concerned. So we need to forget about it also. But be aware that our spiritual enemy will try to use any feelings of condemnation which we may still be harbouring concerning past sin. He will try to convince us that we are not really forgiven or that we are unworthy to receive God's love etc. We need to recognize all such accusations as lies, and cast them down in the Name of Jesus the moment they appear. We need to declare what God's Word tells us, e.g. *"Their sin and iniquities will I remember no more"* (Hebrews 10:17). (Also look at Micah 7:18-19; Isaiah 43:25; 1 John 1:9.) By declaring and truly agreeing with the truth of God's Word, we can know victory in this area.

You see man was originally created to be a partaker of God's Divine Nature - which was lost to man when Adam sinned in the garden. At the Fall man not only lost access to the Divine Nature, he became controlled by the sin nature - which is the reason man is not only born in a state of sin but also receives power from this nature to sin.

Born-again Christians, however, have nailed the old man (the old unregenerate self) to the Cross. This occurred when they were saved, being identified with Christ's death.

**ROMANS 6:3** Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized (spiritually) into Jesus Christ were baptized (spiritually) into His death?

**When they were resurrected**, spiritually speaking, after this funeral of the old man, God gave back that which had been lost, i.e. the graces and energies of His Divine Nature. Therefore Christians again have the power, which comes through the Divine Nature, to do God's will fully.

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***“. . .Most basically defined, sin is anything that does not conform to the character and nature of God. . .”***

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We know, however, that the sin nature, the lower weaker nature of man, remains an issue which saved man still needs to deal with on a day-to-day basis. Concerning the Christian, while the sin nature was positionally (or legally) defeated, and thus taken care of, at Calvary, conditionally (or experientially) it is a different matter. It remains the Christian's responsibility to allow God to help them renew their mind and then to act

according to this renewal, in any particular area, so that the sin nature is conditionally defeated in that area.

**Note:** The sin nature, broadly speaking, concerns man thinking and working out his own ideas without God. Quite often this is described in terms of the wording “the flesh,” a term which can also mean the mind and senses of man and even the physical body of man.

**We therefore need God’s help** (His grace) on a daily basis in order for our condition (our walk) to match our legal position in Christ. The empowerment to do this is provided by the graces of the Divine Nature. As the Believer yields to the Holy Spirit, the power to resist the dictates of the sin nature (the flesh) now comes through the Divine Nature. This too is the good news of the Gospel - we don’t have to sin! Amen.

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (a new creation): old things (the old unregenerate self) are (is) passed away; behold, all things are become new.

### **A Transformed Mind Produces True Repentance**

**ROMANS 12:2** Do not be conformed to the ways of this world: but be transformed (changed) by the renewing of your mind (the way you think), that you may prove (and know) what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

**To have our minds transformed** in any area, a change must take place in our thinking. This is what the Bible describes as “*the renewing of your mind.*” This happens when we reject our old way of thinking (or anyone else’s) and accept God’s way of thinking, wholeheartedly. Only after this can we then be in a position to truly repent. Strangely enough, we may not even understand God’s thinking in an area, but our trust in Him and His Word can override our logical reasoning as we side with God and agree with Him. We can then say, “I’m wrong, You must be right, for You are God and the lover of my soul. You know best - Lord I repent. Help me to live the saved life, change me and empower me.”

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***“ . . .The sin nature, the lower weaker nature of man, remains an issue which saved man still needs to deal with on a day-to-day basis. . . ”***

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True repentance will then always produce action according to that change of mind.

A Transformed Mind  
Produces  
True Repentance  
Produces  
Action According To That Change

I Am A New Christian - Now What??

**Godly repentance** will come about as we, with the help of the Holy Spirit, renew our minds with God's Word of truth. Then empowered by the Spirit, we can act accordingly. We will then be capable of producing fruits of repentance, which are works of righteousness (works of faith motivated by love). We know that this lifestyle change can only come about by God's grace working through us. Therefore God gets the glory for what He is doing through the yielded son or daughter. Amen.

### **The Sin Nature**

We as humans are eternal spirit beings, each person having a soul that contains our mind, will and emotions. Thus man is a spirit and has a soul, all this encompassed within a physical body which functions in a physical world.

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:23** **And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**When a man is born again**, his spirit is regenerated to life by the very presence of God (John 14:17-20). While his mind is then positionally (or legally) saved, conditionally it is not saved until it is renewed by the Word of God (James 1:21; Romans 12:2; Psalm 23:3). Therefore our soul (mind) is saved by the Blood of Jesus in a legal or positional sense. But in colloquial terms, to cash the cheque, our mind must be renewed in God's truth by His power in order for it to be conditionally (or experientially) saved (John 15:26, 16:13).

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***“. . . We therefore need God's help (His grace) on a daily basis in order for our condition (our walk) to match our legal position in Christ. . . ”***

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As a Christian, therefore, our spirit is positionally and conditionally saved, washed clean by the Blood of the Lamb. As stated, however, after salvation, it is up to us, as Christians, each day, to *“receive with meekness the engrafted Word which is able to save your souls”* (James 1:21), i.e. to renew our minds. Renewal means that we seek and then embrace God's truth by His grace. As a result, our thinking becomes aligned with God's thinking. By this means we become *“a work in progress,”* as by God's grace, our mind progressively receives God's truth and so comes to line up with His mind and His thinking.

**The last installment of our salvation** concerns our physical body and will occur on the day that the Lord comes back for His Church. Called the *“blessed hope”* (Titus 2:13), this is the time of the Rapture. On that day, all who are in Christ will receive a glorified body, the same as Jesus received when He was raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:52-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18).

**Our mind in the next life** will be both positionally and conditionally saved. It will therefore merely expand in holy knowledge for the rest of eternity, continually progressing

in regard to God and His truth. In other words, there will be no areas of darkness in our minds in heaven.

While on this earth in this dispensation, however, we may experience difficulties in regard to mind renewal. For instance, we may not be able to hear God properly, or alternatively, we may not want to. From whatever inherited genetic negatives we possess concerning memory function or the lack of it, to the dictates of whatever worldly connection we are plugged into, or whatever tries to influence us, physically or spiritually, all these factors will contribute to the problems we will have with mind renewal.

Chapter 6 in Romans tells us that we, as Christians, still have the sin nature to deal with. When we trust God, rely on Him and are led by the Spirit, then the sin nature will remain dormant or deactivated. This is when the Divine Nature is enthroned in our hearts.

At salvation the sin nature becomes legally dead to us. Conditionally or experientially, however, is another story. If we have accepted thinking in our mind that is contrary to God's truth, then we are, in actual fact, thinking without God's influence. Therefore, in that area (of sin), we are in spiritual darkness. This darkness will be, of course, in our mind and will not impact in any way upon our regenerated spirit.

So it is in this state that we have entered, in our minds, into spiritual darkness. This state provides us with what is known as "the sin nature" - which can be defined as man thinking (and embracing that thinking) in spiritual darkness, - without God's help or empowerment. For the unsaved, this state is perpetual. For the Christian, this is an optional state because we have an alternative.

**The sin nature empowers man to sin** when he does not seek to embrace God's Word of truth concerning the matters of life about which God has spoken.

The sin nature also contains a "gravitational factor" or spiritual weight which seemingly makes it easier to sin in the area of accepted thought or embraced thinking. The more one meditates on wrong thinking with the intent to embrace it, seemingly the greater the gravitational pull which is exerted. So with more meditation comes greater pull (gravity) toward sin and with less meditation comes less pull (gravity) towards sin. As has been said before, the battleground regarding sin is always located in the mind.

Man was originally created with a human nature, which is simply the sum of qualities and traits shared by all humans. To function properly and be complete, the human nature, contained in the spirit of man, needs to be energized by the energies and graces of God's Divine Nature. This is how man was created to function at his optimum capacity. In other words, we always needed this spiritual influence to properly order our thinking and therefore our behaviour in relation to both God and our fellowman - the vertical and the horizontal.

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***“. . .the sin nature . . . can be defined as man thinking (and embracing that thinking) in spiritual darkness, - without God's help or empowerment. . .”***

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**Only as we are yielded to God** will we be allowing Him to energize us by the graces and energies of His Divine Nature. This is when the Divine Nature is enthroned in our

hearts. Without this influence on our minds in a continual sense, we will be thinking in relation to accepted and embraced thought, by ourselves, in isolation from God.

We were thus created not with a defect, but with an inbuilt need to rely on God at all times. Even though we are free-willed beings, we cannot reach our potential in any way without our Creator's influence on our thinking (Isaiah 55:7-9). We were created to function in relationship with Him and dependence upon Him.

When man stepped away from the graces of God's influence, the sin nature - spiritual darkness - flooded into his life. This was not created by God because God does not create evil.

**Without God's influence**, we live with the sin nature, and as we operate in isolation from God, from this nature flows all manner of evil intent. When man remains in, or places himself into this dark place, then dark thoughts emerge. When man has no connection to God in his thinking, he is immersed in spiritual darkness. In this state the sin nature dominates his life as he follows after his flesh (Galatians 5:19-21).

Man is a free-willed being with ethical and moral accountability to his Creator. Without God's influence, however, he is unable to discern, in a true sense, his responsibilities to his God and his fellow man. He is unable to correct himself or self-regulate because he is engulfed by the darkness in his mind and cannot think at a Godly level.

**The only possible answer** to man's dilemma came through God's grace and mercy. God in His love sent a Saviour into this world for this world. In fact God Himself, the second member of the Trinity, entered this temporal world, becoming flesh (John 1:14) and dying as a man for us.

So it can be seen that man without the spiritual restraints of God's truths will be empowered to sin when the opportunity arises, and the sin nature will come alive in that opportunity.

When man enters into the dark cave of self, he becomes self-absorbed and self-centred. By himself, and according to whatever he may think, there are no moral restraints to obstruct or impede him. Sin's opportunity arises when man focuses on his own thoughts and desires to the point of accepting and embracing them so as to act upon them.

**The power to sin** comes from man's unrestrained mind - operating without God's influence. Sin is therefore the result of man thinking by himself so as to embrace thinking which is at odds with God.

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*“ . . . When man stepped away from the graces of God's influence, the sin nature - spiritual darkness - flooded into his life. . . ”*

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Man acts in accordance with the nature with which he was born, and when given opportunity to sin will do so. In the Word we find man described as a sinner by nature:

**ISAIAH 64:6** But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses (so-called good deeds) are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

**PSALM 51:5** Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin (original sin) did my mother conceive me.

**JEREMIAH 17:9** The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

**JEREMIAH 16:12** And you have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, you walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto Me:

Indeed Jesus identified the source of man's defilement as being his evil heart:

**MARK 7:20** And He (Jesus) said, "That which comes out of the man, that defiles the man.

**MARK 7:21** For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

**MARK 7:22** Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

**MARK 7:23** All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (the heart of man is not good but evil)."

Without the guiding moral light of God's truth and the grace that accompanies it, man is defenceless against the onslaught of the sin nature that ravages his character and lays waste to his soul.

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***“. . . Only as we are yielded to God will we be allowing Him to energize us by the graces and energies of His Divine Nature. . .”***

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Unsaved man can still be influenced by God from the outside to some extent, as we see, for example, in the Old Testament - and his conscience is still there to assist him in some way. But man will continue to fail miserably without God on the inside. Therefore Christ came so that God can make His abode on the inside of man, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to influence his whole being.

**JOHN 14:23** Jesus answered and said unto him, "If a man loves Me, he will keep my Words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."

## **The Role Of Guilt In The Christian Life**

*Background Reading: Acts 2:36-38*

**The role of guilt** is not to condemn, but rather to convict people of their sin (wrongdoing).

I Am A New Christian - Now What??

As Christians, we should understand the role of guilt in God's plan of salvation (and ongoing sanctification). Upon hearing the Gospel, the unsaved who open their hearts will be convicted of their sin by the Holy Spirit, and so led to Jesus for forgiveness and release.

Without guilt there can be no conviction of sin. Without conviction of sin, there can be no true repentance. And repentance is vital to salvation and the Christian lifestyle, as we seek to follow Jesus on a day to day basis. Without true repentance there can be no forgiveness, and without forgiveness there can be no spiritual cleansing.

Before forgiveness, however, acknowledgement of wrongdoing must first take place, not just from the mind but from the heart. Conviction comes when God's grace is allowed to work on the heart of an unsaved or saved person. Such things as bias, pride, the desire to self-rule, and an unwillingness to yield or submit can block God's grace from working to bring conviction that would lead to repentance.

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*“. . .When man enters into the dark cave of self, he becomes self-absorbed and self-centred. . .”*

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**As you mature in the Lord**, you should become more sensitive to God's convicting power when you have done wrong, that is, as you are open to the Lord's leading in that area of wrong. Then in response to that conviction, you can sincerely repent and receive forgiveness and cleansing. This is part of the process of ongoing sanctification which takes place as we yield to the Holy Spirit and cooperate with Him.

## **The Sin Of Pride**

*Background Reading: Luke 18:10-14*

**People will operate** in the sin of pride to varying degrees when they hold on to thoughts or views which oppose any of God's principles. Ignorance of the truth of God's Word will not excuse the sin of pride because we have a responsibility to seek truth, and are promised in the Word that if we seek, we will find (Matthew 7:7-8).

**PROVERBS 13:10** **Only by pride comes contention** (strife, quarrelling): **but with the well advised** (those who take advice) **is wisdom.** (*“Pride” is the foundation sin of all sin [6:16-17]. It stems from Satan, as humility stems from Christ. “Pride” breeds “contention,” because it is ever seeking its own. Humility, which can only be given by Christ, generates “wisdom.” The Holy Spirit calls such “well advised.”* (E.S.B.)

**JEREMIAH 49:16** **The terror you inspire and the pride of your heart have deceived you . . .** (N.I.V.)

**Unfortunately this sin is rampant** in many churches around the world, where people are stiff-necked in relation to the Word and will of God, and will not yield, determining to do things “their way.” Christians harm one another through this sin, but the Spirit of God will never stop loving them, and trying to bring them to heart-conviction of their wrong. Therefore, we should not allow negative experiences with people who are operating in this

sin to colour our perception of the whole Body of Christ. We are to love and serve God as His sons and daughters, no matter what others do or do not do, inside the Church or outside it.

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***“. . . People will operate in the sin of pride to varying degrees when they hold on to thoughts or views which oppose any of God’s principles. . .”***

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If people are operating and choose to continue in the sin of pride, they will not feel guilt (through acknowledgement of wrongdoing or wrong thinking) and so will not be able to come to a position of proper repentance in those areas connected to this pride.

They may even seemingly go through the motions of repentance while still not accepting that they are wrong (e.g. by clinging to their preconceived ideas).

If anyone is in this position, then true repentance according to 1 John 1:9, with all its benefits, cannot take place.

#### **True repentance requires:**

(a) Acknowledging when we are wrong, through having accepted the truth in our hearts.

(b) Then in this acknowledgement, turning around from sin by “doing it God’s way,” wholeheartedly.

**Through true repentance,** God promises as we trust in Him that He will give us the strength and empowerment needed to overcome sin in our lives. We must remember it is not our will-power that will help us overcome sin but rather us walking in “*newness of life,*” trusting and relying on the new power of the Spirit within us. This of course is “*the Divine Nature,*” of which we are now partakers in Christ (2 Peter 1:4).

## **OUR ENEMY TODAY**

*Background Reading: Ephesians 6:10-18*

**It is important to realize** that, as Christians, we fight a spiritual battle - for the Word of God tells us that our real enemy today is not other people but Satan and his forces of wickedness working through yielded vessels:

**EPHESIANS 6:12** For we wrestle (fight) **not against flesh and blood** (people), **but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places** (speaks of forces of wickedness ranked in various levels of authority).



**We cannot see this enemy** with our physical eyes, but we can see the effects of his influence in the wars, famines, diseases and suffering that oppress mankind today. Indeed the devil is not a fictitious figure but a real spiritual being who seeks to pervert and destroy all that is good.

**JOHN 10:10** The thief (the devil) comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. . . .

**1 PETER 5:8** Be sober (be aware), be vigilant (be watchful); because your adversary (enemy) the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour (destroy)

Our spiritual enemy will tempt us to go against God's commandments and commit sin. As we submit to God, however, we can resist him through God's grace and empowerment, and gain the victory in Christ.

**JAMES 4:7** Submit yourselves therefore to God (His Word and His will). Resist the devil (in faith), and he will flee from you (in terror because of God's power).

## GROWING IN THE LORD

*Background Reading: Ephesians 3:14-21*

Through accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, you now have a legal "father and son" relationship with God; but He also desires to have a personal relationship with you.

As you spend time fellowshiping daily with God through prayer, devotion and the study of His Word, a deeper knowledge of God and His ways can be developed. Through this a greater trust can grow, and in this way a deeper personal fellowship can develop.

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***“. . . We must remember it is not our will-power that will help us overcome sin but rather us walking in “newness of life” . . .”***

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We all need to be taught God's Word so we can know right from wrong. First we need to hear the basic principles, and then after this, we need to come to understand the meat of the Word.

**HEBREWS 5:13** For every one who uses milk is unskillful in the Word of righteousness: for he is a babe (not necessarily a new Christian, but certainly an immature one).

**“Spiritual milk”** = the truths pertaining to the facts of the Cross that one accepts so that one understands the positional relationship they have with Christ through the Cross. In the position of son or daughter (Romans 8:14-16), we can call out “*Abba Father*” when in

need. We know, in this position, that we are now citizens of heaven, having been rescued from hell. We are also made aware, through scripture, of the basic behaviour required of the Christian in relation to God and man (Matthew 22:37-39). We are not to just know these truths, we are to experience them - to live them - in our Christian walk.

**HEBREWS 5:14** But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age (mature Christians of faith and love), even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern (to know the difference between) **both good and evil.**

**“Spiritual meat”** = the deeper truths of the Cross which bring us into an experiential relationship with God so we can cry “*Abba Father*” out of honour and appreciation for what He has done. In this condition of relational living, we start to understand, by Holy Spirit illumination, the deeper things of the Cross.

God has provided the Church worldwide with preachers and teachers to help us understand God’s Word:

**ROMANS 10:14** How then shall they call on Him (Jesus) in Whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him (Jesus) of Whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

**ROMANS 10:15** And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of them who preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things (salvation)!” (Isaiah 52:7)

**To help you grow** and mature in the Lord, as well as studying His Word and having a personal quiet-time with Him each day, you should also find a place of fellowship. This means that after accepting Jesus as Lord, you need to set down your roots and become established in a local church which will help you become stable in the Lord. Indeed Christians were never meant to be islands unto themselves and we all need the fellowship of other Christians in order to grow in Christ. In fact as new-born babes, we need the structure of a spiritual nursery which can feed us the right milk formula at the right time so that our baby spirit may grow in the things of God. Then as we progress, our spiritual diet needs to be changed to that of an adult so we may continue to grow in the things of God.

## **The Church Is God’s Vehicle and Christ’s Body**

*Background Reading: Ephesians 4:1-16*

**God has ordained**, in this age, a vehicle to work through on the earth. This vehicle is called His “Church of Believers,” of which Jesus is the Head. Another name for the Church worldwide is “the Body of Christ.”

**COLOSSIANS 1:18** And He (Jesus) is the Head of the Body, the Church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence (first place).

**EPHESIANS 4:11** And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

**EPHESIANS 4:12** For the perfecting of the Saints (to prepare God's people for works of service), for the work of the ministry (the preaching of the Gospel), for the edifying of the Body of Christ (so that the Body of Christ may be built up)

The word "church" is used to describe a corporate assembly of Believers. It can be a local gathering or can refer to the entire Body of Christ. The Church (in the context of all Believers worldwide) belongs to the Lord, and its members have been called to be separate from the world (while at the same time, living in the world). (2 Corinthians 6:17-18)

**1 PETER 2:9** But you are (this is all Christians) a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people (a people set apart, each Saint is God's unique possession); that you should show forth the praises of Him Who has called you out of darkness (spiritual death) into His marvellous light

When we call the Church "the Body of Christ," we are saying that Christ is the Head of a living body of which all Believers are members.

**EPHESIANS 5:30** For we are members of His (Christ's) Body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

Even though Jesus has ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father, He is still working today through His Body, the Church, that is when the people in it are being led by the Holy Spirit. Therefore the Church is not merely an organization, as many people think. It is God's vehicle to help bring about His will on the earth. And God's will on the earth is that all have the opportunity to hear the Gospel and enter into His glorious Kingdom (1 Timothy 2:4). It is also God's will that Christians continue to grow in knowledge and maturity with the help of the local church structure.

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***“. . .The Church . . . belongs to the Lord, and its members have been called to be separate from the world. . .”***

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As a new Christian you will need a church with mature faith-filled Christians to help feed you with the milk of the Word of God, and then take you into the deeper truths of the Cross concerning Christ's finished work. Although you may be an adult physically, at the beginning of your Christian walk, you are only a baby spiritually, a babe in Christ. Therefore:

**1 PETER 2:2** As newborn babes, desire pure spiritual milk (the Word at a level a newborn Christian needs) of the Word, so that you may grow up (and become mature) in your salvation:

**HEBREWS 10:25** Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together . . . (at church and teaching meetings etc.), as is the habit of some people, but admonishing - warning,

**urging and encouraging - one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching** (the return of our Lord Jesus Christ). (Amp.)

**In the natural world**, babies can do very little for themselves and need their parents to feed and clothe them, and provide total care. Babies rely on parents for their every need and accept all that is given to them. In some degree, the same could be said with regard to new Christians. God does all they cannot do for themselves - if they allow Him, by willingly obeying Him in faith and love, and receiving what He has for them. The key is for them to trust the Lord as their Father, even if they do not fully understand. Children may not understand their parents' directions, but trust helps them to obey.

**Some people, however**, be they baby Christians or those who have been Christians for some time, are so over-cautious that they let their natural reasoning cheat them out of God's best for them. Some people may be too cautious to step out and do something new, even though it may be right and according to God's will for their lives. Rather than grow in their faith-walk, they cocoon themselves through fear of being wrong or making a mistake. This could relate to finding the right church, receiving healing or being released from bondage in some area, etc. As the Word of God says, some people are ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth that would set them free (2 Timothy 3:7).

So we need not only to be grounded in the Word, we need to apply it, trust the Lord, and step out in faith as He directs. Of course, all this is done by His grace at work in our lives, from the process of study to the point of stepping out in faith.

**PROVERBS 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding** (do not rely on your own wisdom).

**PROVERBS 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.**

## **The Importance Of A Home Base**

*Background Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27*

**God has given us the church structure** in order to provide for our need for fellowship and spiritual growth. In His wisdom He knew we needed such a structure, for Christians are not designed to live in isolation from other Christians. Those who try to do so are saying that God was wrong and that we do not need the church structure which He has provided.

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***“. . .The key is for them to trust the Lord as their Father, even if they do not fully understand. . .”***

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The Bible says nothing in regard to solo Believers. In fact it directs us all to seek out fellow Believers so that we can praise, worship and obtain teaching together from a home base. An example of this is seen in the early church, as recorded in the Book of Acts:

**ACTS 2:41** Then they who gladly received his (the Apostle Peter's) word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

**ACTS 2:42** And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread (communion), and in prayers.

The Apostle Paul spoke of this same principle in Romans 1:12, that in coming together:

**ROMANS 1:12** . . . we may be mutually strengthened and encouraged and comforted by each other's faith . . . (Amp.)

**MATTHEW 18:20** For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them (but only in the unity of the Spirit).

**Those who try to live their Christian lives** in isolation from other Christians often fall prey to the enemy. This is why the Lord warns us that there is safety in numbers. For example, soldiers can only operate effectively when they are properly equipped and each given a position in the army. Soldiers who do not allow themselves to be placed under direction will remain scattered and become easier targets for their enemy. It is usually then not long before those who are scattered are taken captive. This is one reason God has directed Christians not to neglect fellowship on a public level. In fact the Lord says in Hebrews 10:25 that we are not to forsake "*the assembling of ourselves together,*" which is a direct reference to Christians participating in public worship, i.e. church.

Also, if Christians are to grow to their full potential, they need to belong to a church that promotes both the Word of God and the power of God, undergirded of course by the love of God. Where possible, it is advisable to attend a church which promotes the whole Gospel, rather than a church where the main emphasis is on secular and social issues. In other words, you should seek a church of Believers who expect the manifestation of God's power - healing of the body, deliverance from evil in any form, the operation of the power of the Holy Spirit, the evidence of transformed lives and people living in victory over sin. Only through the Word of God and the power of God can people become free, and develop their lives effectively for Christian service. The church you seek, in order to operate in the power of God, should teach the foundational doctrines of Christ's finished work on the Cross, the Atonement (1 Corinthians 1:17-18; Hebrews 9:22; 1 Peter 1:18-19) and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues (Isaiah 28:11; Acts 2:4, Acts 10:45-46). It should also teach the doctrines of the Rapture of the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17), and the Second Coming of Christ (Zechariah 12:10; Zechariah 14:3-4; Revelation Chapter 19).

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***“. . . Those who try to live their Christian lives in isolation from other Christians often fall prey to the enemy. . . ”***

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**A church is God's two-way valve for us.** It is a place where we can not only receive, but also a place where we can give of ourselves to help those in need (and bring them to a

position of faith in God and His Word). This happens as we give of our time, our abilities and our finances - for a church is designed to be an agency of love and service to the world. Christians who allow God to motivate them will have the desire to serve in whatever capacity they are able to do so. And within a proper church structure, a person will have avenues in which they can serve God according to the opportunities that arise and their talents and abilities in Him.

Therefore we should attend church not only with the attitude of wanting to receive from God, but also with the attitude of wanting to give of ourselves. Hopefully the church you attend will preach and teach the Gospel in its entirety, and give you an opportunity to give praise and thanksgiving to God with others of like faith. The combination of sound doctrine and true worship will inspire unity among the Believers in a local church and help people grow in Christ and become strengthened spiritually. A church which is led and empowered by the Holy Spirit is a vehicle which can help transport us to a position where we, along with others, may focus our faith and love on Christ and His finished work on the Cross.

**When we give** from a heart of faith, love and willingness, we not only bless our brothers and sisters in Christ as well as the unsaved, we also, ourselves, are blessed. This applies to the giving of tithes and offerings, the giving of our time and the giving of ourselves in the Lord's service. We should therefore not obey God's laws (for example, in regard to tithing) merely out of a sense of duty, but because we, by His grace, love and trust God and His holy Word. It is the heart attitude accompanying the obedience which is so important.

**If people commit themselves** to a church structure, they are surrounding themselves with fellow Christians who can watch over them and help steer them away from the rocks of life. This is important at any time, but is particularly vital for new Christians who are only babes in Christ, with, at this stage, very little faith, strength or knowledge.

Sometimes when praying for situations to be dealt with or needs to be met, we may find our own level of faith is insufficient. In such cases, it may well be advisable to pray within a group setting with people of stronger faith. This also gives God more avenues to work through regarding direction which is relevant to the prayers being prayed - for where one is limited in their ability to discern God's leading, another may not be. In this way, the situation or need can be dealt with effectively.

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***“ . . . Christians who allow God to motivate them will  
have the desire to serve in whatever capacity  
they are able to do so . . . ”***

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**Nevertheless, we need to take all things** to the Lord in prayer - and believe for, and wait for, confirmation or direction concerning that which we have prayed about. Direction may come instantly or within days. Whatever it takes, we are to seek God's will on the matter. This may come via a specific leading to a scripture to confirm what we are to do, or it may come through an inner witness that gives us peace beyond the natural. There are many ways God can speak to us if we seek His counsel - but we must make a quality

decision to do what He says before we even hear Him. At times direction from the Lord will come through a word from our Pastor or another Godly minister. God's direction could come from the sermon we will hear next week, the tape we will listen to, our personal study or all of these together. All of this is God speaking to us, and is called the "Rhema" Word of God. Anything which is the Lord's will and He reveals to us becomes a Rhema Word. To take another example, sometimes when a Christian is listening to or reading scripture, a verse or two will suddenly "come alive" and the written Word of God will speak. In other words the scripture, for that moment, becomes a special revealed revelation. When God speaks to us like this, the Logos Word (written Word) becomes the Rhema Word (revealed Word). Anything that the Holy Spirit tells us or reveals to us in regard to truth and direction (which is His will on any matter for us) is called the "Rhema" Word.

**Both the Logos Word of God and the Rhema Word of God** are vital to our Christian walk and growth in the Lord. We also need to be "*vigilant*" because the enemy is trying to win back the ground he lost when Christ come into our life. And we need all the help God can give us (and we can receive) - for we are not strong enough by ourselves (Philippians 4:13). To combat the enemy's plans we should also, with God's help, love one another, submit to one another in the Lord and always be careful to watch over one another. God gives us a clear warning in 1 Peter 5:8:

**1 PETER 5:8** Be sober (aware), be vigilant (watchful); because your adversary (enemy) the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking (people not in faith) whom he may devour (destroy)

**The devil preys on Christians** who leave the flock and wander by themselves from place to place without ever thinking of making a commitment to membership in a church (after, of course, taking it to the Lord in prayer). Therefore we need to heed the direction God gave through the Apostle Paul:

**EPHESIANS 5:21** Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

**HEBREWS 13:17** Obey them who have the rule over (guide) you, and submit yourselves (to their authority in the Lord): for they watch for your souls (and guard your spiritual welfare), as they who must give account (to the Lord), that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

We are not saying that you are to be locked into a particular church, through membership, for the rest of your life - for you should always allow God's Spirit to direct you in this and other areas. If you are a member of a church, however, you should commit yourself to it according to the Word as long as you remain a member (Hebrews 13:17). When and if you leave to attend another church, you should do so only under God's direction, not just because you got a "bent nose" or you didn't agree with something that was said or the way something was done!

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***“ . . . We need to take all things to the Lord in prayer -  
and believe for, and wait for, confirmation or  
direction concerning that which we have prayed  
about. . . ”***

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**As people are different**, so will churches be different. You will need to find a church which preaches God’s Word and which you think suits you (although this does not necessarily mean it will be comfortable to your “flesh”). Then you will need to pray about whether or not this is the church the Lord wants you to attend at this particular point in time. So we find that learning to be led by the Holy Spirit is a vital part of our Christian walk, and we need to acknowledge Him in all we do (Proverbs 3:5-6).

We need the Church on earth because we are creatures of flesh and blood living in an imperfect world, full of Satan’s influence. A loving, caring church, full of God’s power, can help steer many away from life’s dangerous waters, and help keep its members strong and victorious as they surrender to the Lord. Now let us warn you that many, in fact most churches will not be functioning as we have described here - as they ought to be! Therefore, with the help of the Holy Spirit, you should seek the best one possible from those available to you.

### **The Importance Of Study And Fellowship**

*Background Reading: Acts 2:41-47*

**Originally God created man** with a perfect memory and a willing desire to serve Him. Adam and Eve would have forgotten nothing. They would merely have had to think about any past event in order to recall it in its entirety.

Today, however (and obviously this was the case shortly after mankind’s Fall), it seems so easy for man to forget God, let alone to have a continuous desire to obey Him.

It appears that shortly after the Fall of man, and because of it, man deteriorated genetically. This deterioration affected man’s memory - his ability to recall information. This means that man quite often loses his focus, experiencing difficulty in continuing to meditate or think on the things he ought. This is not just because of genetics, but because of the pressures exerted by the “flesh” of man which, when yielded to, causes man to focus on fleshly, worldly, self-seeking things.

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***“ . . . So we find that learning to be led by the Holy  
Spirit is a vital part of our Christian walk, and we  
need to acknowledge Him in all we do. . . ”***

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Knowing all this, God has instigated commandments to help counteract some of man's weaknesses. For instance, so we may progress in the faith, God commands His people to study His Word and to fellowship with faith-filled Christians (Disciples of Christ).

**2 TIMOTHY 2:15** Study (young and old) **to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing** (analyzing and applying) **the Word of truth.**

**HEBREWS 10:25** Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as Believers], **as is the habit of some people, but admonishing - warning, urging and encouraging - one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching** (the return of our Lord Jesus Christ). (Amp)

**If we as Christians** choose not to study God's Word or fellowship with other faith-filled Christians, there will be a danger of us quickly becoming forgetful and even worse - losing the reality of the faith-knowledge we have gained.

Also, the devil may take advantage of our weakness in this area, and steal the Word out of our hearts if we are not diligent.

**MARK 4:15** **And these are they who are beside the road, where the Word is sown; but when they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the Word that was sown in their hearts.**

So we need to continually feed ourselves upon God's Word, meditating on it, confessing it in order to help our focus, and acting upon it in faith, trusting in God's empowerment to keep it alive in our hearts. Fellowshiping with other Christians is also important in this regard, so that both they and we may be edified in the faith. Let us warn you that your flesh (your mind and senses) may not want to do all of this. But your regenerated spirit, empowered by the Divine Nature, desires spiritual food and fellowship with the Lover of your soul!

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***“. . .God has instigated commandments to help counteract some of man's weaknesses. . .”***

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**Fellowshipping with faith-filled Christians** is vitally important to our growth in the Lord, for in this way we can edify and build one another up in faith, and motivate each other to move on in God. Christians who do not fellowship with faith-filled Christians are often stunted in their growth and lack motivation to progress in the Lord to their full potential. Such people can become stagnant in their Christian walk and in some cases may even fall away, losing their salvation. This is why God's Word gives us clear direction in this area:

**HEBREWS 3:13** **But exhort** (encourage and motivate) **one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.**

**HEBREWS 10:24** And let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities; (Amp.)

**ROMANS 1:12** . . . that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

## **MAN'S INHERENT LAZINESS**

**Because of the Fall**, our flesh (physical body) became subject to laziness. This was not a part of Adam's original make-up but entered into Adam, and consequently all his descendants, because of his sin. And it is not something which can be erased from our lives. We can, however, exercise our wills to overcome this laziness through self-discipline.

We all need, for example, to exercise our physical body to some extent every day, and to eat a balanced diet. The mind may tell us this is right, but the body does not always want to do what is good for it. Some people allow the flesh (fleshly physical desire) to override and as a result, endanger their health.

It is the same with our service to the Lord. Our emotions (which are influenced by the flesh) will generally not want to do that which God is telling us to do. However we need, as we have said, to study God's Word daily, to pray and to fellowship with the Lord, no matter how much we may not "feel" like it: Matthew 26:41. We need to exercise our wills as a trigger in accordance with God's will (His Word) in order to overcome this reluctance. In this way God's grace of empowerment will come so that we may live according to His will.

So firstly we need to know God's will. This can be achieved primarily through hearing and studying His Word. Then we need to act on this knowledge, for knowledge alone is not enough.

**JAMES 2:26** For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works (action) is dead also.

**In Christ we can overcome** all our weaknesses through exercising our will (as a trigger) in accordance with God's Word - this being the prescribed order for victory.

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***“. . . Christians who do not fellowship with faith-filled Christians are often stunted in their growth and lack motivation to progress in the Lord. . .”***

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God promises us the strength to overcome all things as we allow Him to be Lord of all. This strength comes through the Divine Nature energizing our human nature - as we, by our will, yield to the Holy Spirit.

**JOHN 8:31** Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on Him, "If you continue in My Word (seeking, finding and embracing My precious truths), then are you My Disciples indeed;

**JOHN 8:32** And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

**PHILIPPIANS 4:13** I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me (as I submit to His Word and will).

## **TO RECEIVE GOD’S PROMISES YOU MUST OPERATE IN FAITH**

*Background Reading: Hebrews 11:1-6*

**God tells us in His Word** that the only way to please God and to receive from Him is to be standing in a position of faith. This can only be attained by trusting in Him and His Word, not on circumstances or what we see with our physical eyes.

**HEBREWS 11:6** But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he who comes to God must believe that He is (that He exists) and that He is a rewarder of them who diligently (earnestly) seek Him.

**Faith can be defined** in terms of words such as: confidence, trust, reliance, persuasion. The word “faith” is a noun. This means it is not an action, but a substance which will promote action. It is not mental assent but a conviction within, an inner knowing which is so strong that nothing can persuade you to the contrary.

**So when we have the substance of faith we:**

- have no doubt in someone or something.
- believe wholeheartedly.
- are fully persuaded with full assurance.
- have absolute confidence in the trustworthiness of someone or something.

**To operate in faith** you must first hear what God says, which is the hearing of truth from His Word.

**ROMANS 10:17** So then faith comes by hearing (the message of God), and hearing by (the preaching and sharing of) **the Word of God.**

**By God’s grace, you need to accept and yield to the truth** that you have heard, meditate upon it and believe it from your heart. Through this process, faith can be developed within your heart. To activate this faith, a conscious commitment to a course of action is needed. And that course of action involves putting into practice that which has been believed upon.

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*“ . . . Faith can be defined in terms of words such as: confidence, trust, reliance, persuasion . . . an inner knowing which is so strong that nothing can persuade you to the contrary. . . ”*

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So once you have heard a promise from God's Word, believed, trusted and acted upon it (having met all the conditions of the Word, e.g. forgiveness), God's power will be released in your life to bring this promise to fulfillment.

**Note:** Sometimes we may not have sufficient faith to receive from God ourselves, that is, to appropriate His promises directly. In this case God has made provision in His Word for us to receive from Him through the faith of others - if we are in a position to receive according to His Word (once again, if we have met the necessary conditions).

**JAMES 5:14** *Is any sick (or weak in faith - refers to physical or emotional illness of any nature: E.S.B.) among you? let him call for the elders (mature Christians of faith) of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord (the oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit and represents a point of contact from which one can release one's faith):*

**JAMES 5:15** *And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him (if he repents).*

**At times when our faith is insufficient**, we may need to seek out a mature Christian to pray for us so that our needs can be met in Christ. Nevertheless, the principle involved here remains the same. In order to receive from God, someone's faith must be involved. To keep balanced, we should also always remember that the Lord wants us as Believers to have prosperity of the soul along with prosperity of the body. In fact prosperity of soul is often a prerequisite to obtaining prosperity in other areas of our lives.

**3 JOHN 1:2** *Beloved, I wish (desire) above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers.*

Faith is simply trust in a belief, or better put, faith is the union of belief and trust. As you yield to the Holy Spirit, His grace is given to believe. Further grace is then given to enable you to trust wholeheartedly. The faith that is then in your heart will have been deposited there as a work of grace by the Spirit of God. To get to the point where you trust someone other than yourself, you must come to a position of distrusting self: our ideas, our way of thinking (Isaiah 55:8-9; Proverbs 3:5-6). To come to this point, you will need help from the Holy Spirit Who will bring you, as you surrender, to belief then trust - which constitutes having the faith that pleases God (Hebrews 11:6).

## A VICTORIOUS LIFE IN CHRIST

*Background Reading: John 15:1-17*

**If you desire to have a victorious life** in Christ with Godly fruits operating:

**GALATIANS 5:22** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), gentleness, goodness, faith (faithfulness),*

**GALATIANS 5:23** *Meekness, temperance (self-control) . . .*

**Then you must goal** to live in love and by faith. To do this you need to:

**PROVERBS 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding** (own way of thinking).

To learn self-distrust, so that we trust the Lord - His ways, His will - rather than ourselves, is part of the yielding process.

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:7 (For we [as Christians] walk by faith [in God's Word], not by sight:)**

**ROMANS 14:23 . . . for whatsoever is not of faith is sin** (therefore a bondage and so a curse).

**This is why it is so important** not to disregard or remain ignorant of God's Word, or to have preconceived ideas about so-called "truths." We need to measure all things by the Word of God (understood in proper context, using proper rules to interpret the Bible), not by our own thinking processes or other people's philosophies.

The only real way to distrust our own thinking is to come to a position of faith - by God's grace at work in us. In this we then value and trust God and what He says, regardless of how we may feel.

## **How Do We Achieve A Victorious Life In Christ ?**

God is telling us that the way to have a victorious life in Christ Jesus is to:

### **1. Fellowship regularly with God and follow the leading of the Spirit:**

**PSALM 5:1 Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation.**

**PSALM 5:2 Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto You will I pray.**

**PSALM 5:3 My voice shall You hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto You, and will look up** (wait in expectation).

**ROMANS 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation** (guilt) **to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit** (being both led and empowered by the Holy Spirit).

### **2. Study His Word diligently:**

**2 TIMOTHY 2:15 Study** (young and old) **to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who needs not** (has no cause) **to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.**

### 3. Obey His Word fully:

**JOSHUA 1:8** This Book of the Law (God's Word) shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night, that you may observe (be watchful) to do (act) according to all that is written therein: (and this is the promise) **for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success.**

**HEBREWS 5:9** And . . . He (Jesus) became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them who obey Him

### 4. Fellowship with faith-filled Christians. (This means, if possible, becoming a member of a church of true, full-Gospel Believers.)

**PSALM 133:1** Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren (Christians) to dwell together in unity (with God)!

**EPHESIANS 4:3** Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit (not unity of man or religion) in the bond of peace (in the unity of God's Word).

**HEBREWS 10:25** Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as Believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing - warning, urging and encouraging - one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching (the return of our Lord Jesus Christ). (Amp.)

## HOW TO PRAY CORRECTLY

*Background Reading: Matthew 6:5-15*

**Remember that God** is now your Heavenly Father, and when you have a need, you can come before Him to ask for His help.

**Note:** In regard to receiving answers to prayer, first and foremost, if there is any sin in your life you need to repent - for sin will block the power of God from operating in our lives so that we will not receive the healing, the provision or the direction we seek. Also learn in God to forgive those who have wronged you. Do this in His power - for to sin by holding on to unforgiveness is one of the main ways that God's power is blocked from flowing in the lives of Believers.

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***“ . . . The only real way to distrust our own thinking is to come to a position of faith - by God's grace at work in us. . . ”***

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The correct way to approach God in prayer is to come to Him in Jesus' Name - for Jesus said:

**JOHN 14:6 . . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by Me.**

**JOHN 15:16 . . . that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it to you.**

**When we come before our Heavenly Father**, we can say for example, “I come before You Father in the Name of Jesus and ask . . . . .” Then, if in faith, we would be praying correctly according to the Word of God, and spiritually, we would be before the Father in the throneroom of grace. The Word encourages us to do so, saying:

**HEBREWS 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace** (*presents the Seat of Divine Power, and yet the Source of boundless Grace*), **that we may obtain Mercy** (*presents that which we want first*), **and find Grace to help in time of need** (*refers to the Goodness of God extended to all who come, and during any “time of need”; all made possible by the Cross*). (E.S.B.)

God also tells us in His Word that when we come before Him in prayer, we must come to Him in faith.

**MATTHEW 21:22 And whatever you ask for in prayer** (according to His Word and His will for your life), **having faith and [really] believing, you will receive.** (Amp.)

**Many people pray to God, hoping** that He will do something. But hoping will not achieve the desired result. People sometimes have this concept because they do not really know God’s will on the matter about which they are praying. To pray effective faith-filled prayers, we need to know God’s will in each situation. In order to know His will, we need to first know His Word - for God’s Word, His Logos (written) Word, is His will.

**1 JOHN 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.**

**1 JOHN 5:14 And this is the confidence which we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to His will, He hears us:** (R.S.V.)

**1 JOHN 5:15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of Him.** (R.S.V.)

As we have learned, God also reveals His will by the Holy Spirit through the Rhema (revealed) Word. This Word can give direction regarding what church to attend, for instance, or even extend to what job to take. In addition it can be a Word of encouragement or rebuke. Nevertheless, the Rhema Word is also the Word of God, and will therefore reveal the will of God (Acts 16:6-9). Note that the Logos (written) Word and the Rhema (revealed) Word will never contradict one another but will always be in total agreement. God will never tell you to do anything which contravenes His written Word.

## LAYING ON OF HANDS AND THE BLOOD COVERING

**It is very common** in many Christian circles to “lay hands” on people when praying for them. This practice is scriptural, for Jesus said that Christians shall lay hands on the sick and they will recover (be healed) (Mark 16:18). Also, in many Pentecostal churches, people join hands when they pray. Both these practices may open spiritual doorways between those who participate. While such spiritual doorways can allow the power of God to flow from one person to another, a problematic aspect of these practices is that a negative spiritual transference can also take place between one person and another. This could result in demonic oppression. However let us not major on what the devil may do. Rather, let us focus on what God will do for those who believe and put their trust in Him.

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***“. . .Note that the Logos (written) Word and the Rhema (revealed) Word will never contradict one another but will always be in total agreement. . .”***

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**As a safeguard**, God has provided, for those who are in faith, a protective covering called the blood covering which can block any evil attack. We apply this spiritual blood covering by faith. Through our faith in this spiritual protection, any evil which would try to influence us through open spiritual doorways will be blocked from doing so. This is one benefit to us of the finished work of the Cross - the benefit of protection for all those who put their life in the Master’s hands. The shed Blood paid the price for total victory in our lives. Faith and God’s grace make this victory an experiential reality.

**Today we can, by faith, in a spiritual sense, apply the Blood of Jesus around our doorways.** We can cover ourselves, our children, our property and many different situations, for the enemy is unable to penetrate the “blood covering.” The “covering of the blood” is our spiritual shield of protection from the enemy. **It can be likened to a canopy which completely encompasses us, and protects us from illegal enemy attacks.**

**A person praying** for another person or having another person pray for them should always first believe for the blood covering and thank the Lord for it. If applied in faith, the blood covering will prevent the enemy attempting to attack through another person, and bringing in, for example, unbelief, resentment, pride, sickness, etc. Believe us! This can happen.

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***“. . .As a safeguard, God has provided, for those who are in faith, a protective covering called the blood covering which can block any evil attack. . .”***

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It may seem strange to teach such principles, but scripture clearly tells us it is not flesh and blood (people) against whom we fight. Rather, we fight a spiritual enemy who seeks to destroy us in any way he can, legally or illegally.



**EPHESIANS 6:12** For we wrestle (fight) **not against flesh and blood** (man), **but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places** (Satan's forces positioned in various levels of authority).

**So be aware of this truth**, particularly when you are praying for others or having them pray for you, for it is of great importance.

In regard to "deliverance," and in that we mean deliverance from the world, the flesh and the devil, sometimes we need help from others through prayer. For this purpose, as we have said, many Christians pray for one another (the prayer of faith: James 5:13-16), using the laying on of hands.

**In many cases** the laying on of hands actually provides only a temporary reprieve (or deliverance). This is because, if our mind is to experience lasting deliverance, it must be washed and renewed in the power of truth which has been revealed by the Holy Spirit. This will cause our human nature to be energized by the Divine Nature that we are now partakers of in Christ (2 Peter 1:4). This means that we will then have "*the mind of Christ*" in the area concerned (1 Corinthians 2:16). In this way we can live our Christian life not in the energy of our own strength, but in the power of God as it is supplied through the Divine Nature.

Therefore prayer through the laying on of hands should not be regarded as a magic wand whereby all ills can be cured. True long term deliverance will only really come from truth being taken into our hearts and being acted on, through the power of the Divine Nature.

**Also, always be aware** that in every consideration of the "blood covering," we must be mindful of and trusting in Calvary's sacrifice - that He took the punishment due to us, and the shedding of His precious, perfect, sinless Blood was necessary for the remission of our sin. In this we now have life, and in the power of the Spirit, abundant life is ours. This includes the protection the Blood now offers, as we take up our cross and follow Him. Know, however, that this prayer is not a magic formula. The blood-covering prayer must be based on the solid ground where man's soul was redeemed. This of course is Calvary - all that it has taken away (sin) and all that it has given (life and power over the sin nature).

**This type of prayer** is not meant to be a replacement for power over sin. Nor is it a licence for unconditional protection. Only if our sin is confessed and dealt with can we be afforded the promise of the "blood covering." It is meant to be part of the armour of the new man in Christ, who has been raised in newness of life and is trusting in Calvary's finished work and a Saviour now seated at the right hand of the Father. Let us therefore pray the blood-covering prayer with this balance in mind, so that the Spirit of God may empower us, protect us and enrich our soul - as we seek to do His will in Resurrection power.

**Note:** The enemy can only attack us if we let our guard down:

1. By not progressing in our faith (and so becoming complacent in our Christian walk) (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

2. By not being alert spiritually (even through being in ignorance of His will) (1 Peter 5:8).
3. By sinning, or not dealing with our sin through repentance by putting it under the Blood (1 John 1:9).

All three areas can give the enemy inroads into our lives. If sin is not dealt with, it will keep us from entering the throne room (and as Hebrews 4:16 states, it is only here we are able to find grace in our time of need.) Sin which is not confessed and repented of will also break our “blood covering,” and prevent us applying it again. Therefore God will be unable to protect us in the way He desires. If this be the case, we need to repent according to 1 John 1:9 and then thank the Lord for forgiving us, and cleansing us from the results of that sin. Then we need to thank Him for restoring our “blood covering” which is really the promise of protection in the New Covenant, based on the Blood of Calvary.

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***“ . . . The blood-covering prayer must be based on the solid ground where man’s soul was redeemed. . . ”***

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Remember that the weapons of spiritual warfare are not carnal (of this world) but rather spiritual and mighty. We must fight a spiritual war with spiritual weapons, and protect ourselves with spiritual armour.

**2 CORINTHIANS 10:3** For though we walk [live] in the flesh, we are not carrying on our warfare according to the flesh and using mere human weapons (Amp.)

**2 CORINTHIANS 10:4** For the weapons of our warfare are not physical (weapons of flesh and blood), but they are mighty before God for the overthrow and destruction of strongholds (Amp.)

## YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN ANYMORE

*Background Reading: Romans 6:16-18*

**Through your acceptance of Jesus** as your Lord and Saviour, you have been taken out of the authority of darkness and have become a child of the living God. This was made possible through the finished work of Christ, the Lamb of God - Who was slain for us and raised from the dead by the power of God. Therefore your goal now should be to serve the Lord with a thankful heart and listen to His leading for your life. Remember you are not your own anymore, you have been bought with a price.

**1 CORINTHIANS 6:19** What! Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, Who you have of God, and you are not your own?

**1 CORINTHIANS 6:20** For you are bought with a price (Jesus’ shed Blood): **therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s** (now belong to Him).

To hear God's leading for your life and to glorify Him, you need, by His grace, to take up the cross of self-denial.

### **The Cross Of Self-Denial**

**Taking up the cross of self-denial** and following Jesus does not mean suffering with sickness, disease and poverty. It means denying ourselves, by putting the Lord and the needs of other people in front of our own "fleshly" desires and ambitions.

**MATTHEW 16:24** Then said Jesus unto His Disciples, "**If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross** (of self-denial), and follow Me."

**MATTHEW 10:37** He who loves father or mother more than Me (does not put Jesus, His Word and His will first) **is not worthy of Me** (is not worthy to receive further revelation knowledge); and he who loves son or daughter more than Me **is not worthy of Me.**

**MATTHEW 10:38** And **he who takes not his cross, and follows after Me, is not worthy of Me** (not worthy of the blessings afforded by the "victory" of the Cross. (E.S.B.)

Taking up the cross of self-denial means following the Lord in every area of our lives and putting Him first. In doing this we become not just Christians but Disciples of Christ (John 8:31).

### **How Do We Take Up Our Cross ?**

**To take up our cross** we must give up our past life of sin and live according to the direction God gives us. As we do so, we can come to love God and others as ourselves, through the power of Christ and not of self. The Word of God tells us in relation to the Christian lifestyle to:

**EPHESIANS 5:11** Have no fellowship (nothing to do) with the unfruitful works of darkness (anything contrary to God's Word), but rather reprove (expose) them.

**EPHESIANS 5:12** For it is a shame (shameful) even to speak of those things which are done of them (the disobedient) in secret.

**EPHESIANS 5:13** But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light (made known for what they really are): for whatsoever does make manifest is light (where everything is clear there is light).

**EPHESIANS 5:14** Wherefore He said (*Isa.60:1*), Awake thou who sleeps (*the Apostle is warning Christians that they should stir themselves from lethargy and apathy*), and arise from the dead (*dead to the things of the Spirit*), and Christ shall give you Light. (*Christ will pour upon you the Light of Divine Truth as the Sun gives light to men aroused from sleep.*) (E.S.B.)

**EPHESIANS 5:15** See then that you walk circumspectly (carefully), not as fools, but as wise (close to the Lord),

**EPHESIANS 5:16 Redeeming the time** (making the most of every opportunity), **because the days are evil.**

**EPHESIANS 5:17 Wherefore be ye not unwise** (foolish), **but understanding what the will of the Lord is.**

**As we walk in the light of God's Word** by His grace at work within us, earnestly desiring to please Him, He will show us what needs to be changed in our lives so we can live victoriously. Indeed God desires us all to live in victory, to fellowship with Him and to serve Him. Taking up the cross is a primary condition for allowing God to bless us and protect us in all that we do.

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***“. . . Taking up the cross of self-denial and following Jesus means . . . denying ourselves, by putting the Lord and the needs of other people in front of our own “fleshly” desires and ambitions. . . ”***

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Every day we need to come to Calvary and refresh our minds with the finished work of Christ. We must always be aware that through Christ's Resurrection, the benefits of His death have been made available to us - namely that we should now walk in “*newness of life*” (Romans 6:4). This is possible because we have been born again with a new nature, the Divine Nature, imparted to us through Divine connection. With this focus, as we seek, find and embrace God's will in our lives, by means of the graces of the Divine Nature, we can not only have the desire to do God's will, but also the power to do it (Philippians.2:13). This power to do God's will is available to us if we yield to the Holy Spirit, no matter what circumstances, the devil or the flesh (self) may try to dictate. All victory therefore comes to us via the Cross of Calvary.

All this we need to know and walk in as we take up the cross of self-denial daily, the cross of God's direction, not ours, for our lives.

## **PROTECTING YOUR SALVATION**

*Background Reading: Proverbs 4:20-27*

**As we have learned**, it is possible for people to forfeit their salvation after becoming Christians. For this reason the Lord gives much direction, throughout His Word, concerning the importance of continuing in our commitment to Jesus' Lordship. This of course requires effort, for this commitment is not a once only thing which can then be shelved and forgotten.

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***“. . .Every day we need to come to Calvary and  
refresh our minds with the finished work of  
Christ. . .”***

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As we have said, to maintain our commitment or make it a living commitment, we need the fellowship of other Believers through involvement in a church structure.

**COLOSSIANS 1:21** **And you, that were sometime** (in times past) **alienated and enemies in your mind by** (because of your) **wicked works** (evil behaviour), **yet now has he reconciled** (through the Cross)

**COLOSSIANS 1:22** **In the body of his flesh** (the Incarnation) **through death** (it took Christ's death to effect our reconciliation), **to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight** (cleansed by the Blood):

**COLOSSIANS 1:23** **If you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel . . . .**

**Because of the world's influence**, some find that it is easy to slip back into old ways of thinking and acting. Then, almost without realizing it, they fall away from their commitment to Jesus. Therefore we need to be aware of the subtlety of such worldly influences - for our salvation is very precious - and to guard against them.

Some possible situations about which we need to take care are as follows:

**As a new Christian**, you should learn how to tell people about your new life in Christ. Then you will be able to share with (witness to) your friends about what Christ means to you. But do this in the company of a mature Christian if possible. Then if your friends will not listen, leave them and return another time to witness to them again (maybe when you have become more mature as a Christian or when their circumstances have changed etc.). In all things, however, first pray in order to gain the Lord's timing, what to say and to whom.

**As a new Christian**, you cannot afford to stay in deep fellowship with non-believers who practise a lifestyle of sin. This is because there is a danger of them influencing you and your faith in a negative way (1 Corinthians 15:33).

**Neither can you afford to fellowship** in any major way with lukewarm Christians (Christians who do not try to live according to God's commandments). In other words, their lifestyle is not much different to the heathen who practise sin. You may become influenced by their sin and unbelief, and be drawn away from total commitment to Jesus' Lordship in your life (because as a new Christian, you are still only a spiritual baby at this stage, a babe in Christ) (Proverbs 13:20; Ephesians 5:8). Practised **serious sin can bring about unbelief. If unbelief is left to run its race so that the Christian no longer retains the proper object of their faith, i.e. the Cross - the Atonement (the finished work of Christ at Calvary), then ultimately they will forfeit their salvation. This is because man is saved by**

grace through faith in Christ and His finished work. Only by this means can man be joined to Christ and so be saved.

## **God Commands Us To Separate Ourselves From Workers Of Iniquity (Sin)**

*Background Reading: Proverbs 4:14-19; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18*

As we have been learning, while we are not to be isolated, we are directed by God to be separate from the world, and to be a people holy to Himself. We must therefore separate ourselves from those who engage in the following practices, and we are certainly not to participate in these practices ourselves.

**GALATIANS 5:19** Now the works of the flesh (sinful nature) are manifest (obvious, clearly seen), which are these; **adultery, fornication, uncleanness** (impurity), **lasciviousness** (lustfulness, indecency),

**GALATIANS 5:20** **Idolatry, witchcraft** (sorcery), **hatred, variance** (discord), **emulations** (jealousy), **wrath** (outbursts of anger), **strife** (selfish ambition), **seditions** (dissensions), **heresies** (factions),

**GALATIANS 5:21** **Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings** (carousing), **and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they who do** (practise) **such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.**

**Note:** Galatians speaks of “*adultery*” and “*fornication.*” Adultery in the Greek means unlawful sexual relations between men and women, single or married (but not married to each other). Fornication in the Greek means repeated adultery of married or single people. It can also refer to sexual relations not between men and women, including perversion such as pedophilia, homosexuality and bestiality.

**1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-10** Know ye not that the unrighteous (all who reject God’s Son) shall not inherit the Kingdom of God (shall not go to heaven)? **Be not deceived: neither fornicators** (sexually immoral), **nor idolaters** (idol worshippers), **nor adulterers, nor effeminate** (sexual perverts), **nor abusers of themselves with mankind** (homosexual offenders), **nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers** (slanderers), **nor extortioners** (swindlers), **shall inherit the Kingdom of God.**

**1 CORINTHIANS 15:33** **Do not be misled** (deceived): **“Bad company corrupts good character.”** (N.I.V.)

**The Lord warns us** against such things, for the enemy uses these actions and practices to perpetuate evil, and by them, to attempt to lure Christians back into the Kingdom of Darkness.

### **What Is Sin ?**

**Sin was first manifested** when Lucifer, the archangel, chose to self-rule, and challenge God’s throne. His name was then changed to Satan (meaning “Adversary”), for he had

become totally corrupt and evil, with no chance of redemption. Then in the natural physical world, in the Garden of Eden, sin was manifested when the first man and woman disobeyed God's command. Adam and Eve entered into a state of sin and this became universal, being inherited by all their descendants. This resulted in spiritual death (separation from God) for all mankind.

At the Fall, man also lost access to the energies and graces of the Divine Nature which empowered him to desire and then to do God's will. From this point onwards, man became dominated by the sin nature that then gave him the power to sin. So not only is fallen man born in a state of sin, he is controlled by the sin nature - which empowers him to do the wrong he desires to do, the sin he has decided to commit. Empowerment to sin comes only after a person first wills to do the wrong thing, i.e. to sin. In the Believer, the will is the trigger which causes either the sin nature or the Divine Nature to be enthroned, giving power to the Believer to act according to that which is yielded to.

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***“. . .As a new Christian, you cannot afford to stay in deep fellowship with non-believers who practise a lifestyle of sin. . .”***

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Briefly, sin can be an action or a state (position). We are born into a state of sin because we are descendants of Adam. And we commit actions of sin when we violate God's commandments and laws.

**So sin can be referenced to:**

1. **The state of sin** into which we are all born (separation from God, also called “spiritual death”). Another term used in this context is “original sin.”
2. **Actions** (deeds, thoughts etc.) which violate God's Word and commands, and are thus acts of unfaithfulness to our commitment to Jesus.
3. **The sin nature** which empowers us to commit the sin we have willed to do.

**For the Believer**, to do anything outside the boundaries of the commandments and principles contained in God's Word is an action of sin which will allow the enemy to legally attack us in that area of wrong. Also, concerning the Believer, sin will cause the Divine Nature to be dethroned at an experiential level and the sin nature to again assume the throne - to block the grace of God delivering us from evil. Note that Divine love, by its very nature, cannot intervene or intrude upon the decision of the Saint by supplying something which is against the wishes of that Saint. Willing or deciding to do wrong is the trigger for the Divine Nature to be dethroned and the sin nature to be enthroned. However we need to understand that we do not have to be dominated by sin because Christ defeated sin on our behalf and for our benefit at the Cross. We also need to remember that we have been raised with Him in His Resurrection, as Romans Chapter 6 tells us. Therefore we can use our will to focus on the truths contained in the Bible in regard to the power of the Cross. With this focus we can deny self the opportunity to sin, allowing the faith God has

put in our hearts to rise up so we can grab our inheritance with both hands (that is, if we have bothered to seek and therefore understand these precious truths).

**ROMANS 6:5** For in view of the fact that we are those who have become permanently united with Him with respect to this likeness of His death, certainly also we shall be those who as logical result have become permanently united with Him with respect to the likeness of His resurrection, (Wuest)

**ROMANS 6:6** knowing this experientially, that our old [unregenerate] self was crucified once for all with Him in order that the physical body [heretofore] dominated by the sinful nature might be rendered inoperative [in that respect], with the result that no longer are we rendering a slave's habitual obedience to the sinful nature, (Wuest)

**ROMANS 6:7** for the one who died once for all stands in the position of a permanent relationship of freedom from the sinful nature. (Wuest)

Therefore when we, as Believers, sin, we need to repent, ask God's forgiveness and also thank Him for the cleansing of all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). This takes away the enemy's legal ground, dethrones the sin nature in that area, and restores us to full fellowship with the Father.

When we hold on to unconfessed sin, however, we give the devil legal ground to remain in our lives, and the sin nature remains enthroned. The degree of sin will determine how much legal ground is given. Sin of greater magnitude will give greater legal ground to the enemy to establish a stronghold, from which evil can make greater inroads.

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***“. . . In the Believer, the will is the trigger which causes either the sin nature or the Divine Nature to be enthroned, giving power to the Believer to act according to that which is yielded to. . .”***

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**God has given us the Bible** as our “Manual of Life” so we can know right from wrong, so we can make informed choices and not let our feet tread on unstable ground. Therefore we need to look into God's Word diligently so we can know what God requires of us, and then live accordingly.

We are told, for instance:

**EPHESIANS 4:29** Let no corrupt communication (unwholesome talk e.g. swearing, vulgarity, slander, suggestive speech) proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying (building others up), that it may minister grace unto the hearers (be a blessing, a benefit, to those who hear it).

**EPHESIANS 4:30** And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God (*proclaims the fact that the utterance of evil or worthless words is repugnant to the Holiness of the Spirit*), whereby you are sealed unto the Day of Redemption. (*This should have been translated, “In Whom you are sealed unto the Day of Redemption.” The Holy Spirit is Himself the Seal God has placed on us.*) (E.S.B.)



**EPHESIANS 4:31** Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour (brawling), and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

**EPHESIANS 4:32** And be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another (*be quick to forgive*), even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. (*Christ's forgiveness of us is to always be the basis of our forgiveness of others.*) (E.S.B.)

So let us not give the devil any legal ground to attack us by either being ignorant of, or disobedient to, God's Word (Ephesians 4:27).

## Works Of Iniquity

Some of the practices we need to abstain from are as follows:

1. **God, through His Word**, has commanded Christians to repent if they have been, or are involved in any of the following practices, or have made use of any of the following occult artifacts: Hypnosis, irridology, astral travel, tarot cards, ouija boards, seances, clairvoyance, etc., black or white magic, E.S.P., horoscopes, divining, psychic healing, occult practices, Satanic worship, palm and tea leaf readings, idolatry, religious cults, etc., etc. (Leviticus 19:31; 20:6,27; 1 Chronicles 10:13).

**DEUTERONOMY 18:10** Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire (human sacrifice), who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, (N.I.V.)

**DEUTERONOMY 18:11** or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. (N.I.V.)

**DEUTERONOMY 18:12** For all who do these things are an abomination unto the Lord . . . .

**DEUTERONOMY 18:13** You must be blameless (pure from idolatry) before the Lord your God. (N.I.V.)

These are only a few of the practices (for there are many, many more) that are an abomination to God, and they bring a curse upon anyone involved in them.

2. **The reading and / or watching** of pornographic material of any kind is definitely not an option for the Christian - for your mind is the doorway through which you are able to let good or evil into your life, and activities of this kind would simply put the welcome mat out for the enemy to enter your life and bring you into serious bondage.
3. **Don't listen to songs** which have words that are contrary to God's Word. What you feed yourself on will influence your thinking and your emotions, even unknowingly. Some music, even with "Christian lyrics," may be pleasant to your flesh, but may have a negative influence upon your growth as a Christian. It may take time to have

your spiritual senses developed so that you are able to discern between good and bad in this area. So it would be wise as a young or immature Christian (note that one could still be immature even after being a Christian for 30 years) to seek out mature Christians who love God and His Word to direct you in this area:

4. **Do not watch movies or T.V. programmes** which would cause you to think wrongly, or stumble in your Christian walk.

**HEBREWS 5:14** But solid food is for full-grown men, for those whose senses and mental faculties are trained by practice to discriminate and distinguish between what is morally good and noble and what is evil and contrary either to divine or human law. (Amp).

## YOU ARE HOLY UNTO GOD

*Background Reading: Ephesians 5:1-12*

**The reason we must separate ourselves** from both the works and the workers of iniquity (sin) is because we are now a holy people unto God in Christ Jesus, through His shed Blood.

**1 PETER 2:9** But you (this is all Christians) are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people (a people set apart); that you should show forth the praises of Him Who has called you out of darkness (spiritual death) into His marvellous light:

**2 CORINTHIANS 6:17** “Wherefore come out from among them (the works and workers of iniquity), and be ye separate,” says the Lord, “and touch not the unclean thing (refers to Christians avoiding all unholy contact with a vain and polluted world (E.S.B.); and I will receive you,

**2 CORINTHIANS 6:18** And will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,” says the Lord Almighty.

**1 Corinthians 5:11** But now I have written unto you not to keep company (Believers should not condone this kind of immoral activity in other so-called Christians who do not repent), if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner (plainly tells us that many will call themselves “Christian” or “Brother,” who practise these types of sins (E.S.B.); with such an one no not to eat (speaks more so of the Lord’s Supper than anything else. (E.S.B.)

To be set apart is not to negate our responsibility towards civil authority in the land in which we live - for we are to obey the law of the land as well as God’s Law. Of course God’s moral law is always to be above the law of the land if there is a conflict, e.g. abortion. In the overwhelming majority of cases, however, this will not occur.

**1 PETER 2:13** Submit yourselves to every Ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake (Peter is speaking here of Civil Government): whether it be to the king, as supreme (providing the Ordinance does not violate the Word of God); (E.S.B.)

**1 PETER 2:14 Or unto Governors, as unto them who are sent by him** *(the local police) for the punishment of evildoers (covers all Civil Government), and for the praise of them that do well. (Evil is to be punished and doing right is to be rewarded, which pertains to a stable society) (E.S.B.)*

**1 PETER 2:15 For so is the Will of God** *(Civil Government is ordained by God), that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men (presents the fact that true Christians are the greatest asset of any nation): (E.S.B.)*

**1 PETER 2:16 As free** *(the freedom we have in Christ), and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. (The liberty we have in Christ does not make us above the Law of the Land.) (E.S.B.)*

Jesus had made this point previously, in response to the question of the Pharisees as to whether Israel should pay the hated Roman taxes. Calling for a coin, Jesus dealt with the matter in this way:

**MARK 12:16... And He said unto them, “Whose is this image and superscription?” And they said unto him, “Caesar’s.”**

**MARK 12:17 And Jesus answering said unto them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they marvelled at him** *(the Jewish leaders had used the word “give” respecting tribute or taxes paid to Caesar, while Jesus used the word, “render,” which speaks of paying something as a debt; in other words, He was saying that Israel owed Rome certain obligations, such as taxes, etc.; it also means that Believers are obligated to pay taxes, and as well, to submit to Civil Government in every respect, providing its demands do not abrogate the Word of God. (E.S.B.).*

As we know, the Word of God is to be our guide in all such matters of conduct and conscience, so that we may live a life which pleases our Father and glorifies Him. To be holy is to be set apart, separated from all ungodliness. In this regard we should be aware of our conduct, our speech, what we watch and hear, and the way we dress (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). When we go to church and teaching meetings we should dress in a neat manner, whether formal or casual, according to our means, remembering into Whose presence we are coming, and setting a standard that shows respect for God’s presence.

**Note:** God is not concerned with how elaborately we dress because He looks on the heart. Nevertheless He does expect us to dress sensibly and neatly, according to our means, for the sake of others. For this reason we should not dress in a manner that could cause undue distraction, e.g. if we were to wear excessively short skirts, low cut fronts or tight fitting clothing which highlights the body. A dress code of this kind may become a stumbling block to others, leading them into wrong thinking.

Also, as a holy people unto God, we are directed to abstain from and avoid all appearances (forms) of evil.

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:22 Abstain from all appearance** *(forms) of evil. (The question is, “Does this please God?” (E.S.B.)*

**1 PETER 2:11** Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims (*no one is really a pilgrim in the Biblical sense who has not first become a stranger to this world*), **abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul** (*tells us that the “sin nature” is still with us as Christians*); (E.S.B.)

**This means that** as well as avoiding sin directly, we should not place ourselves or others in a position of strong temptation that could lead to sin. Also publicly we should avoid anything that could be perceived as being immoral, illegal or wrong. Even though something may be totally innocent and without any evil intent, if it appears to be wrong, it may bring disrepute upon those concerned. For example, if two unmarried Christians of the opposite sex were to share a house together, even though they continued to live as separate individuals, it could be perceived by others that they are living in a de facto relationship. This of course is contrary to God’s Word, and so the situation could be perceived by onlookers as being contrary to Christian moral standards. Also, on a personal level, it could only take a weak moment when one or both may succumb to sexual temptation and fall into sin, whether this be through thought or action. To place oneself in this position, for some, could be likened to a person standing in the middle of a freeway and hoping they do not get hit by a vehicle.

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***“. . . God has given us the Bible as our “Manual of Life” so we can know right from wrong, so we can make informed choices and not let our feet tread on unstable ground. . .”***

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Also, those who conduct themselves in such a way may cause younger or weaker fellow Christians to follow their example. As such they may become a “*stumbling block*” for others to fall into sin. The Bible gives warning in this regard:

**1 CORINTHIANS 8:9** But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a **stumblingblock to them who are weak.**

So as Christians, we need to be careful, both for our own sakes and for the sake of the unsaved. Our conduct and lifestyle need to correspond to that of followers of Christ so that we display Godly fruits and do not bring discredit upon the Gospel.

## **TO DRINK OR NOT TO DRINK**

The subject of alcohol and whether, as Christians, we should or should not drink, has long been a topic of debate in many Christian circles. Let us look at the Word of God for our answers.

**EPHESIANS 5:18** And be not drunk with wine (*speaks of being controlled by alcoholic beverage, which Paul desires to use as an example*), **wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit** (*being controlled by the Spirit constantly, moment by moment*). (E.S.B.)

**The Bible tells us not to be drunk**, not to be in “excess” but to be filled with the Spirit. This means to be controlled by the Spirit of God and not to be controlled by anybody else or anything else, including alcohol and mind-altering drugs. Of course for medical purposes and the benefit of a patient, a doctor may use drugs. Obviously this is not to use drugs in an improper way.

The past for many Christians could be summed up as Peter wrote in 1 Peter 4:1-4:

**1 PETER 4:1** Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh (through the Atonement), arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he who has suffered in the flesh (won the battle over the flesh) has ceased from sin;

**1 PETER 4:2** That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh (in this earthly life) to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

**1 PETER 4:3** For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles (this means before we were saved), when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries (these are works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21):

**1 PETER 4:4** Wherein they (your former friends and associates) think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you (one form of persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12)

**Therefore the Bible is quite clear** that in regard to alcohol, we are not to be drunk, i.e. to drink to excess. We could try to determine what would constitute “excess.” Alternatively we could assume that we could drink just a little, let’s say a glass of wine with our meals. What would we then be doing? In this case, we would be saying by our actions that it is an acceptable Christian practice to drink alcohol.

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***“ . . . Our conduct and lifestyle need to correspond to that of followers of Christ so that we display Godly fruits and do not bring discredit upon the Gospel. . . ”***

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If someone were then to ask you if you drink alcohol, you would have to answer “Yes.” If they then asked whether it is okay, as a Christian, to drink alcohol, you would have to answer, because of the example you are setting and therefore your underlying belief, “Yes, but in moderation.”

This may sound both reasonable and wise. However let us take this issue a little further in terms of its analysis and possible effect on others.

What if, from your standpoint of drinking in moderation, you speak to a newly converted Christian who has, as many others in this generation, a past that has been filled with alcohol abuse - binge drinking in particular. Upon receiving your counsel they then set out to drink in moderation. They start with one or two glasses, but through the weakness of the flesh, they do not stop. They would then have failed to achieve the goal of “moderation” and would have entered into “excess.” In this case, through your sanction of drinking in moderation, you would have placed a stumbling block in front of this person - and possibly many other Christians as well.

Certainly this particular individual is responsible for his actions as we all are. However in this hypothetical case you would have supported their weakness, however unknowingly, by assuring them that it is acceptable to drink in moderation provided they are still “sober” and not “given to wine”(1 Timothy 3:2-3). Better to consider it preferable not to drink at all rather than to put a stumbling block in front of anyone!

**Think about it!** If everybody had good self-control, and after salvation we were all able to follow the leading of the Spirit without wavering, then there would not be a problem. But as we know, many have been weakened in the area of self-control in relation to alcohol. Through sin, habit, or bad genetics - it does not matter. However such individuals need no encouragement to test their resolve in this area. The answer is always repentance and gaining empowerment to live one’s life according to the will of God.

Many people have abused their bodies with alcohol to the point where a chemical addiction or an emotional addiction has been produced. Upon salvation, man is changed in his spirit, but his body and mind are a different matter. As Christians we know only too well that ongoing work is needed in regard to sanctification, for we will always remain “a work in progress.” Ongoing sanctification is required to bring a man’s condition to his position in Christ.

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*“. . .many have been weakened in the area of self-control in relation to alcohol through sin . . . habit, or bad genetics. . .”*

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To be considered here is the weakness of the flesh in many Christians, weakness that would cause them to fall headlong into hell’s grip through alcohol. There are individuals who seemingly do not have the willpower, the self-control, to stop after a few drinks - for whatever the reason. As loving and caring Christians, we should take every opportunity to safeguard and help protect brothers and sisters who have this potential weakness. And who is to know who is weak in this area? Some Christians who may fall into this sin of “excess” have possibly never abused their bodies with alcohol in the past and may never have even been drunk in their lives. Who is to know, and it is far better to err on the side of caution in this matter than to plough ahead with no regard for others. The doctrine of “moderate drinking” never addresses the love of one’s fellowman, only the love of self and self-indulgence.

**If drunkenness becomes a way of life, this is one of the sins the Word of God explicitly warns us about this type of sin that will fast-track a Christian into forfeiting their salvation through unbelief (Hebrews 3:12-14), whereby denying Jesus’ Lordship. Scripture tells us clearly that one’s name can be blotted out of the Lamb’s Book of Life (Exodus 32:32-33).**

**1 CORINTHIANS 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,**

**1 CORINTHIANS 6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.**

**REVELATION 3:5** He who overcomes (by being in Christ), the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.

Love should guide all our actions, not the dictates of our flesh - our self-desires and wants. Concern for the welfare of our fellowman should, with God's help, be our priority in all things. We should never allow a stumbling block to be set in place because of the way we live or what we do or say. Let it never be said of us in this life or the next that after becoming a Christian, we in any way have caused or helped cause the demise of **another**.

**To drink or not to drink** (in moderation) should not really be about us, but about us thinking of, and being considerate towards, and protective of, others. This is God's love at work, in and through us. This is only one example in life whereby we can influence others so that, as a result, they may harm themselves. When this is the case, it is something we must seriously consider. Scripture tells us:

**ROMANS 14:21** It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby your brother stumbles, or is offended, or is made weak (*the idea is that love is to be the ruling guide, not our freedom or liberties*). (E.S.B.)

**The point is that we have liberties** and can do certain things as Christians. However, if these liberties were in any way to assist another brother or sister to fall into sin, it would be better and indeed right for us not to embrace such liberties. Also, many have fought against the bondage of alcohol addiction and what it involves, namely a lowering of moral restraints and standards of decency. Excess alcohol consumption can lead not only to drunkenness but also, when an opportunity presents itself, promiscuous sexual behaviour, etc.

Certainly alcohol can cause people not to count the cost, and not to retain their personal moral boundaries. We are to be clear-headed and not influenced or weakened in the mind in regard to our communication with others and also our actions concerning others.

**The scriptures continually urge us** as Christians to be "*sober*," (e.g. Titus 1:6-8, 2:2-6; 1 Timothy 3:2; 11; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; 1 Peter 1:13; 4:7).

**1 PETER 5:8** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour

To be "*sober*" in this scriptural context means to be serious, earnest, level-headed, to show no excessive or extreme emotion or prejudice, to be self-controlled, clear-headed, self-possessed, to be in one's "right mind," to think clearly and to use common sense.

To be "*sober*" is thus to have a clear and sound mind, in other words, to have proper self-control, to be mentally alert and circumspect. Doing anything that would cause the Christian to be weakened in this area is wrong and therefore a sin. Alcohol can help cause us not to be sober minded, as we have discussed.

**The Biblical principle of the stumbling block** can be related to many other areas of our life - our actions and our speech. Basically to apply this principle (of not allowing a stumbling block to be created by what we do or do not do) requires the grace of the love of God to empower us in all that we do and do not do, as ambassadors of Christ. This

principle highlights the responsibility that is laid at our feet to care for our fellowman. As Jesus taught, we have a responsibility to not just love ourselves but also our neighbour (Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31).

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***“ . . . Love should guide all our actions, not the dictates of our flesh - our self-desires and wants. . . ”***

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Again, it is not to be just about us but about the welfare of others. To have this mindset we need the Spirit of truth and power in our lives, governing our thinking. In other words, we need God’s direction and empowerment on a daily basis, afforded to us as we yield to His will in our lives and believe for the grace required (Philippians 2:12-13).

Summing it up then, it would be far better for others that a Christian’s response to the question “Do you drink?” should be “No, I do not drink and I would advise all Christians to do likewise.” Why? “Out of consideration and love for others, I will not be an instrument used to cause a stumbling block to be placed in front of the life of another.”

**Note:** Whether you are a normal Christian or a Five Fold Minister of the Gospel, the same rule of love should govern your actions. There is no difference, for we are all in Christ and are His representatives, hopefully drawing on the power of the Holy Spirit to flow in the standard of His love, day by day, to His glory. Amen.

### **The Importance Of Correct Thinking**

**Because we are now a holy people in Christ**, we need to keep our conversation pure, refraining from all swearing, filthy language and coarse joking, as God has instructed in His Word.

**COLOSSIANS 3:8** But now you must put off (rid yourselves) of all (such things as) these: anger, wrath (rage), malice, blasphemy (slander), filthy communication (abusive, offensive language) from your lips.

**EPHESIANS 5:4** Neither filthiness (obscenity), nor foolish (silly and corrupt) talking, nor (coarse) jesting, which are not convenient (fitting for Saints): but rather giving of thanks (to God).

**Sometimes we may need** to walk away from people (or situations) for our own benefit and well-being. If we don’t, we may be influenced by their sin, affected by their unbelief and drawn away from Jesus’ Lordship in our lives. Meditating on wrong thoughts will result in bondage. We should meditate on things which are good, honest and pure, as Philippians 4:8 tells us:

**PHILIPPIANS 4:8** For the rest, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of reverence and is honourable and seemly, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely and lovable, whatever is kind and winsome and gracious, if there is any virtue and excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think on and weigh and take account of these things - fix your minds on them. (Amp)



**In other words**, if a thought or attitude does not line up with God's Word, we are to reject it, cast it aside, then believe and trust that the Divine Nature will give us the power to say "No" to unrighteous thoughts. If we begin meditating on wrong thoughts, this may give legal ground to the devil to enter our lives and so bring us into some kind of bondage. It is not the initial thoughts themselves which pass through a person's mind that are sinful. Continuing to think on these thoughts, however, will bring a person into bondage, i.e. allow evil to gain access to or take hold in areas of a person's life. For example, the new Divine Nature, of which we are partakers, is meant to give us the desire and empowerment to do God's will. If we choose to think (meditate) on that which is evil, or to want that which is wrong in God's eyes, then the sin nature will roar back into ascendancy and enthrone itself, giving us the power to do what we have chosen. God has given us, through the grace of the Cross, access to the graces of His Divine Nature - by which we can live so that sin should not have dominion over us. Therefore, there is no necessity to sin, for Christ has paid the price for us to have victory over sin and the sin nature, as we walk in "*newness of life*" (Romans 6:4-6).

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*“ . . . Sometimes we may need to walk away from people (or situations) for our own benefit and well-being. If we don't we may be influenced by their sin, affected by their unbelief. . . ”*

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**One of Satan's greatest weapons is unbelief** (doubting God's Word). This is an important truth for every Christian to remember - for our enemy, Satan, continually tries to attack people's minds with thoughts of doubt concerning the credibility of God's Word. His suggestions may take such forms as: "This is not for today," "This is not for you," "God doesn't do that anymore," "The Bible was written by man and is not really God's Word," "Most of the Bible stories are really myths," and so on. It is up to each of us, however, to reject these lies and to stand on the truth of God's Word, claiming the promises.

If we stand in our authority in Christ, we do not have to entertain Satan's lies. We can turn them back on him by saying, "**I reject your lies in the Name of Jesus.**" Then as we are open to God, we can allow Him to empower us with the strength needed to overcome - through the energies and graces of the Divine Nature, to which we were given access when we were resurrected with newness of life in Christ.

### **The Importance Of Correct Speech**

We also need to be careful of what we say (our confession), for by our words that come from our heart, we will either have victory or defeat in our lives.

**EPHESIANS 4:29** Let no corrupt communication (anything contrary to God's Word) proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying (building ourselves and others up in faith), **that it may minister grace unto the hearers.**

**MATTHEW 12:34 O generation of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.**

**MATTHEW 12:35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.**

**Through negative speech**, people can give legal ground to the devil to promote darkness again in their lives, and so block God's power from operating in relation to these areas of negative speech. So too when people consistently make positive faith statements, this can help them focus properly, and so help bring them, as part of the process, to a position of faith. It is faith which is needed to allow God's grace to work in our lives.

Some minor, or seemingly innocent examples of negative confession are: "I'm sick and tired of doing that," "You make me sick," "I'm dying to do that," "That's a pain in the neck," "I'll probably get the flu this year," and so on. This manner of speech can bring bondage into a person's life (the same result as when people meditate on negative things). Quite often, there is no real intent in regard to these sayings. However the practice does train the Believer to think and speak negatively, and believe us, it will catch up with those who do so.

**We need to retrain ourselves** and replace such sayings with positive confession. For example, instead of saying "I'm dying to do that," you could say "I'm eager to do that," etc. Again, people who speak negatively in these seemingly minor areas have usually allowed negativity to enter into most of their speech. If we address these minor areas, the positive effects will usually flow into other areas of our speech. We need to remember that our words can either give ground to the enemy or ground to God to work in our lives.

**Also, do not allow Satan's lies** to affect you. These lies could be, "You're not worthy enough", or "You're good for nothing", or "You can't do that." **Just reject these lies by confessing who you are in Christ.** Proclaim in faith that you are now a joint heir with Jesus (Romans 8:17), and that you have been redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb (Jesus) and the word of your testimony (Revelation 12:11). Proclaim that greater is God Who is in you than he (Satan) who is in the world (1 John 4:4). Other good confessions are: God is on my side, I will not fear (Psalm 118:6), for God has not given me a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7), I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13), by Jesus' stripes (wounds) I am healed (Isaiah 53:4-5), I have been saved according to Romans 10:9-10, God will never leave me or forsake me (Hebrews 13:5-6), etc. Always remember that it is by God's strength you overcome and not your own.

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***“. . . Through negative speech, people can give legal ground to the devil to promote darkness again in their lives. . . ”***

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**As you confess** (speak out) **God's Word in faith**, believing for the empowerment to obey Him, you will have the victory. Indeed God's Word tells us we are to hold fast to our

confession of faith (Hebrews 10:23). Confession should be the spoken affirmation of that which we believe, that which is already in our heart. And confessing the truths of God's Word should help us focus our faith on His promises.

If God is trying to develop faith in our hearts, confession can be used as a means of helping focus us on what God has said. Therefore confession is not the means to faith, but rather a tool to be used to keep us properly focused on God's Word.

**Confession can also be used as a tool** to help lift up the faith that we already have so as to activate it. With the Spirit's grace, confessing God's Word can also help us develop faith in the sense that, as we speak out the Word, we are also hearing it. As the Bible teaches us, "*faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*" (Romans 10:17).

So through the power of God working in our hearts and lives, that which is undesirable will depart as we meet the conditions of God's Word, trusting in the Blood-bought victory Christ won for us at the Cross. Don't forget that you now have, in Christ, a Divine connection to God's Divine Nature which will help you live the saved life - in both word (speech) and deed. Yielding to the Holy Spirit will allow Him to energize our human nature through the graces of the Divine Nature, giving us the desire and power to do God's will - as we seek it.

## WHAT SEPARATES PEOPLE FROM GOD ?

**Remember this:** God loves all people but hates their sin, for it is their sin that keeps them separated from His love.

**PSALM 5:4** For You are not a God Who has pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with You.

**LUKE 13:27** But He shall say (to all who reject Jesus Christ), "**I tell you, I know you not whence you are** (do not know where you come from); **depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity** (evildoers)."

**ISAIAH 59:2** But your iniquities (**sin**) have separated (caused a separation) between you and your God; and your sins have hid His face from you, (so) that He will not hear.

**Concerning the Believer, there are many types of sin** that will not break our legal "father and son" relationship with God. However any kind of sin will interfere with our fellowship with Him. If you have sinned in any area, you can be restored to full fellowship with God through repentance and acceptance of His forgiveness. Once you have received His forgiveness, then believe also for the cleansing of all unrighteousness, according to 1 John 1:9:

**1 JOHN 1:9** If we confess (and repent of) **our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness** (any spiritual results of that sin).

In First Corinthians and Revelation we are given an outline of the types of sins that if practised without repentance will eventually lead to unbelief, even the denial of Jesus' Lordship, and this will then break our legal "father and son" relationship with God:

**1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-10** Know ye not that **the unrighteous** (all who reject God's Son) **shall not inherit the Kingdom of God** (shall not go to heaven)? **Be not deceived: neither fornicators** (sexually immoral), **nor idolaters** (idol worshippers), **nor adulterers, nor effeminate** (sexual perverts), **nor abusers of themselves with mankind** (homosexual offenders), **nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers** (slanderers), **nor extortioners** (swindlers), **shall inherit the Kingdom of God.**

**REVELATION 21:8** **But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers** (the sexually immoral), **and sorcerers** (those who practise magic arts), **and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone** (the Lake of Fire): **which is the second death** (eternal separation from God following the Great White Throne judgement).

**The sins listed in these verses** can be termed, for the Christian, "sins unto death"-meaning separation from God. This is because of their potency and strong gravitational pull to not only help keep people out of the Kingdom, but to also help transport those who are in the Kingdom of Light back into the Kingdom of Darkness. Murder, drunkenness, and sexual sins such as adultery and homosexuality, are prime examples. If former Christians practice these types of sins and in so doing, lose their faith in Jesus' Lordship, God calls them to repent. They can then be restored to salvation, for God calls sinners of all kinds to repent so that they may be cleansed by the Blood of the Lamb (1 John 1:9).

**Sin causes the lowering** of our inhibitions so that the flesh can flow without restraint within that prevailing darkness. Sin always pulls us away from God's influence and grace. Repentance and the Blood of Jesus applied to that sin will cause us to come back under the influence of His grace. Some types of sin have a greater gravity to influence us, to pull us into a dark place, which constitutes man thinking and living without God's influence and grace. Sin will take us on a journey away from God's influence. The degree of that influence will depend on the type of sin involved and the person themselves. One person may be affected to a small degree while another person may be seriously affected.

Sin in certain areas will cause a "searing of the conscience", a hardening of the heart. Certain more serious sin will cause one's thinking to be drawn away from God's holy standards and His perspective on things that matter. Therefore sins of greater gravity (as in Revelation 21:8 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10) can help fast-track us into darkness by promoting this change from relational truth in Christ to historical truth outside of Christ. In other words, serious sin can change heart-faith to mere mental assent, which is really unbelief (Hebrews 3:12-14).

In other words, the relational truth of Jesus would eventually change to historical truth about Him. We would then cease to know Him, we would only know about Him. We must meet the conditions to be "in Christ" if we are to abide in Him. Sin is sin, and we are saved from it, not saved so we can return to it with impunity.

**Repentance for salvation purposes** is an attitude and commitment of the heart to go God's way and not any other way, including the way of the flesh. Revelation 21:8 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, along with many other scriptures provide Christians with a warning that to practise the types of sins described will fast-track them into unbelief, thereby causing them to deny Christ and His Lordship. This will of course result in such former Christians stepping out of Christ and therefore forfeiting their salvation.

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***“. . .Repentance for salvation purposes is an attitude and commitment of the heart to go God’s way and not any other way, including the way of the flesh. . .”***

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## **WHAT IS BONDAGE ?**

*Background Reading: Luke 13:10-17*

**To be in bondage** is to be held or taken captive by someone or something. If a person is brought into bondage, spiritually speaking, they have allowed evil to gain access to, or to take hold in areas of their life.

Non-believers and sadly many Christians are in bondage in one way or another to varying degrees. First and foremost, non-believers are in the bondage of spiritual death which means separation from God. There are also many Christians who remain in bondage in various areas of their lives while being unaware of it. They may be in bondage to fear, worry, unbelief, poverty, mental torment, sickness and disease, etc., and people are often unaware of the source of these problems. Many people have been deceived into thinking that some of these bondages are an intrinsic part of their make-up, or that indeed things like sickness and disease are sent by God to test them. How foolish this is! The Word of God reveals to us that such things are neither fundamental to man’s make-up nor are they from God (Acts 10:38; Luke 13:11-13).

**Unbelief is shown forth** in many different ways. But unbelief is simply not believing on and in the Word of God in any area. The critical area will always be, of course, not believing on the Word of God as it pertains to salvation (John 3:18, 36). It is this kind of unbelief which consigns vast masses of people to hell.

Some hear the Gospel message and reject it, refusing to believe, while others do not bother to seek their Creator with an open heart. The Bible tells us that man is without excuse to believe in God - for if people do open up to the reality of the existence of God, then the Holy Spirit can bring them to the knowledge of Calvary as they continue to be sincere in their search for truth - pertaining to the Creator and life after death. Concerning man, the Lord has said:

**ROMANS 1:19** For that which is known about God is evident to them and made plain in their inner consciousness, because God [Himself] has shown it to them. (Amp)

**ROMANS 1:20** For ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature and attributes, that is, His eternal power and divinity have been made intelligible and clearly discernible in and through the things that have been made - His handiworks. So [men] are without excuse - altogether without any defense or justification (to believe there is a God). (Amp)

**So that which exists in the material creation** actually proves the eternal power and existence of the Creator. Again what can we say but agree with the scriptures, “*man is*

*without excuse*” - without excuse to believe that there is a Creator. Then man becomes responsible to search for the knowledge of that Creator, and the Word of God tells us plainly that those who seek, assuming they do so with a sincere heart before the Lord, will find:

**MATTHEW 7:7** Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

**MATTHEW 7:8** For every one who asks receives; and he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks it shall be opened.

We also know, by the scriptures, that a day of judgement will come for all those outside Christ (Revelation 20:12-13). Those who have either rejected or not sought the Creator, whose names are not in the Lamb’s Book of Life, will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14-15).

**In the meantime and until his final demise**, man’s enemy the devil will continue to seek to steal, kill and destroy all he can of God’s creation, the centre of his focus being, of course, man.

**1 PETER 5:8** Be sober, be vigilant (watchful); because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour

**The many bondages in people’s lives** highlight some of the means by which the enemy tries to carry out his evil intent. This can only happen, however, as people allow him to do so by either sinning or remaining ignorant of God’s Word.

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***“. . . Many people have been deceived into thinking that some of these bondages are an intrinsic part of their make-up. . . ”***

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It is sin which gives the devil legal ground to enter people’s lives, to take them captive to some degree. Also, because of people’s ignorance, the enemy may legally or illegally cause havoc within their lives. Romans 6:16 clearly states:

**ROMANS 6:16** Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey - whether you are slaves to sin (the devil’s way) **which leads to death** (bondage), or to obedience (God’s way), **which leads to righteousness** (victory)? (N.I.V.)

We have many different areas in our lives and this can be likened to a house which has many rooms. We, as Christians, may allow God access to some areas (rooms) of our life but not others. Because of this, people may continue to have problems of various kinds even after they have been Christians for many years.

## **What Keeps People In Bondage ?**

I Am A New Christian - Now What??

**People who sin by rejecting God's Son**, or not seeking the Creator with an open heart, will remain in the bondage of spiritual death (separation from God). Many seek truth according to their own philosophies and desires - but this is to seek not with an open mind but a biased one. The truth man needs to liberate himself cannot be found in this way.

Man is born into a state of spiritual death, and is by nature a sinner. Only through Jesus can the bondage of spiritual death be broken. Only through Jesus can man gain spiritual life, and power over sin:

**JOHN 12:46** I (Jesus) **am come a light into the world, that whosoever believes on Me should not abide in darkness** (spiritual death or bondage).

**1 JOHN 5:11** **And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life** (the life of God flowing in us) **and this life is in His Son** (*Christ is the Source, while the Cross is the means.* (E.S.B.).

**1 JOHN 5:12** **He who has the Son has (spiritual) life; and he who has not the Son of God has not (spiritual) life.**

**JOHN 10:10** . . . **I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly** (to the full).

**Many Christians also experience bondage** of varying degrees because they are either ignorant of the truth of God's Word in areas of their lives or they have not applied the truth of God's Word to situations when needed.

Spiritually speaking, you can know of certain truths from God's Word at an intellectual level which is called "head-knowledge." But unless we allow the Holy Spirit to bring this awareness of truth to the point of heart acceptance which results in faith – having trust in that which we believe - we will have knowledge but be empty of God's power in that area. We will therefore remain spiritually ignorant of God's delivering power in that area.

So ignorance takes on new meaning in this instance, for you can mentally assent to the truths of God's Word and not really accept them in the heart. And if you are ignorant of truth at this level, you will remain in bondage. Therefore ignorance can stay in force as long as a person chooses not to journey with God, through relationship, into the waters of truth, thus gaining a heart revelation of His Word. Without this journey and this revelation, spiritual darkness will continue to impact on a person's mind.

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***“. . .It is sin which gives the devil legal ground  
to enter people's lives, to take them  
captive to some degree. . .”***

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**Ignorance maintains darkness**, and has always been Satan's choicest weapon to keep the great masses of people of the world blinded from the truth. The prime example of spiritual blindness is, of course, to lack the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. God's Word speaks of Satan as being the instigator of this spiritual blindness.

**2 CORINTHIANS 4:4** **In whom the god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God, should shine unto them.**

**Over the centuries**, Satan and his forces have held the great majority of the human race in bitter, soul-blighting ignorance. He has been given ground to do this because people have not sought truth with an open heart, an action that would lead them to Calvary and the Creator.

Not only has he bound them (the people of the world, and also many Christians in various areas) through ignorance, he has also given them, through deception, a fear of light (truth) so that they reject the very force that would set them free.

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***“ . . . So ignorance takes on new meaning in this instance, for you can mentally assent to the truths of God’s Word and not really accept them in the heart . . . ”***

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And Jesus is of course the Source of this light, being called “ *the Light of the world* ” (John 8:12).

**JOHN 3:19** And this is the condemnation (verdict), that **Light is come into the world** (Jesus is the Light Who has come), **and men loved darkness (sin) rather than light** (they reject the Light), **because their deeds were evil** (they are sinners desiring to sin).

**JOHN 3:20** For every one who does evil **hates the Light**, **neither comes to the Light**, **lest his deeds should be reprovved** (exposed and revealed for what they are).

**HOSEA 4:6** My people (Christians) **are destroyed for lack of knowledge . . .**

**This destruction**, even in the Christian, can be manifested in the form of sickness, lack of peace, disease, poverty, worry, mental torment, etc. We need to always be aware that these negative experiences are not meant to be a part of the Christian life - they are devices of the enemy, not tools of the Lord.

**Note:** Let us understand, however, that sickness and disease are not necessarily a direct result of sin in a person’s life. In many cases, somewhere in the genetic line, sin has produced a weakness which has caused a predisposition toward certain sicknesses and diseases when the right conditions are met. But whatever the physical condition or predisposition of a Believer, Christ has paid the price for salvation of spirit, soul and body.

## **What Sets People Free ?**

*Background Reading: John 8:31-36*

**To be set free** from all bondage one first needs to surrender one’s life so as to be in Christ positionally, then to have experiential relationship with Him. As you walk hand in hand with the Lord, the Holy Spirit will reveal God’s will for your life - as you seek, find and embrace His truth. Jesus Himself said:

I Am A New Christian - Now What??



**JOHN 8:32** “And you shall know the truth (in your heart), and the truth shall make you free (from bondage).”

**So seek truth** (God’s knowledge, wisdom and understanding) with all you have.

**PROVERBS 2:3** Yea, if you cry (seek earnestly) after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding;

**PROVERBS 2:4** If you seek her (God’s Word - wisdom) as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures;

**PROVERBS 2:5** Then shall you understand the fear of the Lord (reverence to obey), and find the knowledge of God.

**JOHN 8:32** And (then) you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (liberate you).

**JOHN 8:36** If the Son (Jesus Christ) therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

**So as we seek the Lord** with all our heart by making a quality decision to obey all His commands (Mark 12:30-31), believing and trusting for His empowerment to do so, God will reveal the truth which is needed to set us free. Through this process God will bring us to the place where His truth will become assimilated into our heart so that we become one with God and His Word, not just at an intellectual level but a heart level.

We also need, however, to focus on the Cross and the new creation we have become in Christ (with a brand new nature). This needs to be a daily exercise of faith - so that we can enjoy victory in our lives. Our character will then become more Christlike as we yield to God’s will, His leading and His grace at work in us through the Divine Nature energizing our human nature. As Paul the Apostle wrote:

**1 CORINTHIANS 2:2** For I determined not to know any thing among you, save (except) **Jesus Christ, and Him crucified** (*that and that alone is the Message which will save the sinner, set the captive free, and give the Believer perpetual victory.* (E.S.B.)

Victory over depression, alcohol, drugs, uncontrollable temper, lust or any other bondage can be found at the Cross. Jesus said:

**JOHN 10:10** “The thief (Satan) comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (to the full).”

**Jesus was not a liar**, for He defeated anything and everything associated with sin, completely and utterly, through His finished work. Positionally this victory is ours also. But to live in it, we quite often need to allow God to change our thinking and our desire, which can only be done through the new nature implanted within us. We must always flow with the leading of the Spirit so that He can direct us into the deeper waters of our salvation

at an experiential (conditional) level - so we can be saved, as we have said, body, soul and spirit, at this experiential level (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

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***“. . . We also need, however, to focus on the Cross and the new creation we have become in Christ (with a brand new nature). This needs to be a daily exercise of faith - so that we can enjoy victory in our lives. . .”***

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Remember that God will always reveal the truth needed to set us free if we come to Him with a humble heart, asking Him for the spiritual food of His Word which is needed to strengthen our inner man. The promise of truth has been given - so wait upon the Lord. It may come progressively or immediately (John 8:31-32).

## WHAT GOVERNS SUCCESS IN THE LORD ?

*Background Reading: Joshua 1:1-9*

**The prosperity of your soul** will determine your success in the Lord. Briefly stated, the prosperous soul encompasses a mind which is renewed and in harmony with God and His revealed Word - a mind which is at peace with the Lord. As your soul prospers, other areas of your life will also prosper:

**3 JOHN 1:2 Beloved, I wish (desire) above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers.**

In order for your soul to prosper, you need to study God's Word and observe to do all that He commands, relying on His empowerment in order to do so.

**JOSHUA 1:8 This Book of the Law (God's Word) shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night (think on the Word constantly), that you may observe (be watchful) to do (act) according to all that is written therein: (and this is the promise) for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success.**

**MATTHEW 4:4 . . . He (Jesus) answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’ ”**  
(Deuteronomy 8:3)

**Indeed your inward man** needs to be fed on spiritual food (God's Word) just as your outward man (body) needs to be fed on physical food - for man (you) cannot live on physical food (“bread”) alone.

## Studying God's Word

I Am A New Christian - Now What??

**As a Christian**, you should have a daily structured teaching program to help strengthen you and build you up in faith. For God's Word tells us:

**ISAIAH 28:9** Whom shall He (God) teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? them who are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

**ISAIAH 28:10** For precept (commandment) must be upon precept (commandment), precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little (everything is to be measured by the Word of God)

**It should be our desire** as Christians to serve God. Firstly we need to know His will for our lives. We learn this primarily by studying His Word (the Bible). And this is best done by disciplining ourselves to study on a daily basis, learning as the scripture states, "*precept upon precept.*"

Through this process, the Spirit will wash our mind with the water of the Word (Ephesians 5:26), and make it new in the sense that we will begin to think differently. Our thinking will agree with God's thinking as we progress, day by day, understanding His commands and putting them into practice. But remember this is all done as we yield to the Spirit - Who teaches these truths, and implants them in our mind and heart.

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***“. . .Remember that God will always reveal the truth needed to set us free if we come to Him with a humble heart. . .”***

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Therefore our knowledge in the Lord will be based on progressive revelation. With this our relationship with the Lord will develop and progress, being based on our faith (belief and trust) in God's Word.

### **Attitude Towards Study**

**Your attention span** and knowledge as a new Christian, or an old Christian not used to much study, may be rather limited! This means you may only be able to concentrate on one thing at a time in regard to spiritual matters.

**Do not be disappointed** when studying God's Word if you cannot, at first, fully understand all that you study. You see your spirit needs to be educated and trained in spiritual matters, just as your body has been trained in regard to physical skills. This of course takes time.

Also, just because a person reads the Word of God does not necessarily mean that his or her spirit will become educated - for it requires understanding before this process can take place.

A person could sit down and read a great deal of scientific material, for instance, but it would not necessarily mean that this person would be understanding what they were reading.

You too can read the Bible and not understand what you are reading. This is one reason why the Lord has provided the Church with teachers whom He anoints (Ephesians 4:11-12) - so that His people can gain a clear understanding of the Word of God.

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***“. . .Briefly stated, the prosperous soul encompasses a mind which is renewed and in harmony with God and His revealed Word. . .”***

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**Also, spiritual matters** cannot be understood from our natural reasoning (our unrenewed mind), for God’s Word is spiritually understood as revelation knowledge by the heart (spirit) of a man.

**1 CORINTHIANS 2:13** Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s (human) wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (*communicating spiritual truths to spiritual men by the Spirit* . (E.S.B.)

**1 CORINTHIANS 2:14** But the natural man (natural thinking man) receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him (he cannot accept them): neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (understood only through revelation by the Holy Spirit).

**This is why** we should continually meditate on God’s Word, to give the Holy Spirit the opportunity to reveal His truths to us, little by little, so that we can grow in true knowledge and understanding of the Word.

### **Understanding The Bible Versus Understanding Truth**

**The Bible is written in such a way** that an unsaved person of normal intellect can understand what it says if they use proper rules of interpretation (hermeneutics). This involves, for example, taking what is said literally, using normal rules of grammar and reading the scripture in context.

The Bible is based upon and describes eternal principles of righteousness, judgement, spiritual darkness and spiritual Light. If one leaves one’s bias aside, all these concepts which are addressed in the Bible can be understood - at an intellectual level, at least. Natural man, however, can never accept these eternal spiritual principles, so as to embrace them, because they are “*foolishness*” to him (1 Corinthians 2:14).

A “*natural*” man is one who does not personally know God and is thus unsaved. He has no sense of spiritual values and has therefore no appetite for them, only an appetite for his carnal cravings to be satisfied whenever possible. Therefore spiritual things (the things of God) are “*foolishness*” to him, for he does not accept what is being said as valid. The unsaved cannot embrace spiritual truth because he has no relationship with God. And so it is not that man cannot understand what is written in the Bible but that he has no appreciation for spiritual things, and so no sense that what is said is credible. The things of God make no sense to the unrenewed mind, steeped in sin and darkness. Having no

spiritual understanding, and without a proper desire for spiritual things, natural man not only disqualifies himself from accepting truth, he has no capacity to apply truth.

**With a darkened mind**, steeped in sin and dominated by the sin nature, man has no way to help himself, He can only be rescued by God's grace. God's truths can only be accepted and embraced through grace. This takes place as His Anointing that comes with His holy truth anaesthetises the darkness and gives the unsaved a chance to say "yes" to the truth being presented. It is only God Who can deliver man from His plight of spiritual darkness and death. A man who is seeking truth draws the Anointing of God (God's presence in a special way) to himself like a magnet (Matthew 7:7-8). Conviction comes when preaching is anointed, or the unsaved man reads the Bible with intent so that the Anointing on the words causes Light to break through the darkness. Then that which can be understood but not known becomes accessible. Through the Anointing, the words of truth reach beyond the mind to the heart, and are perceived as right, good and even desirable.

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***“. . .The Bible is based upon and describes eternal principles of righteousness, judgement, spiritual darkness and spiritual Light. . .”***

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As we have said, unsaved man is able to understand, at an intellectual level, what is written. However with no appetite or ability to grasp spiritual truth, such people will not embrace it, and indeed will consider it "*foolishness.*" Also, with a faulty foundation birthed and constructed in darkness, they will tend to even misinterpret that which is understandable. God's Light is needed to accept and embrace the understandable so that it becomes more than words. We need to be spiritually in tune to properly discern spiritual things. Once the Anointing holds back the darkness, and a choice is made to accept that which is revealed to the heart, then a man or woman can receive the saving Light that frees them from spiritual death (Luke 1:79). Then it is possible for the saved person to know and embrace further spiritual truth. A "spiritual" as opposed to "natural" man is saved and lives under the control of the Holy Spirit and not his fleshly passions.

If, as the Bible says, it is by precept upon precept that we will understand the Word of God, if one does not embrace the first lesson in Truth, then one has no proper foundation for the next lesson in Truth. We need spiritual understanding as we journey down the road of spiritual Truth. Proper study using proper hermeneutics is needed to give us the proper focus required so that the Spirit can cause us to digest the Word of God in this process. In this, we are not just emotionally embracing God's Word, we are spiritually embracing God's Word. It then becomes one with us which is called "spiritual assimilation." The evidence of this is God-given faith in the truth which has been assimilated. Only by the graces of the Holy Spirit can this take place - as we study properly with correct rules of interpretation and a desire to both know God and please Him.

### **A Structured Order Of Study**

**Normally it is to a person's advantage** to study God's Word in a structured order.

This structured correspondence teaching program which has been prepared includes, in Series One (the Christian Foundation Studies), some of the following subjects:

- Obedience to God and His Word
- What has happened to you spiritually and who you are in Christ
- Communion
- The Divine Nature and the sin nature
- The Cross of Calvary
- Water Baptism
- The Holy Spirit
- True prosperity
- Your covenant between yourself and your Lord
- Faith, healing, fasting and praise
- The fall and redemption of mankind
- God's principles of deliverance for yourself and your fellow man
- The Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

**If you continue with this program**, it will provide you with good grounding in the fundamental truths of God's Word and help build you up in your Christian faith, as we have said, *"precept upon precept, line upon line."*

### **SOME OF THE FUNDAMENTAL DO'S AND DON'TS FOR CHRISTIANS**

Before you read the do's and don'ts, let us remind you that Christianity is built on a relationship, and this relationship is that of Father and son or Father and daughter. The relationship also gives us, through daily yieldedness to the Head of this union, a power to do all according to the Father's will. This empowerment comes through the new nature, the Divine Nature, of which we are now partakers in Christ. So with this in mind, let us consider the fundamental boundaries which exist for Christians, as outlined in the Word of

God. **And remember that sin will frustrate the grace of God from operating in a Christian's life so they are able to live victoriously in Christ.**

### **Don'ts**

#### **1. God has commanded all Christians:**

- (a) Not to be intoxicated (not to consume excess alcohol) (Ephesians 5:18, 1 Peter 4:1-4, 1 Thessalonians 5:5-8).
- (b) Not to take narcotics or any other severe mind-altering drugs outside medical approval (Ephesians 5:18, 1 Peter 5:8, 1 Peter 4:1-4, 1 Thessalonians 5:5-8).
- (c) Not to have sex outside a legal marriage (Hebrews 13:4, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, **Ephesians 5:1-3**).

#### **2. You cannot afford to be involved in these or similar situations:**

- (a) Going to hotels or night clubs (Ephesians 5:7-13, 1 Peter 4:1-4).
- (b) Attending wild non-Christian parties (Ephesians 5:7-13, 1 Peter 4:1-4).
- (c) Having deep fellowship with unbelievers who promote evil (1 Corinthians 15:33, 1 Peter 4:1-4).
- (d) Having deep fellowship with lukewarm Christians - those who do not try to live according to God's commandments, that is those who do not try to live "the saved life" (Revelation 3:15-16; 2 Thessalonians 3:6).

**You may become influenced** or affected by the sin, complacency and unbelief of the people in these situations, and be drawn away from your commitment to Jesus' Lordship in your life. This will cause you to stop yielding to the Holy Spirit's gentle direction, therefore denying yourself access to the power of the Divine Nature that gives Believers not only the desire but the empowerment to do God's will.

## **GOD HAS COMMANDED ALL CHRISTIANS:**

### **Do's**

- 1. To diligently study** His Word - the Bible (Joshua 1:8).
- 2. To obey His Word**, being not only "*hearers*" of the Word of God but "*doers*" of it as well (James 1:22; Hebrews 5:9).

3. **To be water-baptized** (fully immersed in water) according to Matthew 28:19. (In later studies you will be taught in depth both the reasons for, and the benefits of, being water-baptized, other than it being just an act of obedience to God's command [Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:4].)
4. **To give**, in faith and love, tithes and offerings from the substance (provision) which the Lord blesses us with, to help support His work (Malachi 3:8-12; Numbers 18:20-21; Deuteronomy 14:28-29; Exodus 35:5; 1 Chronicles 29:6-9; Matthew 10:41; Joshua 21:2-3).
5. **To be baptized in the Holy Spirit**, with the evidence of speaking in other tongues (Isaiah 28:11-12; Acts 2:4; Acts 10:45-46; Acts 19:6; 1 Corinthians 14:18).

Christians are also:

6. **To commit** themselves to a local Word-based church, one which proclaims the truth of God's Word, and to attend meetings regularly (Hebrews 10:25).
7. **To fellowship** with faith-filled committed Christians (Romans 1:12).

### **Tithing Principles**

**PROVERBS 3:9 Honour the Lord with your substance, and with the firstfruits of all your increase**

**The principle of giving tithes and offerings** appears throughout the Old Testament, being concerned with God's commandments in regard to giving. (We will only briefly refer to this subject here and go into much greater detail in the study book "Tithes and Offerings." A small booklet on this subject is also available). Note that the giving of the tithes is the giving of a tenth of one's income to God through the local church. Offerings are a separate form of giving and are of no stipulated amount.

The tithes and offerings from the people of Israel were first given to God and then distributed to those in need, according to the guidelines set down in the Law of Moses. Thus the various commandments concerning tithes and offerings were set in place so the people could honour the Lord with their giving, and so the financial and physical needs of the Israelite people could be met.

**Our Christian community** and the community at large today have similar physical needs to the Israelite community. The needs of the Christian community are to be primarily met through the same set of commandments outlined in the Old Testament. God's ministers today still need to be provided for (1 Corinthians 9:14), as do the spiritually and physically poor. The local church still has running costs, ministers still need housing, and churches still need money with which to purchase church buildings. All these needs are addressed by God's commandments concerning giving.

Some object to the practice of tithing from the standpoint that we are no longer under the Mosaic Law. We find, however, in searching the scriptures, that we as Christians now



come under something far weightier than the Law of Moses. Indeed this is the law of love, identified by the Lord Jesus in the following statements:

**MATTHEW 22:37** Jesus said unto him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

**MATTHEW 22:38** This is the first and great commandment.

**MATTHEW 22:39** And the second is like unto it, You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

**MATTHEW 22:40** On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets.”

**So we have been commanded** by Jesus to love God and our fellow man. This means we are obligated to try to help our fellow man gain what he needs, on both the spiritual and physical levels. And in obeying the law of love, we will give. God in turn will then give us what is needed to provide for our own needs and those of our neighbours, i.e. so we may help them in an appropriate capacity.

Indeed the only time the Lord gives instruction in the scriptures to prove Him occurs in Malachi 3:10 where He is speaking to the Israelites directly about tithing. Here He promises a blessing if the people will simply obey Him in this area.

**MALACHI 3:10** “Bring all your tithes (and offerings v.8) into the storehouse, that there may be meat in My house, and prove Me now in this,” says the Lord of Hosts, “if I will not open (for) you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to hold (receive) it.”

In doing this, we will not only be receiving a blessing, we will be honouring and indeed worshipping God as Jehovah Jireh our Provider. Without tithing our worship will be incomplete, for tithing proves our trust in our God. Indeed He is the Provider of every good and perfect gift for the enrichment of our souls and the expansion of His Kingdom. This expansion takes place not only in a numerical sense, but also in terms of character, as we and others conform more closely to the stature and likeness of Christ.

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***“ . . . In doing this, we will not only be receiving a blessing, we will be honouring and indeed worshipping God as Jehovah Jireh our Provider. . . ”***

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**So let us see the broader picture** in this area of giving, and count it a privilege to give back to our God from willing cheerful hearts, in faith and love. As we do so, the Lord promises that He will provide for our needs and give us sufficient to meet the needs of others (2 Corinthians 9:6-8). This heart response may not be immediate, but as we obey Him in this area, our hearts will be changed by His grace. As a result our character will be developed. Instead of our thinking being inward and self-centred, it will become more outward and God-centred. Only His grace at work in us can produce these changes as we flow in Christ.

## **An example of a church's TITHES AND OFFERINGS envelope**

- [ ] **FIRST TITHE** - 1/10th of all our increase:- For the Five Fold Ministry (Levites) and their support ministries. Numbers 18:6-26, Nehemiah 13:10
- [ ] **THIRD TITHE** - 1/3rd of 1/10th:- For missionary work, widows, the fatherless, the poor and any other people in need, ministries of evangelism and teaching, Christian aid organizations, etc. Deuteronomy 14:28-29
- [ ] **OFFERING** - For the running of the church:- Rent, advertising, stationery, and all running costs, etc. Exodus 35:5
- [ ] **OTHER OFFERINGS** - Church buildings, schools, church equipment, and other needs. 1 Chronicles 29:7-9
- [ ] **OFFERINGS FOR OTHER MINISTRIES** - Proverbs 28:27, Matthew 10:41
- [ ] **HOUSING PROVISION** - For the Five Fold Ministry (Levites) and their support ministries. Numbers 35:1-4; Joshua 21:2-3.

## **Back of Envelope**

**MATTHEW 5:17** Think not that I (Jesus) am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

**MATTHEW 5:18** For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot (smallest letter in the Greek alphabet) or one tittle (a minute ornamental finish to ancient Hebrew letters), will in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled.

**2 CORINTHIANS 8:12** For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted (that a man give) according to that (which) a man has, and not according to that (which) he has not.

**MALACHI 3:10** "Bring all your tithes (and offerings v.8) into the storehouse, that there may be meat in My house, and prove Me now in this," says the Lord of Hosts, "if I will not open (for) you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to contain it (this is speaking of abundance).

**MALACHI 3:11** And I will rebuke the devourer (Satan and his forces) for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field," says the Lord of Hosts.

**So continue to grow** in your new life in Christ through obeying God's Word in the knowledge that God through Christ has made us partakers of the Divine Nature. Always remember that the gift you have received is the greatest gift of all, and that you have indeed been bought with a great price - the precious Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. As you surrender your life to the leading of the Spirit, you will then be a blessing to all who come

across your path. Indeed if you, by the Spirit's leading, then share the good news of the Gospel with all who have ears to hear and an open heart towards Jesus, many lives will be changed to the glory of God. We all have some part to play in God's plan on earth. This is not in question. Whether or not we become part of this plan is up to us. Let us therefore always look beyond ourselves and our flesh-based desires to the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2) - so that we may be accounted worthy to serve Him, in whatever capacity He has called us to do so (2 Timothy 2:20-21).

**God bless you** and may you have the victory in your new life in Christ. Amen.

**TIME LIMIT - Due on or before.....**

*This time limit is based on a minimum of ..... hours of study per week.  
You should allow as a general guideline, ..... hours to answer the questions.*

*TOTAL ALLOWANCE ..... hours.*

*If you are having problems completing this study within these guidelines, you may need to seek assistance from those in charge of distribution..*

## STUDY QUESTIONS

*The following questions are designed to assess how much you have understood and retained from your studies.*

*Answer and number all questions on line-ruled paper, giving two or three scriptures with each answer whenever possible. Also give an explanation, whenever possible, of how you arrived at your answer.*

*Answer these questions according to the instructions given regarding the grade you have chosen to work at, i.e. either Intermediate Grade or Ordinary Grade.*

*If you do not understand a particular question, contact those responsible for distribution.*

*For ease of correction **write the actual question down on your answer sheet before answering each question, and please print all answers to the questions.***

*Note: If you do not agree with any particular viewpoint expressed in the studies and you have another viewpoint, answer questions relating to this area in the following manner:*

*The view that the studies teach is . . . . .*

*But I believe . . . . .  
(and state the reasons why you do so )*

***Note: Remember the time limit and complete the study and your answers within the allotted period.***

*If you are studying at Intermediate Grade, you will later be eligible to do the Advanced Questions if you so desire. You will not be able to use your study books or notes to help you answer these questions. In fact all you will be able to use are Bibles and Concordances. So prepare for this by studying properly and answering these questions according to the instructions given.*

*(See letters concerning how to study.)*

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**I AM A NEW CHRISTIAN, NOW WHAT ??**  
**Study Questions**

1. What two things happened to you when you became a Christian?
2. In Romans 10:10, what does “*righteousness*” mean?
- 3 (a) In Colossians 1:13, what does “*rescued*” mean?  
(b) To whom is this scripture referring, and from what have they been rescued?
4. What does the word “Gospel” mean?
5. Name two important things the Gospel tells us about our spiritual position before we were saved.
6. What is the significance of the shed Blood of Christ in regard to salvation?
7. What does “to be born again” mean, and what happens to our spirit at this time?
8. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:23, how many parts are we each made up of, and what are they?
- 9 (a) After regeneration, which part of us still needs to be renewed and why is this so?  
(b) Explain how this renewal is achieved, and whose help is needed in this process.
10. Some Christians don’t act as though they are saved. What is the problem here in regard to “ongoing sanctification”?
11. According to Joshua 1:8, how often should we meditate on God’s Word, how many of God’s commandments (principles) should we “*observe to do*” and why should we do this?
12. What is the greatest commandment of all?
13. What is the definition of sin, what are some of the different kinds of sin we can commit and what is the only way we can avoid sinning?
- 14 (a) What must we do when we realize we have sinned?  
(b) Explain what Hebrews 10:17 means in this situation.
- 15 What nature did Adam:  
(a) lose at the Fall?

- (b) gain at the Fall?
16. Where does the power to sin come from?
  17. What nature do we receive when we are born again, and what power do we receive from it?
  18. When we are born again, what happens to the sin nature?
  19. How do we resist the dictates of the sin nature?
  - 20 (a) When we truly repent, what changes will take place?  
(b) Who gets the glory for such change and why?
  21. How can the term, “the sin nature,” be defined in a simple way?
  22. Was the sin nature created by God? If not, how did it come to exist?
  23. What spiritual influence is always needed if man is to properly order his thinking and behaviour?
  24. What role can guilt play in God’s plan of salvation, and what role does guilt play in the life of the Christian?
  - 25 (a) What type of sin would you be in if you continued to hold a view which was at variance (disagreed) with any of the principles contained in God’s Word?  
(b) If people are operating in this sin, what does it become very hard for them to do and why?  
(c) Will ignorance (lack of knowledge) of God’s principles excuse you in this or any other area? Why?
  26. What does true repentance require?
  27. When we are walking in “*newness of life*,” what are we doing?
  28. As Christians we fight a spiritual battle. What is this battle, and who is our enemy?
  - 29 (a) According to 1 Peter 5:8 and John 10:10, how does our enemy operate and what are his goals?  
(b) What do we need to do to gain victory over him?
  30. What is “spiritual milk”?

31. What is “spiritual meat”?
32. How do we develop our personal relationship with the Father?
33. To help us understand the Word of God, what has God given to the Church?
34. To help us grow in the Lord, we should find a place of fellowship. What is this place of fellowship?
35. What is “the Church,” what is its function and who is the Head of the Church?
- 36 (a) According to 1 Peter 2:2, what type of spiritual food do young Christians need?
  - (b) What type of Christians do young Christians need to help feed them with this spiritual food?
37. What does Hebrews 10:25 indicate in regard to attending church and teaching meetings, and why is this important?
38. Although people may be adults physically, what are they spiritually when they are first saved, and what attitude is needed for them to allow God to do all that they are not yet able to do?
- 39 (a) What are Christians who think they do not need to go to church saying to God?
  - (b) What can happen to those who try to live their Christian life in isolation from other Christians?
- 40 (a) What type of church should we seek out and become members of?
  - (b) What should one expect to be happening in such a church?
  - (c) If the power of God is to be found operating in this church, which important foundational doctrines should be being taught there?
41. In what way is the local church a two-way valve for its members?
42. What will the combination of sound doctrine and true worship in the local church promote?
43. If people submit themselves to a proper church structure, with what are they surrounding themselves, and what benefit can they receive as a result?
44. Learning to be led by the Holy Spirit is a vital part of our Christian walk. What are some of the ways in which the Lord can give us this direction?
45. What is the Rhema Word of God? Give examples.

- 46 (a) What can make it difficult for Christians to focus on the things of God?
- (b) What has God given us to help us counteract some of these weaknesses? Give examples.
47. How do we keep the Word of God alive in our hearts?
48. What can fellowshiping with faith-filled Christians help do for us?
49. Due to the Fall of man, what did our physical body become subject to, and how do we overcome this weakness?
50. If the Lord tells us to do something, and we do not “feel” like doing it, how should we respond?
51. After we have knowledge of God’s Word, what is then needed to reap the benefits of this knowledge, and what strengthens us in this regard?
52. What is faith, and what is it a union of?
- 53 (a) According to Hebrews 11:6, why must we have faith to receive from God?
- (b) According to Romans 10:17, how can we obtain faith?
- (c) What is the process by which faith is developed in our hearts and then used?
- (d) If we do not have this faith, what can we do in order to receive from God?
- 54 (a) According to Galatians 5:22-23, what are some of the fruits of a Godly life in Christ?
- (b) What must we learn to trust and distrust, and what is the other essential ingredient needed to produce this fruit?
55. List four important things we must do to achieve and maintain a victorious life in Christ.
- 56 (a) How should we approach God correctly in prayer, and when we do so, what, spiritually speaking, are we entering?
- (b) When Christians pray, what can block God’s power from operating in their lives?
- 57 (a) According to Matthew 21:22, what is required in order for our prayers to be answered?
- (b) How important is knowing the will of God when we pray? Why?



- (c) How is the will of God revealed to us?
- (d) What is the “Logos” Word of God and how does it relate to the “Rhema” Word of God?
- 58 (a) When Christians lay hands on others or join hands in prayer, what may happen spiritually?
- (b) What has God provided as a safeguard in these situations and how do we take advantage of it?
59. What is the best long term way to achieve deliverance?
60. According to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, why should we seek to know God’s will for our lives?
- 61 (a) In Luke 9:23, Jesus said “*If any man will come after Me, let him . . . take up his cross daily . . .*” What is this cross?
- (b) What does “taking up your cross” mean to you?
62. Can you be a Christian and yet not be a Disciple of Christ? Explain.
63. When are we born again, what new nature is imparted to us through Divine connection, and what power is made available to us through this nature?
64. How do we protect our salvation?
65. What are lukewarm Christians, and what danger do they pose to new Christians?
- 66 (a) As a brand new Christian, what should you do when you go to share with or witness to your friends about your new life in Christ?
- (b) What should you do if your friends will not listen to you?
67. As Christians, we are directed by God to be separate from the world. What does this mean in practice?
68. Where did sin originate?
69. What resulted from Adam and Eve’s sin in the Garden?
70. Describe how the will acts as a trigger for either power source in man.
71. What constitutes sin, i.e. what can the word “sin” be referenced to?

- 72 (a) If we sin, what happens experientially to the Divine Nature, and to whom are we giving legal ground to oppress us in that area of wrong?
- (b) What do we then need to do to remove that legal ground?
73. What precious truths do we need to know and understand in order to help us overcome sin?
74. How can we know right from wrong, and so make informed choices?
75. Give examples of some of the occult practices and artifacts which the Bible shows us are an abomination to the Lord.
- 76 (a) As Christians, what types of books and movies should we no longer read and watch?
- (b) Give some reasons for this.
77. As Christians, what types of music:
- (a) should we listen to?
- (b) should we not listen to?
78. As Christians, how should we dress and conduct ourselves? Why?
79. Why should Christians avoid doing things that could be perceived as being immoral or illegal?
80. What does the Bible tell us about alcohol consumption?
- 81 (a) In the Word, what is meant by the term “stumbling block” ?
- (b) How and why may we relate this to the issue of Christians drinking alcohol?
82. What should be our motivation in considering this issue, and what stakes may be involved for others?
83. What is our responsibility to the laws of the land, and why is this so?
84. Why should Christians keep their conversation pure?
85. Explain in detail what happens when a person meditates on wrong thoughts.
86. What should we as Christians meditate on?

- 87 (a) In what ways may Satan try to attack a person's mind? (Give some examples with your answer.)
- (b) How do we combat this kind of attack?
88. Explain what may happen when people consistently make:
- (a) positive confessions of faith?
- (b) negative confessions?
89. How can confessing God's Word help us?
90. Give some examples of faith statements we can make in relation to who we are in Christ.
91. How is the human nature energized so we gain the power to do God's will?
92. God loves all people, but what does He hate, and what does this thing cause?
93. How can we interfere with our fellowship with the Lord?
94. What kinds of sins will break our relationship with the Lord?
95. What important promises are found in 1 John 1:9, and how do we appropriate these promises at any time?
96. Explain the term "bondage," giving some examples with your answer.
97. What is unbelief and what is its most critical form?
- 98 (a) What does the natural creation tell man, if he is open to truth?
- (b) What then does he become responsible for doing?
- (c) What does the Word of God promise to those who seek truth?
99. What keeps people in bondage and who promotes this situation?
- 100 (a) What is "spiritual death" and what will keep people in the bondage of spiritual death?
- (b) How is this bondage broken?
101. Is simple head-knowledge of God's Word enough to make it a reality in our lives? If not, what more is needed?

102. What does ignorance do to people, and why is it a chief weapon of Satan? Make reference in your answer to Hosea 4:6.
103. According to God's Word, to be freed from any bondage, what must Christians seek, how should they seek, and what then must they do?
104. Describe the process whereby our character becomes more Christ-like.
105. Jesus defeated everything associated with sin through the Atonement (His suffering, death and Resurrection). To live in this victory personally, what do we need to do?
106. The prosperity of your soul will determine your success in the Lord.
- (a) What is a prosperous soul?
- (b) How is it achieved?
107. According to Matthew 4:4, what food does your spirit (the real you) need?
108. Looking at Isaiah 28:9-10, why can we see that Christians need a daily structured teaching program?
109. If spiritual matters cannot be understood by natural reasoning:
- (a) How is the truth of God's Word revealed to us?
- (b) What part do anointed teachers and preachers play in this process?
- 110(a) How is it that the Bible can be understood and yet not accepted as truth?
- (b) How is the truth contained in the Bible assimilated and what is the evidence of this?
- 111(a) List four things God has commanded all Christians not to do.
- (b) List four activities that Christians cannot afford to attend or be involved in. Explain why.
- (c) List five main things God has commanded all Christians to do.
112. Give at least one reason why you should be water-baptized.
113. To give a tithe is to give what?
- 114(a) In Old Testament times, why did God set in place laws concerning giving?
- (b) How do these laws relate to us today and what obligation are we now under?

115. According to Malachi 3:10-11, what does God promise if Christians obey Him in the area of giving?
116. What is incomplete without tithing?
117. We all have a part to play in God's plan on earth. What is the price to be paid for us to do so?
118. At what grade did you study this booklet and answer the questions, Ordinary Grade or Intermediate Grade?
119. Do you wish to commit yourself to studying at 7 hours a week or 4 hours a week in regard to your next study?

*Note: Please send \$..... with these answers for your next study.*

*Note: Under certain circumstances, you may not feel you can commit 7 hours a week to the next study. You can then opt to study at 4 hours a week. The time limits will be adjusted accordingly. Should your situation change, you can increase your time to 7 hours a week - just notify the college or those in charge of distribution.*



## **WE BELIEVE:**

1. The Bible is the inspired, infallible and authoritative written Word of God.
2. There is one true triune God, eternally co-existent in three persons Who form the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Word and God the Holy Spirit. These three dwell together in perfect unity, forming one heavenly government called God, and each of the three divine persons we recognize to be God.
3. God the Word stripped Himself of His rightful godly privileges and became flesh, a human being called Jesus Christ. Nevertheless He remained God the Word, being both truly God and truly man.
4. Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin. He was crucified, buried, and then raised from the dead by the power of God. He now sits at the right hand of the Father, and is the only Mediator between God and man.
5. In the spiritually lost condition of men - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (are deprived of God's saving presence).
6. Salvation is found in no one else except Jesus, and there is no other name under heaven which is given to men whereby mankind can be saved.
7. In the essential need of the new birth by faith in Jesus Christ. The only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious blood of Christ.
8. Spiritual regeneration (the new birth) is brought about by making Jesus Christ Lord and Saviour, and by believing that Jesus' precious shed blood was the price needed to redeem man from sin.
9. In the Person and work of the Holy Spirit with His gifts and fruit abiding in the Church.
10. In the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, as the Spirit gives utterance.
11. That believers should be water-baptized, as the Lord commands, by full immersion, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
12. That divine healing is provided in the New Covenant through Jesus Christ, by applying faith to God's Word of promise.
13. In the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit by Whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy life.
14. Jesus Himself shall descend from heaven to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to meet with Him in the air. This event is known as the Rapture of the Church.
15. In the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth along with His glorified saints. This event will take place after the Rapture (the snatching away).
16. That all who accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour will enjoy everlasting life with Him.
17. That all who do not accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour will spend eternity in everlasting torment in the lake of fire, along with Satan and his forces of evil.