

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- BAPTISMS – 1
  - BITTERNESS – 7
  - BLASPHEMY – 9
  - BACKSLIDING – 10
  - CURSES – 13
  - CULTS & FALSE DOCTRINES – 17
  - CRITISISM AND A CRITICAL SPIRIT – 21
  - COVETOUSNESS - 23
  - CONFUSION – 25
  - CONFESSION – 27
  - COMPULSIVENESS – 29
  - COMMUNICATION – 32
  - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP – 42
  - CHASTENING AND DISCIPLINE – 46
  - CHASTENING AND DISCIPLINE – 49
  - ENVY AND JEALOUSY – 52
  - ENEMIES – 55
  - EMOTIONS – 59
  - EATING DISORDERS – 63
  - FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – 68
  - FRIENDSHIP – 74
  - FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION – 80
  - FINANCES – 86
  - FEAR – 104
  - FASTING – 111
  - FAITH – 115
  - FAILURE – 123
  - GENERATIONAL – 126
  - GUILT - 129
  - GRIEF – 123
  - GREED -129
  - GOSSIP – 143
  - GIFTS – 148
  - HYPOCRISY – 144
  - HOPELESSNESS – 158
  - HOMOSEXUALITY – 163
  - HEALING – 168
  - HATRED – 176
  - HABITS - 179
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## BAPTISMS

**DEFINITION:** The word "baptize" used in the Bible means to entirely immerse or submerge.

### **FACTS ABOUT BAPTISMS:**

**The New Testament mentions four different baptisms.** These are Christ's baptism of suffering; the baptism of John; Christian baptism; and baptism in the Holy Spirit. The first two were unique to New Testament times. The last two are experiences for all believers.

-Christ's baptism of suffering refers to His death on the cross (Luke 12:50). This baptism was unique to Christ and His suffering for our sins.

-The baptism of John was performed during his ministry. John made two demands on the people: Repentance and public confession of sins. Those who were willing to meet these God-given requirements were baptized by John in the Jordan River as a public testimony that they had repented of their sins. John's baptism was for those who repented prior to the death and resurrection of Christ.

-Christian baptism is the term used to refer to water baptism of a person who has confessed faith in Jesus Christ. The biblical pattern for this baptism is immersion in water.

-The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an immersion in the power of the Spirit that occurred after the ascension of Christ back into heaven (Acts 2).

**Christian baptism should be done by immersion in water**, following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:13-17).

**Baptism in water is a command.** It is not an option. Many believers procrastinate or ignore water baptism because they think it is optional. Jesus commanded his disciples saying: *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"* (Matthew 28:18-20). From that point on, people were baptized upon their confession of faith, fulfilling the Lord's command.

## **Requirements for Christian baptism in water are:**

- Repentance: Repenting from your sin (Acts 2:38-39).
- Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and confessing Him as Savior (Mark 16:15-16).
- Instruction. New believers should be taught the meaning of baptism before they are baptized. This does not have to be lengthy instruction. Most New Testament converts were baptized immediately after conversion (Acts 8:36-38).

**Baptism of babies.** When Jesus was an infant, His parents brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord, but He was not baptized (Luke 2:22). Jesus was baptized when he was old enough to know what He was doing and the reason why He was doing it (Matthews 3:13-17). Babies can be presented to the Lord for dedication and blessing by the laying on of hands, but a person should not be baptized until they understand the meaning of the act and have met the Biblical requirements. There is no set age at which this understanding comes. It depends on the mental and spiritual development of each individual child.

**Baptism does not save you.** It is a public confession that you have been saved, you are dead to the old life, and risen to new life in Christ (1 Peter 3:21-22).

**The significance of Christian baptism** is that you are following the Lord's example by making a public confession of faith (Romans 6:1-4). It symbolizes death to sin as you are immersed in the "grave" of water and resurrection into new life as you come up out of the water.

**Words to be spoken at the time of baptism.** According to the Bible, baptism "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" or in the "Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" are both acceptable to be spoken at the time of Christian baptism. There is no conflict between either wording because both refer to the Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The following wording is suggested: "Upon the basis of the confession of your faith, in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I baptize you into the Lord Jesus Christ."

**Requirements for baptism in the Holy Spirit.** You must be a believer: *"Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call'"* (Acts 2:38-39). You receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit just as you did salvation: By faith.

## **DEALING WITH BAPTISMS:**

**If you are not saved,** accept Christ as your Savior. This is mandatory in order to participate in Christian baptism.

**After accepting Christ, be baptized** by immersion in water as a public confession of your faith, your death to the old life, and your resurrection to new life in Christ. Water baptism is usually done by a pastor or spiritual leader.

**Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit baptism after your conversion.** Study the following instances of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in New Testament times:

-Acts 9:17-19 recalls how Saul (Paul) received his healing, baptism in the Spirit, and water baptism all in one day.

-Acts 2:2-4 records what happened on the day of Pentecost.

-Acts 10:44-46 records what happened when Peter preached the Gospel to a man named Cornelius and his family.

-Acts 19:6 describes what happened to the first group of converts at Ephesus.

See also Acts 1:8, Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33, Acts 1:5, and 11:16. For further instructions see the Harvestime International Network publication entitled *"Ministry Of The Holy Spirit"* available at <http://www.harvestime.org>.

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT BAPTISMS:**

I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.  
(Matthew 3:11)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:13-17)

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."  
(Mark 16:15-16)

The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. (Luke 3:16)

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)

Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." (John 1:32-34)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. (John 14:16-17)

For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:5)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:2-4)

"In the last days," God says, "I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy." (Acts 2:17-18)

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:38-39)

But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. (Acts 8:12)

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:14-17)

As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. (Acts 8:36-38)

Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord-Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here--has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. (Acts 9:17-19)

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days. (Acts 10:44-48)

"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'" (Acts 11:15-16)

Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. (Acts 13:24)

One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us. (Acts 16:14-15)

Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized. (Acts 18:7-8)

Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. (Acts 18:24-26)

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. (Acts 19:1-6)

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (Romans 6:1-4)

For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called--one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

...having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. (Colossians 2:12)

...and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him. (1 Peter 3:21-22)

## BITTERNESS

**DEFINITION:** Bitterness is characterized by an unforgiving spirit and accompanying negative and critical attitudes. It begins when you harbor offences by others, allow disappointments to germinate in your heart, and permit resentment to grow.

### **FACTS ABOUT BITTERNESS:**

**Bitterness is destructive.** Bitterness is a bottled-up feeling that will eat away at you until you finally explode externally or implode spiritually (Galatians 5:19-20).

**Bitterness affects others.** Bitterness will spread from you to others: *"See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many" (Hebrews 12:15)*

**Bitterness affects how you talk.** Paul said that the mouths of unrighteous men are filled with "cursing and bitterness" (Romans 3:14).

**Bitterness is sin.** Peter told a man named Simon: *"You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin" (Acts 8:20-23).*

**Bitterness will hinder your ministry.** Peter told Simon that he had no part of the ministry because of the sin and bitterness in his heart.

### **DEALING WITH BITTERNESS:**

**Determine what caused your bitterness.** What event, circumstance, disappointment, relationship, etc., planted the root of bitterness in your heart? Go to the root cause and identify it so you can deal with it.

**Repent of your bitterness.** Repent and ask forgiveness for bitterness and the unforgiveness, anger, etc., that caused it.

**Extend and ask forgiveness.** You may need to ask forgiveness of others who have been affected by your bitter spirit. You may also need to forgive someone who hurt or failed you which led to your bitterness. The Bible commands: *"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:31-32).*

## **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT BITTERNESS:**

Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked, from the rebellion of the workers of iniquity, Who sharpen their tongue like a sword, And bend their bows to shoot their arrows--bitter words, that they may shoot in secret at the blameless; Suddenly they shoot at him and do not fear. (Psalm 64:2-4, NKJV)

"You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin" (Acts 8:20-23).

There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one. Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes. (Romans 3:10-18)

Love... is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. (1 Corinthians 13:5)

Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. (Colossians 3:19, NKJV)

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:31-32)

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of man; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. (Hebrews 12:14- 15)

Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? (James 3:11, NKJV)

But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. (James 3:14-15, NKJV)

## BLASPHEMY

**DEFINITION:** Blasphemy is disrespect shown towards God, His Word, or something that is deemed holy.

### **FACTS ABOUT BLASPHEMY:**

**Blasphemy can occur in various ways.** You can blaspheme not only by what you say, but also by your conduct. Riotous, sinful behaviour does not show respect towards God and His Word and is a form of blasphemy. Using God's name in vain as a curse word is blasphemy.

**Blasphemy starts in the heart.** Jesus said that blasphemy--as other sins--begins in the heart (Mark 7:20-23).

**Blasphemy is sin.** Jesus said one who blasphemed needs forgiveness (Mark 3:18).

### **DEALING WITH BLASPHEMY:**

**Identify your blasphemous behaviour.** Are you committing blasphemy by what you say or do?

**Repent.** Blasphemy is sin (Mark 7:20-23). As in all sinful behaviour, it requires repentance.

**Ask God to create a new heart in you.** Since blasphemy comes from the heart, your heart needs to be changed. Claim this scripture: *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).*

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT BLASPHEMY:**

I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. (Mark 3:28)

And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man." (Mark 7:20-23, NKJV)

But now you yourselves are to put off all these: Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, (Colossians 3:8-10, NKJV)

And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. (Luke 12:10) (See the "Unpardonable Sin" in this database.)

## **BACKSLIDING**

**DEFINITION:** Backsliding is when a believer deliberately goes back into sin, turns away from God, or becomes rebellious to the will of God. Backsliding starts in the heart and then is expressed through outward actions.

### **FACTS ABOUT BACKSLIDING:**

**Backsliding is closely aligned with carnality.** One's own desires and devices are acted out in opposition to God's will (1 Corinthians 3:3; Proverbs 14:14).

**Backsliding results from** a general falling away from God due to conscious rejection of the truth revealed in His Word. Sins of the flesh also lead to backsliding, i.e., deliberately engaging in immorality, addictions, etc. There is an indifference towards God, His Word, and the church, and making other things a priority ahead of the spiritual.

**Your own backsliding condemns you.** It is your own backsliding that condemns you (Jeremiah 2:19). Jesus did not come to condemn you, but to give you abundant life (John 10:10)

**Backsliding is a sin.** Like all sin, God will forgive it when you repent.

### **DEALING WITH BACKSLIDING:**

**Identify the issues that caused you to backslide.** Was it disappointment with God? Did you refuse to do something God asked you to do. Was it because of unanswered prayer? Hanging out with worldly people in worldly places? Unwholesome media through the TV, Internet, videos, music, and literature? Did you continue to engage in willful sin or did you just grow cold in your intimate relationship with God? It is important to identify where you began to backslide so that you will not fall into the same trap again.

**Confess backsliding as sin.** Ask forgiveness, and you will be forgiven (1 John 1:9).

**Pray for restoration.** David prayed: *"Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me"* (Psalm 51:12).

**Make a new commitment to God.** After praying for restoration, David promised to make evangelism, praise and worship, and sacrificial living a priority (Psalm 51:13-19).

## **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT BACKSLIDING:**

Can papyrus grow tall where there is no marsh? Can reeds thrive without water? While still growing and uncut, they wither more quickly than grass. Such is the destiny of all who forget God; so perishes the hope of the godless. (Job 8:11-13)

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. (Psalm 32:1-2)

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. (Psalm 51:12)

Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil. (Proverbs 4:25)

If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all. (Isaiah 7:9)

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? (Isaiah 43:18-19)

Let him return unto the Lord ... for He will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:7)

"Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the Lord your God and have no awe of me," declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty. (Jeremiah 2:19)

Return, faithless people; I will cure you of backsliding. Yes, we will come to you for you are the Lord our God. (Jeremiah 3:22)

Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord. (Jeremiah 17:5)

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely... (Hosea 14:4)

Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them...Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. (Mark 4:15-19)

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee... (Luke 15:17-18. The story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 is a tremendous example of being restored after backsliding.)

You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? (1 Corinthians 3:3)

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! (1 Corinthians 10:12)  
Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58)  
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place. (Revelation 2:4-5)

## CURSES

**DEFINITION:** Curses are powerful forces that operate in the spiritual realm. A curse--also sometimes referred to as a jinx, hex, or execration--is any expressed wish that some sort of adversity or misfortune will befall a person. It can also be a command for evil powers to attach themselves to a certain place or object.

### **FACTS ABOUT CURSES:**

**Curses are not primitive superstitions.** Curses are mentioned over 200 times in Scripture. People in the western world are not as aware of the power of curses as people in nations where witchcraft, Wicca, and Shamanism are common--but they are strong spiritual forces that cannot be ignored.

**Both blessings and curses** are invisible forces of spiritual power which are transmitted by words (Proverbs 18:21). You can speak positive words of blessing over someone, or negative words of curses that cause despair, discouragement, and destruction in a person's life.

**The first instance of blessing and curses is found in Genesis.** God blessed mankind (Genesis 1:28). In Genesis 3, due to the entrance of sin into the world, the first curses result. Curses are always linked in some way to a violation of God's Word--either by the person themselves or by a person who is putting a curse on someone.

**Curses have causes.** The Bible says "*...the curse causeless shall not come*" (Proverbs 26:2), meaning there is always a root cause behind a curse. Curses can result from witchcraft and the occult, of course, but they also arise from:

- Having false gods: Exodus 20:3- 4; Deuteronomy 27: 15.
- Disrespect for parents: Deuteronomy 27:16.
- Treachery against a neighbour: Deuteronomy 27: 17.
- Committing injustices: Deuteronomy 27: 18-19.
- Sexual sins: Deuteronomy 27: 20-23.
- Lying: Deuteronomy 27: 25.
- Stealing: Zechariah 5:1-4.
- Robbing God: Malachi 3: 9.
- Perverting the gospel: Galatians 1:8- 9.
- Depending on the flesh instead of God: Jeremiah 17:5.
- Acts of racial discrimination: Genesis 12:3, Genesis 28:3 and 14.

**Self-imposed curses** result when you make declarations like: "I'll never be any good. I am so stupid. God doesn't love me. I hate myself. I will never forgive myself. No one cares. I am better off dead. " You are actually putting a curse on yourself by your own words.

**Curses imposed by others**--authority figures in your life, your spouse, your parents, etc.--include statements such as "You are no good, you are useless, you are stupid, you are a failure, you will never achieve anything, you are ugly." Curses can also be imposed by those engaged in witchcraft and from maintaining relationships with those engaged in such satanic practices..

**Generational curses are negative spiritual traits passed down from a previous generation.**

These are sinful spiritual strongholds that have controlled the attitudes and actions of your ancestors. In the natural world it is possible to have a propensity towards certain physical conditions--cancer, heart disease, diabetes, etc.--due to heredity. The same is true in the spiritual world. For example, if your ancestors were involved in the occult, you may have a predisposition to dabble in it also and/or you may be affected by it. Chronic sickness can be a generational curse passed down from your ancestors, as well as a tendency to use addictive substances. Children often repeat the sins of their parents. Through your sin, you can erect spiritual strongholds that will be passed on as generational curses to your children and succeeding generations. You can also pass on spiritual blessings. Just as curses can be passed to a succeeding generation, so can blessings (Deuteronomy 5:8-10 and Psalm 103:17).

**Curses can be broken through the blood of Jesus.** Galatians 3:13 confirms that: "*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."* Jesus not only redeemed you from sin when He died at Calvary, but He also redeemed you from every curse.

## **DEALING WITH CURSES:**

**Recognize the signs of a curse operating in your life.** Your life may seem to get increasingly harder. You may experience constant hardships, frustration, poverty, or be unproductive in your labours. You may live in continual defeat or experience chronic mental, emotional, or physical problems. Barrenness and being accident-prone are also signs of a curse.

**Recognize that you have the power to choose either blessings or curses.** God told Israel: "*See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse--the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known"* (Deuteronomy 11:26-28). You do not have to be a victim of curses.

**Go to the root cause of curses.** The Bible says "*...the curse causeless shall not come"* (Proverbs 26:2), meaning there is always a root cause behind a curse. Curses can result from witchcraft and the occult, of course, but you can also operate under a curse because of your own words and sins. See the causes of curses in the previous section. Cut the root and you will kill the fruit!

**Acknowledge your sin.** Acknowledge your sin and take personal responsibility for any sinful practices in which you are engaged. Confess and repent of these sins (Ezekiel 18:20). Freeing yourself from the results of your own sinful behaviour is the first step in breaking curses. For example, if you are participating in a cult, a curse may be on you because of your participation. Idolatry opens the door to spiritual curses, as does sexual immorality and deliberate disobedience to God and His Word.

**Identify generational curses.** If you are struggling with issues passed down from your parents--and if your siblings also struggle in these areas--you most likely are living under a generational curse. (See "Generational Curses" in this database.)

**Break every curse in the name of Jesus.** A stronghold is an area in your life where the enemy has established control. It may be a hold he has over your attitudes, behaviours, emotions, or your finances. The Bible declares that you have power over all the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19). Claim the power of the blood of Jesus and take authority over Satan in every area of your life. Pray a prayer of deliverance, binding the power of Satan and breaking every curse or generational curse operating in your life. Here is a sample prayer: *"In the name of Jesus, I confess my sins and break any curses operating in my life. The strongholds of curses have no hold over my life. In the name of Jesus, and by the power of His blood, I declare that every curse is broken over my life. I am no longer in bondage and I declare myself to be free from all curses."*

**Put on the spiritual armor of God.** Study Ephesians 6:10-21 and the topic of "Spiritual Warfare" in this database. The armor of God will protect you against curses.

**Refuse to engage in curse-causing behavior.** Things like rebellion, negative emotions, witchcraft, the occult, addictive substances, and sexual sins all can result in spiritual curses in your life.

**Destroy objects associated with the occult**--things associated with idolatry, witchcraft, books, charms, tarot cards, games, etc. Break relationships with people involved in the occult or witchcraft.

#### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT CURSES:**

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [ generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments. (Deuteronomy 5:8-10)

See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse--the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known. (Deuteronomy 11:26-18)

But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children--with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts. (Psalm 103:17-18)

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. (Proverbs 18:21)

...the curse causeless shall not come. (Proverbs 26:2)

In those days people will no longer say, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.' Instead, everyone will die for his own sin; whoever eats sour grapes--his own teeth will be set on edge. (Jeremiah 31:29-30)

You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the fathers' sins into the laps of their children after them. O great and powerful God, whose name is the Lord Almighty, great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve. (Jeremiah 32:18-19)

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:36)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." (Galatians 3:13)

## CULTS AND FALSE DOCTRINES

**DEFINITION:** A cult is any group whose beliefs differ from the basic tenets of God's Word and whose members do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God. False doctrine is any teaching or belief that cannot be documented by the written Word of God.

### **FACTS ABOUT CULTS AND FALSE DOCTRINES:**

**There are many false religions and cults.** You must follow the truth of God's Word, not the so-called revelations of man.

**Cults often emerge from claims of personal revelation.** Such revelations, if not in harmony with the Word of God, should be rejected (Galatians 1:8-9).

**Cults often incorporate partial truths in their doctrines.** For example, they may talk about the love of God and love for one another, yet deny the reality of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for sin.

**Cults always present other ways to God.** There are "many ways to God", they claim. But the Bible says: *"It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. He is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.' Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."* (Acts 4:10-12)

### **Common characteristics of cults and false doctrines include:**

- Dictatorial Leadership: Cults cluster around domineering personalities who have absolute authority and are accountable to no one.
- Exclusive: Cults adopt the attitude that they are the only group with divine truth. They exclude from fellowship others who disagree with them.
- Legalistic: Cults usually have strict rules of belief and behaviour which have no Scriptural basis.
- Defensive: Cult members are usually led to believe that society, organized religion, and/or governments are against them.
- Oppressive: Cult members are usually manipulated, controlled, and oppressed by the leadership.
- Secretive: Many things about the cult are kept secret from outsiders.
- Higher Revelation: Cults often claim "higher revelation" from God, a source of authority beyond the Scriptures
- Anti-church: Cults vigorously oppose organized churches and their pastors.

- Anti-family: Cults sometimes want their members to break ties with family who are not members.
- Salvation by works. They emphasize what you do rather than the fact that all has been done by Christ to secure your salvation.

## **DEALING WITH CULTS AND FALSE DOCTRINES:**

**Ask God to forgive you** if you have been involved with a cult or false doctrine.

**Renounce any involvement with cults and false doctrines.** Leave the cult. Leave the fellowship of those teaching false doctrines. Break all ties!

**Pray for deliverance from the demonic influences involved in cults.** Cults are doctrines perpetrated by devils (1 Timothy 4:1).

**Reaffirm your commitment to God.** Reaffirm your belief in the Trinity of God and that Jesus is the only way to God and His Word as the authoritative source of truth.

**Renew your mind in the Word of God.** Cults tend to "brainwash" their members, so you need to renew your mind in order to understand and receive the truth: *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:1-2).* Study God's Word--not books written by man. Compare everything you read, hear, or are taught to what the Word of God teaches.

**Join a Bible-believing church.** The church is the pillar and foundation of truth and will help you grow in the Lord (1 Timothy 3:15).

## **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT CULTS AND FALSE DOCTRINES:**

I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path. (Psalm 119:104)  
 There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death. (Proverbs 16:25)  
 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. (Matthew 24:24-25)

It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. He is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has

become the capstone. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:10-12)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:13-14)

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! (Galatians 1:8-9)

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. (Colossians 2:8)

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. (2 Timothy 2:15-17)

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:13-15, NKJV)

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21)

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privately shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (2 Peter 2:1-2)

Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist--he denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. (1 John 2:22-23)

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. (1 John 4:1-3)

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds. (2 John 9-11)

But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (Jude 17-21)

## CRITICISM AND A CRITICAL SPIRIT

**DEFINITION:** Being critical is to make and express assumptions about the moral and personal conduct of others. Having a critical spirit is to be guilty of this continuously, always criticizing and putting others down.

### **FACTS ABOUT CRITICISM AND A CRITICAL SPIRIT:**

**God is the judge.** You are not to criticize others because God is the judge (Romans 14:12-13). When you take it upon yourself to judge others, you are trying to assume a function of God.

**You will be judged the same way you judge others.** Think about that when tempted to judge and criticize other people (Matthew 7:2).

**When you criticize others, you condemn yourself.** Very often, you are doing the same things you are criticizing others for--if not worse (Romans 2:1).

**When you criticize your leaders, you are criticizing God.** Israel criticized Moses and Aaron, but God viewed it as criticism of Himself because He had set these leaders in authority (Numbers 14:27).

### **DEALING WITH CRITICISM AND A CRITICAL SPIRIT:**

**Ask God to forgive your judgmental, critical spirit.** Since Jesus said not to judge others, then it is a sin when you do.

**Focus on dealing with issues in your own life.** Instead of judging and criticizing others, focus on your own moral and spiritual condition (Matthew 7:1-5).

**Ask God to help you guard what you say.** David said, *"Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, keep watch over the door of my lips"* (Psalm 141:3).

**View others as God sees them.** God sees you and others, not as you are, but as you have the capacity to become. Look at a person's potential, not their problems.

**Do not accept criticism raised against you** unless you believe it is justified. Simply tell the person, "Thank you for bringing that to my attention." If it is something legitimate, correct it. If not, forget it. When you are praised for something, do you not lift that praise to God since every good thing done in you and through you is because of Him? Lift unjustified criticism to Him in the same way.

## **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT CRITICISM AND A CRITICAL SPIRIT:**

For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:1-5)

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. (Luke 6:37)

And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. (Luke 18:7-8)

You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. (John 8:15-16)

For at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. (Romans 2:1)

So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? (Romans 2:3)

Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. (Romans 14:1)

You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. (Romans 14:10)

Each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. (Romans 14:12-13)

The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment. (1 Corinthians 2:15)

I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. (1 Corinthians 4:3-5)

Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you -- who are you to judge your neighbour? (James 4:11-12)

(See also "Judging" in this database.)

## COVETEOUSNESS

**DEFINITION:** Covetousness is a driving desire to have that which one does not possess, control, have access to, use of, or authority over.

### **FACTS ABOUT COVETEOUSNESS:**

**Covetousness is sin.** The Bible declares: *"You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour" (Exodus 20:17).*

**Covetousness results from a love of the world.** The Bible warns: *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15-17, NKJV).*

**Covetousness comes from your heart.** Jesus said: *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-33, KJV).*

### **DEALING WITH COVETEOUSNESS:**

**Ask God to forgive your covetousness.** Covetousness is sin, and as all sin, confession and repentance is required.

**Ask God to change your heart.** Covetousness comes from the heart. Pray the prayer of the psalmist: *"Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain" (Psalm 119:36)*

**Ask God to help you order your priorities.** Make spiritual things your desire and priority instead of coveting after carnal things: *"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:31-33).*

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT COVETEOUSNESS:**

You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour. (Exodus 20:17).

Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. (Psalm 119:36)

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:31-33)

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man. (Mark 7:21-33, KJV)

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. (1 Timothy 6:10-11, KJV)

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he has said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. (Hebrews 13:5, KJV)

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4:1-3)

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17, NKJV)

## CONFUSION

**DEFINITION:** Confusion is a lack of clarity or a misunderstanding of the truth or facts in a given situation. It is disruption in regards to time, place, people, or tasks to be accomplished.

### **FACTS ABOUT CONFUSION:**

**God is not the author of confusion.** God does not cause confusion. If He does not cause it, then it is obvious that it is caused by Satan (1 Corinthians 14:33).

**The causes of confusion.** Evil spiritual powers may try to cause confusion. Confusion may also be caused by sin in your life, by looking to man instead of God, by lack of knowledge of the truth of God's Word, and an inability to hear God's voice and know His will. Your inability to hear God's voice often arises from neglecting prayer and study of the Word. You do not stay in His presence long enough to receive His direction. Confusion also results simply because you do not ask for wisdom from God.

**You never need be confused.** You can ask for wisdom from God for every situation in life and you will receive it (James 3:14-17).

**The Holy Spirit is your guide.** If you are a born-again, Spirit-filled believer, then the Holy Spirit is resident within you. One of His purposes is to guide you into all truth so that you need never be confused.

### **DEALING WITH CONFUSION:**

**Discover the root cause of confusion.** Is it simply because of miscommunication or is it due to demonic powers? Is it because you have not sought God's will concerning the situation with which you are dealing? Deal with the root causes of the confusion.

**Reject the spirit of confusion.** Confusion is a spirit. Do not allow it to operate in your life. Anytime confusion starts to arise in your circumstances, stop and rebuke it immediately!

**Resist the devil.** Satan causes confusion, so submit yourself to God, resist Satan, and he will flee from you (James 4:7)

**Ask God for wisdom.** The Bible says: *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him"* (James 1:5).

**Embrace and act upon the truth.** Jesus said: *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free"* (John 8:31-32). Reject the lies of Satan that bring confusion and embrace God's truth.

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT CONFUSION:**

In thee, oh Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. (Psalm 71:1, KJV)

A man's steps are directed by the Lord. How then can anyone understand his own way?  
(Proverbs 20:24)

The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. (Psalm 19:7)

The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. (Psalm 119:130)

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. (1 Corinthians 13:9-10)

There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.  
(Luke 12:2)

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. (1 Corinthians 13:12)

If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. (John 8:31-32)

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26)

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5)

We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. (1 John 5:20)

## CONFESSION

**DEFINITION:** Confession is acknowledging your transgressions to God and agreeing with what He says about your sin. Biblically, it is also verbally and mentally agreeing with the promises of God's Word.

### **FACTS ABOUT CONFESSION:**

**Confession is necessary in order to receive forgiveness.** *"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives" (1 John 1:8-10).*

**You are not required to confess to another person.** Jesus Christ is the mediator between you and God, so you can confess directly to Him. Some people find it helpful, however, to confide in a spiritual leader to help them confess and deal with their sins. If you do this, prayerfully select someone who will keep your confidences. You should, of course, confess and ask forgiveness of anyone you have wronged.

**Public confession is not necessary in order to receive forgiveness.** In fact, public confessions are sometimes disruptive in a church fellowship. Confessing your faults and asking for prayer as mentioned in James 5:16 is different than confessing specific sins. For example, you might say "I need prayer for a problem with unforgiveness" rather than specifically pointing out the people in the church you are unable to forgive!

**Confession is important in claiming the benefit of the promises of God.** You receive salvation by confession. Other spiritual benefits such as healing, peace, deliverance, financial blessings, etc., are also received by agreeing verbally and mentally with the promises in God's Word.

### **DEALING WITH CONFESSION:**

**Confess your sins to God in the name of Jesus.** Each day, confess your known sins, and God will forgive you of them as well as those behaviors you do not recognize as sin. He will cleanse you from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8-9). Confession is part of the model prayer that is to be prayed daily by believers (Matthew 6:9-13).

**Do not keep confessing sins of the past.** Once confessed, God forgives you. The Bible says that God takes your sins and casts them as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12) and remembers them no more (Isaiah 43:25). If you bring those sins up again, God does not remember what you are talking about!

**Confess the promises of God.** Let the words that come out of your mouth agree with what God says in His Word regarding your healing, deliverance, peace, finances, etc.

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT CONFESSION:**

Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord--and you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Psalm 32:2-5)

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:12)

Read David's great psalm of confession: Psalm 51.

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)

I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. (Isaiah 43:25)

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (Matthew 6:12)

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. (Romans 10:9-10)

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (1 John 1:8-10)

## COMPULSIVENESS

**DEFINITION:** Compulsiveness is the irresistible impulse to do irrational, repetitive, sinful, or unnecessary actions.

### **FACTS ABOUT COMPULSIVENESS:**

**Examples of compulsiveness** include compulsive gambling, addictions, sex, eating, talking, hoarding, drinking and working. These are examples of uncontrolled works of the flesh. An activity may be harmless in itself, but may become compulsive behaviour when it is done excessively and repeatedly.

**Compulsiveness is a lack of self-discipline.** As a follower of Christ, self-control should be one of the spiritual attributes apparent in your life. *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control"* (Galatians 5:22-23).

**An anxiety disorder** called obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) is characterized by obsessive thoughts that lead to compulsive and repetitive behaviour.

**The root cause of compulsiveness is anxiety.** People often eat because they are stressed. They talk excessively when they are upset. They gamble and drink to find relief from their anxieties. Such behaviours reflect a lack of trust in God and His promises of care and provision. This leads to compulsive behaviours such as sex, overeating, alcoholism, etc., to attempt to deal with the complexities of life.

**Compulsiveness is sin.** You are commanded to refrain from worry, so therefore compulsive anxiety over the circumstances of life is actually sin (Matthew 6:31-34; Philippians 4:6). You are also commanded to show self-control, and when you are acting compulsively and out of control, you are not doing so

### **DEALING WITH COMPULSIVENESS:**

**Repent of compulsive behaviour.** Compulsiveness is a lack of self-control. Confess it to God as sin and ask forgiveness.

**Ask God to give you strength to deal with compulsive behaviour.** Whether your problem is compulsive anxiety, gambling, sex, eating, talking, hoarding, drinking--God will give you strength to conquer these.

**Pray about your concerns instead of worrying about them.** Philippians 4:6-7 commands you to pray about everything instead of worrying.

**Flee temptation.** Do not put yourself in a place where you will be tempted. For example, if you are a compulsive gambler, do not go to a gambling casino. If you have problems with compulsive eating, a restaurant with a buffet is probably not the best choice for you.

**Put off the works of the flesh and put on the Fruit of the Holy Spirit.** See Galatians (6:19-25). Learn to live in the Spirit instead of according to the dictates of your flesh that lead to compulsive behaviour.

**Do not allow yourself to be brought under the power of anything other than God.** Paul said that everything was permissible, but that he would not permit himself to be overpowered by anything (1 Corinthians 6:12). For example, eating is good because it maintains life, but gluttony means your eating is out of control.

**Renew your mind in the Word of God.** As with most issues of spiritual life, the battle begins and is fought and won in your mind. Transform your mind by studying the Word of God. (Romans 12:1-2). When obsessive thoughts try to return, rebuke them in the name of Jesus using the Word of God. Take control of your thought life. Cast down vain worries and anxieties (1 Corinthians 10:4-5)

**When you find yourself engaging in compulsive behaviour again, stop immediately!** Ask God for forgiveness and stop doing what you are doing. Use your spiritual weapons to defeat Satan right then and there!

#### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT COMPULSIVENESS:**

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:31-34)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)

Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the

Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.  
(Romans 13:14)

Everything is permissible for me-but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me-but I will not be mastered by anything. (1 Corinthians 6:12)

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, (1 Corinthians 10:4-5)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23).

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:6)

## COMMUNICATION

**DEFINITION:** Communication is the act of giving or exchanging information through speech, writing, various forms of media and the arts, or through a common system of signs or behaviour.

### **FACTS ABOUT COMMUNICATION:**

**The most important communication is that between God and man.** God communicates through His Word and the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as prophecy and teaching.

**The Holy Spirit communicates** to convict us of sin (John 16:7-11) and to guide us into all truth (John 16:13).

**Our primary mode of communication with God is prayer.** In prayer, we speak with God and He speaks to us.

**God has given you the ability to communicate.** He has also declared that you will give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word you have spoken (Matthew 12:36).

**Your tongue is powerful.** The Bible says it has the power of life and death in it (Proverbs 18:21). Your own words can be a snare to your soul (Proverbs 18:7).

**Your mouth, speaking God's Word, expedites the work of angels.** The angels of God are released or hindered to work in your behalf by the words that come out of your mouth. Hebrews 1:14 reveals that angels are "ministering spirits" sent from God to minister in behalf of the heirs of salvation. They are released by God to minister when you speak God's Word instead of murmuring and complaining (Psalm 103:20).

**The tongue is difficult to control.** James 3:1-3 explains that the tongue is impossible to tame, apart from the Holy Spirit. The Bible compares the tongue to a fire (James 3:5); a world of iniquity (James 3:6); a beast that needs taming (James 3:7-8); a fountain of either fresh or bitter water (James 3:11); a tree bearing either good or evil fruit (James 3:12); an unruly evil (James 3:8); deadly poison (James 3:8); a sharp razor (Psalms 52:2); a sharp sword (Psalms 57:4; 59:7); a poisonous serpent (Psalms 140:3); and a deep pit (Proverbs 22:14).

**What you speak comes out of your heart.** If your heart is filled with negative thoughts--hatred, anger, jealousy, pride, bitterness, and strife--that is what will come out of your mouth. If your heart and mind are filled with carnal thoughts and lusts of the flesh, this will be manifested in your words. If your heart and mind are filled with positive thoughts--thoughts of faith, love, joy, peace --what you say will reflect this.

### **Controlling your tongues is mandatory because:**

-You can be snared with your own words: *"You are snared by the words of your mouth; You are taken by the words of your mouth" (Proverbs 6:2, NKJV).*

-Your words can separate you from God: *"Who have said, with our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?" (Psalms 12:4, KJV).*

-Your words can create a breach--an opening--in your spirit: *"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit" (Proverbs 15:4, KJV).*

-Satan uses your lips to affect your soul: *"A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul" (Proverbs 18:7, KJV).*

-Your tongue can cause calamity: *"He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity" (Proverbs 21:23).*

-Your tongue affects your whole body: *"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell" (James 3:6, NKJV).*

-Your tongue affects your whole life: *"He who guards his mouth preserves his life, But he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction" (Proverbs 13:3, NKJV).*

### **DEALING WITH COMMUNICATION:**

**Ask God to forgive you.** Evil communication is sin, and as all sin, must be dealt with by confession, repentance, and seeking forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

**Get your heart right with God.** The first step in gaining victory over the tongue is to get your heart right with God because...*"the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.'* For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander" (Matthew 15:18-20). Your mouth speaks what is in your heart. If your heart is not right, your tongue will reveal it.

**Recognize that you are responsible** for the words that come out of your mouth, so take control! *"But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word"*

*they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37).*

**Keep your words few and simple.** The more you talk, the greater the opportunity to sin with your words. *"When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise" (Proverbs 10:19).* Jesus said: *"Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one" (Matthew 5:37).*

**Set a good example by your communications.** Your conversation reflects on the Lord, so you should set a good example by what you say: *"... set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (1Timothy 4:12).*

**Think before you speak.** Take time to think about what you are going to say. The Bible warns:

*Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear; slow to speak, slow to wrath. (James 1:19, KJV)*

*If you have played the fool and exalted yourself, or if you have planned evil, clap your hand over your mouth! (Proverbs 30:32)*

*The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil. (Proverbs 15:28)*

*Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue. (Proverbs 17:28)*

**Think on these verses before you speak.**

*The wise in heart are called prudent, understanding, and knowing, and winsome speech increases learning [in both speaker and listener]. (Proverbs 16:21, AMP)*

*The mind of the wise instructs his mouth, and adds learning and persuasiveness to his lips. (Proverbs 16:23, AMP)*

*A man has joy in making an apt answer, and a word spoken at the right moment--how good it is! (Proverbs 15:23, AMP)*

*A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. (Proverbs 25:11, KJV)*

*He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity. (Proverbs 21:23)*

*He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin. (Proverbs 13:3)*

**Ask yourself these questions before you speak.**

- Will what I am about to say bring glory to God?
- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?
- Will it edify others?
- Have I talked to the person I am talking about?
- Is what I am saying a fact that needs to be shared or is what I am saying based on rumors and does not need to be said?
- Is it absolutely necessary that I share this?

**Separate yourself from those who cannot control their tongues.** The Bible warns: *"Stay away from a foolish man, for you will not find knowledge on his lips" (Proverbs 14:7)*. Do not hang out with them and allow them to pour their filthy, godless conversations into your spirit.

**Learn the power of peaceful words.** *"Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone" (Proverbs 25:15)*.

**Recognize your tongue is a weapon.** Your tongue is a weapon you can use to overcome the enemy instead of being defeated by him: *"And they overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony..." (Revelation 12:11, KJV)*.

**Avoid these communication errors which the Bible warns against.**

-Murmuring and complaining: Complaining is actually a form of rebellion against God. When the nation of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, God said they were actually complaining against Him. When you complain, you are rebelling against the way He is doing things and the circumstances He is allowing in your life. Rebellion is compared to the sin of witchcraft in the Bible (1 Samuel 15:23). As He did with Israel, God will execute judgment against those who murmur and complain (June 15-16).

-Profanity: Profanity is language or behavior that shows disrespect for God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit including misuse of their names. It is vulgar and irreverent language or behavior, including jokes or innuendos that mock that which is holy.

-Covetous words: *"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have..." (Hebrews 13:5)*. See also "covetousness" in this database.

-Idol words: *"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36, KJV).*

-Foolish words: *"The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly" (Proverbs 15:14).*

-Unprofitable words: *"Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen" (2 Timothy 2:14)*

-Fables and commandments of men: *"Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth" (Titus 1:14, KJV).*

-Evil about things you do not know: *"But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption" (2 Peter 2:12, NKJV).*

-Flattering words: *"You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed--God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else" (1 Thessalonians 2:5-6).*

-Vain words: *"They speak vanity every one with his neighbour" (Psalms 12:2, KJV) .*

-Proud words: *"...with their mouth they speak proudly" (Psalms 17:10, KJV).* See also "Pride" in this database.

-Enticing words: *"And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words" (Colossians 2:4, KJV).* Enticing words are words that sound wise and plausible, but are not.

-Boastful words: *"How long shall they utter and speak hard things? And all the workers of iniquity boast themselves" (Psalms 94:4, KJV) .*

-Words that misuse God's name: *"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name." (Exodus 20:7).*

-Cursing and bitter words: *"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" (Romans 3:14, KJV).*

-Lies: *"Let the lying lips be put to silence, which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous" (Psalms 31:18, KJV).*

-Malicious words against others: *"So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us" (3 John 10).*

-Backbiting words: *"...and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbour no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman" (Psalms 15:3).*

-Words of discord: *"...one who sows discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:19, NKJV).*

-Contentious words: *"A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calls for blows" (Proverbs 18:6, NKJV).*

-Words of strife: *"You shall hide them in the secret place of your presence from the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues" (Psalms 31:20, NKJV).*

-Devouring and deceitful words: *"You love every harmful word, O you deceitful tongue!" (Psalms 52:4).*

-Froward and perverse words: *"Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips" (Proverbs 4:24).*

-Mischievous words: *"They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things and imagine deceits all the day long" (Psalms 38:12, KJV).*

-Tale-bearing words: *"A talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter" (Proverbs 11:13, NKJV).*

## **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT COMMUNICATION:**

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. (Exodus 20:7, NIV)

You have tested my heart; You have visited me in the night; You have tried me and have found nothing; I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. (Psalms 17:3, NKJV)

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer. (Psalms 19:14, KJV)

Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. (Psalms 34:13)

I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. (Psalms 39:1, KJV)

"Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; And to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God." (Psalms 50:23, NKJV)

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10, KJV)

You love every harmful word, Oh you deceitful tongue! (Psalm 52:4)  
Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.  
(Psalm 103:20)

Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips. (Psalm 141:3)  
Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. (Proverbs 4:24)  
Hear; For I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.

For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing forward or perverse in them. (Proverbs 8:6-8, KJV)

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but overwhelms the mouth of the wicked. (Proverbs 10:11)

When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise. (Proverbs 10:19)  
The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of judgment. (Proverbs 10:21)

The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, but the speech of the upright rescues them. (Proverbs 12:6)

From the fruit of his lips a man is filled with good things as surely as the work of his hands rewards him. (Proverbs 12:14)

Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (Proverbs 12:18)  
The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly. (Proverbs 15:2)

A man finds joy in giving an apt reply--and how good is a timely word! (Proverbs 15:23)

The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil. (Proverbs 15:28)

Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. (Proverbs 16:24)

Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out. (Proverbs 17:14)

A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered. Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue. (Proverbs 17:27-28)

A fool's mouth is his destruction, And his lips are the snare of his soul. (Proverbs 18:7)

He who answers before listening--that is his folly and his shame. (Proverbs 18:13)

From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied. The tongue has the power of life and death. (Proverbs 18:20-21)

He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity. (Proverbs 21:23)

A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. (Proverbs 25:11)

Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone. (Proverbs 25:15)

A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control. (Proverbs 29:11)

Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him. (Proverbs 29:20)

Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. (Ecclesiastes 5:2)

Do not let your mouth lead you into sin...(Ecclesiastes 5:6)

The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. (Ecclesiastes 12:11, KJV)

Do not pay attention to every word people say. (Ecclesiastes 7:21)

The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools.

(Ecclesiastes 9:17)

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11, NKJV)

Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one. (Matthew 5:37)

Men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matthew 12:36-37)

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, (Ephesians 2:1-6)

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. (Ephesians 4:22-25)

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. (Ephesians 4:29, KJV)

Let all...evil speaking be put away from you...(Ephesians 4:31, KJV)

But now also put off...filthy communication out of your mouth. (Colossians 3:8, NKJV)

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. (Philemon 6, KJV)

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. (James 1:19-21)

Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, th

should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. (James 3:6-12)

...be holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, be holy; for I am holy. (1 Peter 1:15-16)

For, Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. (1 Peter 3:10)

If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. (1 Peter 4:11)

## CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

**DEFINITION:** The New Testament defines the Church as the physical manifestation of Christ, also called His Body and the Bride of Christ. The word actually means "the called out ones" or "dedicated to the Lord." The church is the spiritual body through which Christ works in the world.

### **FACTS ABOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:**

**Becoming a church member does not save you.** Salvation only comes through confessing, repenting, and accepting Jesus Christ as Savior (John 3:16; Romans 10:9).

**There are two dimensions of the Church.** The universal Church and the local Church.

-The universal Church is composed of all true believers in Christ--those now living and those who have preceded us in death.

-The local Church is composed of a local congregation living in a specific area and meeting together regularly, whether it be in a church sanctuary, a home, or even outside under a tree!

All born-again believers are automatically members of the universal Church. Believers become part of a local church through meeting together with them and/or a formal process of joining the local congregation. Various groups of churches have organized into what is called "denominations". Although this was not done in New Testament times, modern churches have opted to do this for purposes of administration and organization.

**The Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ** are other names used in the Bible for true believers who are part of the universal Church.

**Jesus Christ is the head of the Church.** *"And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way" (Ephesians 1:22-23).* Jesus loved the church and gave His life for it (Ephesians 5:25).

**The Church fulfills Christ's mission to the world.** The book of Acts and the epistles record how God worked through members of the first Church to extend the Gospel around the world.

**Christians are directed to assemble with other members of the Body of Christ.** The Bible warns: *"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).*

**Which local congregation one should be a part of** is between you and God. The question is where does He want you--both for your spiritual benefit and for the benefit of others? This may change from time to time. You may fulfill your purpose in one church and move on. When you

leave one congregation for another, however, it should be because of the direction of God and for accomplishing His purposes in and through you. Always leave a church right--that is with a good reputation and without making accusatory statement regarding the congregation from which you are departing.

**There is no perfect church.** If you are looking for a perfect church, you will not find one. The church is composed of men and women just like you--people who are imperfect. The "perfect" church is one where believers are following the mandates of God's Word, seeking to mature spiritually, and fulfilling the Great Commission to the world.

**Responsibilities of church** membership include faithful attendance, service for God, and financial support. Each member of the Church has a specific purpose to fulfill (1 Corinthians 12).

**God sets the leadership in the church.** Apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelists, teachers, and those with various other spiritual gifts are set in the church by God (1 Corinthians 12:27-28).

**God's purpose for the church is that** *"...through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:10-11).*

**The church of God is the pillar and ground of the truth.** That is why it is so important to be part of a Bible-believing church (1 Timothy 3:15).

#### **DEALING WITH CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:**

**Do not remain in a church where scripture is being violated.** If the teaching or leadership of a local congregation do not line up with the truth of God's Word, find a new church.

**Recognize the importance of attending church.** Hebrews 10:25 warns about abandoning meeting together, especially in the end-times. The church is important to your spiritual growth and development and provides a place where you can serve God with your talents and gifts. It is also the foundation of truth which will keep you from deception (1 Timothy 3:15).

**Find a church.** Become part of a Bible believing, Spirit-filled, proof-producing church.

**Pray and ask God to guide your decision.** Your choice of a local church is not about your preferences. Rather, it is about the best church for you to attend where you can grow spiritually and your gifts and abilities can be effectively used to bless others.

**If you believe God is calling you to start a new church,** do so without causing disruption in the church you are presently attending. God is not pleased with those who cause division among His people.

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:**

Read through the book of Acts and mark each time the word "church" is used. You will note that the church was the agency through which the Great Commission to reach the world is fulfilled. The epistles are letters written to the church under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and provide guidelines for it in faith and practice.

And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47)

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. (Romans 12:4-5)

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. (1 Corinthians 12:27-28)

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. (Ephesians 1:22-23)

His (God's) intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Ephesians 3:10-11)

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (Colossians 1:16-20)

... you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:15)

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:25)

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

## CHASTENING AND DISCIPLINE

**DEFINITION:** Chastening means to discipline in order to correct errors or faults.

### **FACTS ABOUT CHASTENING AND DISCIPLINE:**

**Reasons for chastening and discipline.** It is the nature of sin to rebel against authority. This is what caused the original sin of Lucifer (Satan) and of man (Adam and Eve). Because of this basic sin nature, we all rebel and need correction at times.

**Pastors or spiritual leaders have the authority for discipline** within a church or ministry because they have the responsibility for the spiritual welfare of followers (Hebrews 13:7). You are to respond positively to your spiritual leaders so it will be a joy for them to lead you.

**God expects parents to discipline their children.** The Bible says that a person without discipline will die without instruction--spiritual death for sure, and maybe even physical death (Proverbs 5:23). Proverbs 23:13 says "*do not withhold discipline from a child.*" Moses commanded Israel to teach their children to observe all of God's words (Deuteronomy 32:46). The Bible says: "*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:4, NASU).

**God disciplines** believers through His Word, trials of faith, and adverse circumstances.

**The purposes of chastening and discipline.** It leads you to repentance and corrects sin (1 Corinthians 8:9; 2 Corinthians 7:9). It keeps you humble (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). It teaches you spiritual discernment (1 Corinthians 11:31-32) and to obey God's Word (Psalm 119:67). It encourages you to be faithful (1 Corinthians 5:6-7); protects the testimony of the church (1 Timothy 3:7); and is restorative (Galatians 6:1; Matthew 6:14-15).

**Chastening and discipline confirm God's love for you.** It confirms that you are a child of God and that He cares about you (Hebrews 12:8, Psalms 94:12; Proverbs 3:11-12).

### **DEALING WITH CHASTENING AND DISCIPLINE:**

**Consider chastening a reason to examine your life.** As the Apostle Paul admonished, "*...let a man examine himself...*" (1 Corinthians 11:28). Examine your life for sins of commission (things you should not do) and sins of omission (things you should have done but didn't).

**Confess any known sin.** Chastening sometimes occurs because of sin, so confess any known sin. When you do, God will cleanse you from all unrighteousness, meaning even sins of which you are not aware (1 John 1:8-9). Pray the prayer of David: "*Cleanse me from secret faults*" (Psalm 19:12).

**Do not be discouraged by discipline.** Know that through chastening, God confirms His love for you (Hebrews 12:7-11). You are actually blessed when you are disciplined by God (Psalm 94:12)

**Remember what has been called** the "golden rule" if you deal with situations that require discipline: *"Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them"* (Matthew 7:12, RSV). Always ask yourself:

- What does God's Word say about this?
- How would Jesus handle this?
- How would I want to be treated in this situation if our positions were reversed and I was him and he was me?"

**Use these biblical guidelines for discipline:**

-Go first to the erring brother and solve the matter individually and personally if possible. If the erring believer will not listen to you and repent, go again with witnesses. If he still refuses to hear you, take the matter before the entire Church (Matthew 18:15-17).

-Discipline should be with a proper spirit. Spiritually mature believers are to first judge themselves and then deal with offenders in a spirit of meekness, love, and helpfulness (Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 15:1-2; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8, and Galatians 6:1-4).

-Correction should be done with the purpose of restoring the offender who has been taken captive by Satan (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

-Opportunity should be given for the erring brother to respond. If he repents, the leader can restore him to fellowship and ministry. If the offense is serious, the offender may need to be removed from active ministry until he sets his own life and home in order. If he is rebellious and does not repent, he must be removed from leadership and possibly, the church fellowship.

-Private problems and public sins should be handled differently (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 2:1-14; 1 Timothy 5:20). In the passage from Matthew it seems the problem was between two individuals. It was to be dealt with by enlisting the aid of other believers and, if the offender would not listen, by excluding him from fellowship. In the other passages, the problems were matters of public record so they were dealt with publicly.

-Exercise discipline only on the basis of factual knowledge. "Hearsay" evidence is not sufficient, and there must also be two or three witnesses to an offense (Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1 and 1 Timothy 5:1,9).

-If correction is totally refused, discipline may include exclusion from the fellowship. One of the greatest gifts God has given believers is fellowship with other believers. One of the most severe punishments is withholding such fellowship (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; 2 John 7-11; and 3 John 9-11).

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Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. (Psalm 119:67)

My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. (Proverbs 3:11-12)

But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:31-32)

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:7-11)

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## ENVY AND JEALOUSY

**DEFINITION:** Envy is a synonym for jealousy and covetousness excited by the success of others. It is resentment of the spiritual, financial, or material blessings of others. It is lustful desire and longing for something that someone else has. It is sometimes characterized by snide remarks against others in an effort to build up one's own self.

### **FACTS ABOUT ENVY AND JEALOUSY:**

**Envy comes from the spirit of man.** *"Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely?" (James 4:5)*

**Envy is a sign of being a carnal Christian.** *"...for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?" (1 Corinthians 3:3, NKJV)*

**Those living in sin are filled with envy.** *"Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers..." (Romans 1:29, KJV)*

**Where there is envy, other problems arise.** *"But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice" (James 3:14,16).*

**You are not to envy sinners.** *"Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the Lord" (Proverbs 23:17)*

**Envy is a characteristic of false teachers.** *"If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain" (1 Timothy 6:-4).*

### **DEALING WITH ENVY AND JEALOUSY:**

**Acknowledge that you are envious and jealous.** Until you recognize these responses are operating in your life, you will not be able to deal with them.

**Recognize the ramifications of envy and jealousy.** It results in confusion and other evil works (James 3:16) and it ultimately ends in tragedy (Galatians 5:19-21).

**Repent.** Envy and jealousy are sins which require repentance.

**Ask God for a new manifestation of His love.** When you truly love someone, you do not envy them, nor are you jealous of them: *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy..."*  
(1 Corinthians 13:4)

**In the future:**

- Walk in the Spirit: Romans 13:13.
- Manifest the Fruit of the Spirit: Galatians 5:22-23.
- Focus on things of eternal value instead of things of the world: Colossians 3:1-4.

**WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT ENVY AND JEALOUSY:**

A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones. (Proverbs 14:30)  
Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the Lord. (Proverbs 23:17)

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers... (Romans 1:29, KJV)

Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. (Romans 13:13, NKJV)

...for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? (1 Corinthians 3:3, NKJV)

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy...(1 Corinthians 13:4)

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the

Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5:19-23)

If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. But godliness with contentment is great gain. (1 Timothy 6:3-6)

For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, and deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. (Titus 3:3, KJV)

But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. (James 3:14,16)

Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? (James 4:5)

## ENEMIES

**DEFINITION:** An enemy is one towards whom you are antagonistic, hostile, and unforgiving. It is someone that you also may be seeking to injure or threaten. You may also try to ruin the reputation of an enemy through slander, gossip, and lies.

### **FACTS ABOUT ENEMIES:**

**The Word of God** teaches you not to become bitter, hostile, or vengeful toward another person. You might not like what others do or say, but you must love them and extend forgiveness to them, just as God extended it to you.

**Satan is the source of all contention.** The Bible explains that *"...our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"* (Ephesians 6:12). Your struggle is against the evil forces that cause a person to react in such a way that you consider them an enemy.

**The proper response to contention.** The Fruit of the Holy Spirit, qualities that are to be evident in the lives of believers, provide the answer to contention. *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another"* (Galatians 5:22-23).

**You are commanded to love and pray for your enemies.** *"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"* (Matthew 5:46-47).

**God can cause your enemies to be at peace with you.** *"When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him"* (Proverbs 16:7).

### **DEALING WITH YOUR ENEMIES:**

**Examine your heart.** If you have hatred, anger, unforgiveness, or bitterness towards someone, then you are not responding biblically to your enemies. Are the feelings and attitudes you have towards this person Christ-like? What caused the break in the relationship? Did you have a part in it? What is the other person's attitude towards you?

**Pray for forgiveness.** Not only for your own attitude towards your enemy, but pray to forgive your enemy also. As a mature believer, the obligation to forgive and initiate reconciliation rests

with you. You can do this because the Bible declares you can do all things through Christ (Philippians 4:13).

**Go to your enemy and try to reconcile.** You cannot control their response, but you can ask forgiveness and seek to reconcile with them. If they refuse, then you have the satisfaction of knowing you have acted scripturally. Follow the guidelines in Matthew 18:15-17.

**Love and pray for your enemies.** Jesus commanded this in Matthew 5:43-48.

**Pray for the Fruit of the Spirit** to be manifested in your life towards your enemy: Love, goodness, kindness, meekness, patience, etc. (Galatians 5:22-23).

**Cast down vain imaginations.** Vain imaginations are unproductive thoughts and imaginations. When Satan tries to return and instill unforgiveness or bitterness towards the person once again, cast these thoughts down in the name of the Lord (2 Corinthians 10:5).

#### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT ENEMIES:**

He is the God who avenges me, who subdues nations under me, who saves me from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from violent men you rescued me. (Psalm 18:47-48)

When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him. (Proverbs 16:7)

Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice, or the Lord will see and disapprove and turn his wrath away from him. (Proverbs 24:17-18)

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:43-48)

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matthew 6:14-15)

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." (Matthew 18:22-35)

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39)

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. (Mark 11:25,26)

But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:27-36)

"So watch yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him." (Luke 17:3-4)

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. (Romans 12:14-21)

## EMOTIONS

**DEFINITION:** Emotions are defined as strong feelings about something or someone.

### **FACTS ABOUT EMOTIONS:**

**God created emotions.** God created you in His image and He is an emotional being, expressing emotions such as love, righteous anger, mercy, compassion, etc. As a human being, created in God's image, you also have emotions.

**Emotions can be divided into two categories** A negative emotion is any response that results in adverse thoughts or actions. A positive emotion is any response that results in positive thoughts or actions. There is a broad range of emotions in each of these two categories and a person may also express combinations of these emotional responses. It is your negative emotional responses which you want to eliminate.

### **DEALING WITH EMOTIONS:**

**Recognize that negative emotions are powerful.** Unbridled negative emotions can cause you to react in ways that can impact your life forever. Many people who had never violated the law previously are serving lengthy prison sentences because of one violent act done in a fit of anger.

**Understand that negative emotions do not represent the truth.** For example, you may feel fearful when there is nothing to fear. You may worry when in reality, there is nothing about which to be concerned. It is God's Word that speaks the truth into your life, not your own negative emotions or your limited perception of the situations around you.

**Do not try to excuse your negative emotions.** Deal with them, because they are powerful and, left unchecked, they will control your life! You have the power to do so because the Word of God declares that *"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world"* (1 John 4:4, NKJV). The same power that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you and will enable you to control your emotions (Romans 8:11).

**Take responsibility for your emotions.** What negative emotions do you experience and express when you are in difficult situations? Acknowledging these responses will make you more aware of them when they try to surface in your life. Do not blame your emotions on others, ie., "I'm like my Uncle Jack. I got his temper!" Take responsibility for your own negative responses. You are only responsible for how you react to situations, not for how others respond.

**Make a decision to change.** All change begins with a decision. Your decision to become a believer was the first step toward a new life. Now you must make a decision to allow God to rule in every area of your life, including your emotional responses. You are the only one who can initiate changes in your emotions. You do this by making a decision to be transformed by the Word instead of being conformed to the world (Romans 12:1-2).

**Realize that you cannot change your soulish nature on your own.** Self-effort will not rid you of habitual sin. Negative emotions cannot be broken through self-effort. You must let God supernaturally change your mind, will, and emotions. For years, your sinful soulish nature has controlled your body and your spirit. Now you must learn to let your redeemed spirit control your body and soul. Don't give up. It is a process of spiritual growth.

**Pray about your negative emotions.** Make your negative emotions a matter of prayer. God wants you set free from every emotion that has you in bondage. As you pray about your emotions, God will give you wisdom and power to deal with them.

**Realize that negative emotions call for an immediate response.** Whenever you recognize a negative emotion beginning to surface, it is a signal that something is wrong. You need to stop what you are doing, stop what you are saying, or stop what you are thinking. Do not allow the emotion to be strengthened by your actions, words, or thoughts. In the name of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit, take control of negative emotions immediately (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

**Be willing to forgive.** If you follow the biblical directive to forgive others, many negative emotions will be eliminated. You have been forgiven by God and people whom you have offended. Extend this same grace to others

**Wait before you respond.** In difficult situations, think about the response you are about to express. Is it an attitude that honors God, His Word, and your commitment to Christ? How does this emotion reflect on you as a believer? Is it an emotion by which you want to be known? For example, being angry all the time will make you known as an angry person.

**Take the way of escape.** Sometimes, you need to remove yourself from a volatile situation or an aggravating person. God's Word has promised: "*No temptation (trial) has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted (tried) beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted (tried), he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it*" (1 Corinthians 10:13, NIV). This is God's guarantee that no circumstances, trial, temptation or attack of the enemy will come into your life that you are unable to bear. In every circumstance you face, God has made a way of escape that will bring you out victoriously.

**Respond as you would like to be responded to.** Ask yourself how you would like for someone to treat you in a similar situation. Apply what is called the "golden rule" that is the thesis statement of the Word of God: *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets"* (Matthew 7:12).

**Eliminate volatile situations** when you can do so. This will help, but you may not be able to escape certain people and problems. You can, however, make a decision to change your attitudes and your responses to these circumstances and refuse to respond negatively.

**Avoid toxic people.** Toxic people are those who speak negative things into your life such as "you are stupid, you should be ashamed, you will never amount to anything, etc." Avoiding such people does not give you license to treat them rudely. You can be friendly without being friends. Do not make annoying, insensitive, rude, toxic people your close friends and confidants. Toxic people ignite the sparks of negative emotions in your life. The Bible says: *"Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go, Lest you learn his ways And set a snare for your soul"* (Proverbs 22:24-25, NKJV). Substitute any negative emotion for the words "angry" and "furious", and the warning is the same because you learn the ways of those you hang out with. Your own attitudes, actions, and emotions are affected by the company you keep. Make friendships with people who are aggressively following the Lord and will speak the truth of God's Word into your life.

**Don't give up.** If you regress into a negative emotional reaction, do not give up in your quest to eliminate such responses. You never fail until you quit trying! Remember that after your new spiritual birth, your soul—which is your mind, will, and emotions—must be supernaturally changed as you live out this new life. This change is a process of spiritual maturity.

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT EMOTIONS:**

Here are some general guidelines that are applicable to all negative emotions. For specific emotions, identify the problem and then use a concordance to study all the Bible has to say about it. For example, if you are struggling with anger, commit to memory such verses as: *"A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control"* (Proverbs 19:11).

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2).

No temptation (trial) has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted (tried) beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted (tried), he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. (Philippians 4:8)

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4, NKJV)

## EATING DISORDERS

**DEFINITION OF EATING DISORDERS:** An eating disorder is an abnormal eating habit associated with deranged thoughts and negative feelings. Eating may be increased or decreased by bingeing or refusing to eat.

### FACTS ABOUT EATING DISORDERS:

**There are several types of eating disorders.** Anorexia is when a person refuses to eat, expresses an intense fear of gaining weight, and becomes extremely underweight--sometimes to the point of starvation. An anorexic person sees themselves as "fat" no matter what their weight, and will often exercise excessively. Bulimia is characterized by bingeing and purging--overeating and then forcing one's self to vomit afterwards. Binge-eating is overeating to the point of being physically uncomfortable--the biblical definition of this is gluttony.

**Emotional issues are at the root of eating disorders.** People who feel their world is out of control believe that eating is one area where they are in control. A sense of worthlessness, sadness, and depression may drive one to develop an eating disorder. A bad self image--thinking one is fat and unattractive--also contributes to these types of problems. Stress, anxiety, rejection, guilt and shame are other emotions that trigger abnormal eating habits.

**Eating disorders tend to develop** during the teenage and young adult years, and they are more common in women.

**There are no biblical restrictions on food for New Testament believers.** The restrictions of the Old Testament were made under the law and were part of God's covenant with Israel. Some believers still choose to abide by these, but this is not mandatory according to scriptures and their beliefs should not be imposed on others. The New Testament clearly indicates that all things are pure (Romans 14:20-21) and believers are free to choose their diets (1 Corinthians 8:7-9). Paul warns about legalistic regulations: *"Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: 'Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!'"? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence"* (Colossians 2:20-23).

**Eating disorders lead to physical problems.** Bingeing and purging through vomiting, diuretics, enemas, or laxatives can harm one's digestive tract. Being extremely overweight or underweight can affect internal organs, heart, blood pressure, and the functioning of the brain.

**God does not want you to be in bondage** to eating disorders or anything else. The Apostle Paul said: *"Everything is permissible for me but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me but I will not be mastered by anything"* (1 Corinthians 6:12).

## **DEALING WITH EATING DISORDERS:**

**Admit your problem.** Acknowledging that you have a problem is the first step in dealing with an eating disorder.

**Determine the triggers that cause your problem.** Identifying the issues that contribute to your eating disorder will help you deal with the root cause of it. Do you eat because you are lonely? Depressed? Because of stress?

**Pray a prayer of deliverance.** Ask God to deliver you from the bondage of eating disorders. Accept by faith, as you did your salvation, that it is done. In prayer, deal with any issues that contribute to your eating disorder. Ask God for deliverance from guilt, shame, depression, anxiety, etc. Ask Him to show you better ways to deal with loneliness, depression, and stress, etc. rather than eating.

**Acknowledge that you have within you the power to change.** You have the ability, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to put off old behaviors and put on new ones: *"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness"* (Ephesians 4:22-24).

**Surround yourself with supportive people.** Recruit a few friends to provide prayer support. Get involved in a church or Bible study where you can receive additional support from other believers. If you know someone who has overcome an eating disorder, ask them to join your support team.

**Learn to eat right.** Learn what foods to eat in what amounts in order to develop a healthy lifestyle. A trained nutritionist can assist with this. No more binging and purging. No more dieting. No more fasting for losing weight. If you need to lose weight, develop a healthy lifestyle, exercise, and eat right.

**Stick to a schedule.** Have set times for eating and snacking. Set a schedule and stick to it. This will prevent you from becoming so hungry that you overeat.

**Meditate on Scriptures that will help you overcome your disorder.** The following is a list you can use for this purpose.

## **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT EATING DISORDERS:**

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)

Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities. They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. (Psalm 107:17-20)

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. (Psalm 139:14-16)

Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. (Proverbs 31:30)

All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no flaw in you. (Song of Solomon 4:7)

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? (Matthew 6:25-26)

Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak. (Mark 14:38)

Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear." (Luke 12:22)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)

Everything is permissible for me but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me but I will not be mastered by anything. (1 Corinthians 6:12)

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5:1)

You have the ability to put off old behaviours and put on new ones: You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its

deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. (Ephesians 6:11-13)

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)

Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. (Colossians 2:20-23)

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight (1 Peter 3:3-4)

## **FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**

**DEFINITION:** The fruit of the Holy Spirit refers to the nature of the Spirit revealed in the life of the believer, spiritual qualities which should be evident in the lives of all Christians.

### **FACTS ABOUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:**

**Spiritual Fruit comes through the Holy Spirit.** It is the "Fruit of the Spirit", not the fruit of self-effort. Developing spiritual fruit is a continuing work of the Holy Spirit in your life as a believer to conform you to the image of Christ. Like fruit in the natural world, you must continue to cultivate it.

**Spiritual Fruit is evidence of spiritual maturity.** Like fruit in the natural world, spiritual fruit it is a product resulting from the process of life. It is Christian character that is manifested in both personal and social conduct and is the evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in your life. Just as fruit takes time to develop in the natural world, spiritual fruit also takes time to develop. It is the product of growth in the life of the Spirit.

**Spiritual Fruit is singular.** The word "fruit" is singular. It is not plural. Spiritual fruit can be understood by the natural example of grapes. A cluster of grapes has individual grapes on it, but it is one cluster. In the natural world, when grapes are picked from the vine they are picked in a cluster. This cluster of grapes is called the "fruit" [singular] of the vine. Spiritually, there is one cluster of fruit with many individual facets.

**You are chosen to bear fruit.** Jesus said: *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last"* (John 15:16).

**Jesus placed great emphasis on fruit bearing.** Read the parable of the vineyard that did not yield fruit (Luke 13:6-9) and the fig tree which had no fruit (Matthew 21:18-19).

### **The Fruit of the Holy Spirit consists of these qualities.**

-Love, an emotion of deep affection, care, and concern, an unconditional giving of self to others.

-Joy, a quality of gladness, delight, and jubilation. Happiness depends on the world around you and your circumstances. Joy originates with the Spirit of God and is not dependent upon what is going on in the world or your outward circumstances.

-Peace, a condition of quiet, calm, tranquility, and harmony. Peace is the absence of strife, anxiety, and concern.

-Longsuffering is the quality of patience, the ability to cheerfully bear an unbearable situation and patiently endure.

-Gentleness is the quality of having a mild manner that is not severe, violent, or loud. It is a quiet and respectful kindness.

-Goodness, which is demonstrated through holiness and righteousness.

-Faith, a strong confidence in God which is manifested through a lifestyle of godly works.

-Meekness, which is controlled strength.

-Temperance, which is self-control, moderation in emotions, thoughts, and actions.

**Developing the Fruit of the Spirit.** Jesus used the term "fruit" of the Spirit as a natural parallel of a spiritual truth. Certain conditions are necessary to produce fruit in the natural world that are symbolic of things necessary for production of spiritual fruit. In the natural world, as well as the spiritual realm, specific conditions are necessary to assure growth. These include:

-Life: Just as life in the natural world comes through seed, life in the spiritual world came through the Seed of Jesus Christ (Genesis 3:15).

-Water: Water is necessary to produce fruit in the natural world and the water of the Holy Spirit is necessary to produce fruit in the spirit world. It quenches your spiritual thirst and brings spiritual growth (John 7:38-39 and Isaiah 44:3).

-Light: It is response to light that stimulates growth in the natural fruit bearing process. It is your response to the light of God's Word that produces the fruit of the Spirit (1 John 1:5-7).

-Air: Carbon dioxide is drawn in by a plant from the air which surrounds it and is necessary for growth and fruit production. The Word of God compares the Holy Spirit to air or wind (John 3:8). The "wind" of the Holy Spirit blowing across your life is much like the wind in the natural world. It scatters the seeds of the Word of God, separates the wheat from the chaff in your spiritual life, and fans the dying coals of your spiritual zeal to set you ablaze for God.

-Space: In Matthew 13 in the parable of the sower, competition for space choked out some plants. The believer who develops spiritual fruit will discover he must be set apart from the competition of the "weeds" of the world (Matthew 13:22; Romans 12:1-2).

-Roots: Roots are necessary to anchor and supply nutrients to the plant. Psalms chapter explains how to develop the root system in your spiritual life.

-Rest: Dormancy (rest) occupies a specific season in the natural growth cycle of plants. Dormancy is a period during which the plant may appear to be dead because there is no growth. Dormancy usually occurs right before a period of very rapid growth. One of the purposes of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is to bring spiritual rest and refreshing. This spiritual refreshing results in rapid growth of the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 28:11-12).

-Soil: Both in the natural and spiritual worlds, in order to produce fruit the ground must be properly prepared. In the parable of the sower in Matthew 13 it was the condition of the soil that affected the growth of the seed. Your heart is like soil in the natural world. If your heart is hard and filled with things of the world that choke out the Word of God, you will not bear spiritual fruit (Hosea 10:12).

-Death: Every time you plant a seed to produce fruit, it does not come to life unless it dies first (John 12:24; 1 Corinthians 15:36). Spiritual life depends on death to the things of the world. It requires death to sin, worldly desires, and pleasures. Death to the world results in the development of the fruit of Christ-likeness in your life.

-Attachment to the vine: In order to bear fruit in the natural world, a branch must be attached to the main plant. If the branch is broken off from the main, life-giving vine it will not bear fruit. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. In order to bear spiritual fruit we must maintain our relationship to Him (John 15:1-5).

-Pruning: Pruning is necessary in the natural world if a plant is to remain productive and bear fruit. When a farmer prunes a plant he cuts off the unproductive branches in order to make the plant produce more fruit. He removes everything which would hinder the growth of the plant. Pruning is also necessary in the spiritual world. Spiritual pruning is correction by God. The Bible also calls it chastisement. When God "prunes", He removes from your life everything which would hinder your spiritual growth. This process is necessary if you are to bear spiritual fruit (John 15:2).

-Climate: Climate is important in developing good fruit. In the natural world, many types of fruit are developed in environments that are specially controlled. They are grown in buildings called "hot houses" at specific temperatures. They are protected from the real environment of the outside world. If you take a "hot house" plant and move it outside, it will soon die because it has lived only in a controlled environment and it cannot withstand the environment of the real world. Spiritually speaking, we do not want "hot house" Christians who look good in controlled settings but wilt on contact with the real world. Spiritual fruit should be just as evident in your contacts with the world as in the controlled settings of Christian friends and the church.

### **DEALING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:**

**Analyze your life.** Which manifestations of the Fruit of the Spirit are apparent? Which are lacking? Which need to be strengthened?

**Rely on the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells within you.** The Fruit of the Spirit does not develop through self-effort. It develops from the resident power of the Holy Spirit within you. The Holy Spirit works with you by convicting you when you violate scriptural principles that will impede your spiritual growth.

**Provide the proper environment for spiritual growth.** Review the conditions for developing spiritual fruit in the preceding section and make sure you are providing a proper environment for fruit-bearing.

**Remember that fruit-bearing is a process.** In the natural world as well as the spiritual world, fruit develops over time with proper care. Do not become discouraged if you don't always seem to manifest the spiritual qualities of the Holy Spirit in challenging situations. Ask God for forgiveness when you fail, and then ask Him to strengthen you in the areas in which you are weak.

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:**

He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. (Psalm 1:3)

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise (Proverbs 11:30)

Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. (Matthew 3:8)

Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. (Matthew 7:17-20)

"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit." (Matthew 12:33)

The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop. (Luke 8:14-15)

He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.'" (Luke 13:6-9)

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. (John 15:1-6)

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. (John 15:15-16)

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. (Galatians 5:16-26)

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. (Galatians 6:7-8)

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. (Ephesians 5:8-10)

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that confess his name (Hebrews 13:15)

## FRIENDSHIP

**DEFINITION:** Friendship is a relationship of mutual affection between two or more people. It is a strong bond that exceeds a mere association with someone.

### **FACTS ABOUT FRIENDSHIP:**

**The two greatest commands in the Bible**, upon which all others depend, are concerned with relationships: *"Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments"* (Matthew 22:37-40). Amazingly, the whole message of the Word of God is summarized in these two commandments--your relationship with God and others!

### **There are three basic types of relationships.**

-A mentor friendship: This is a relationship in which you are the mentor and you disciple a friend in God's Word and help them grow spiritually.

-A mentee friendship: In this relationship, you are the one being mentored by a godly friend who is helping you grow spiritually.

-A mutual friendship: Mutual friendships are when you are closely aligned with another person on the same spiritual level, and you minister to each other back and forth.

**Do not be unequally yoked in friendship.** The Bible says: *"Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character"* (1 Corinthians 15:33). We are warned not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers in any type of relationship (2 Corinthians 6:16).

**Christian friendships are based on Jesus Christ.** That mutually significant factor provides a sound foundation upon which to build a friendship. He is the one who ... *"...has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity"* (Ephesians 2:14-16, NKJV).

**Christian friends love one another unconditionally.** When difficult times come in the relationship, they continue to love and accept one another despite faults and differences: *"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity"* (Proverbs 17:17). Romans 15:7 indicates that you are to accept others as Christ accepts you--unconditionally.

**Christian friends love sacrificially.** They are not selfish, rather they give freely of their time, energies, and abilities to their friends: "*Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends*" (John 15:13). Jesus is the best example of a true Christian friend. His love for you is sacrificial, never selfish. He demonstrated this not only through miracles of salvation, healing, and deliverance, but also by the humble service of washing the disciples' feet, and ultimately when He gave His life for you.

**Christian friends do not use one another.** Philippians 2:3 says, "*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.*" By placing your friend's needs before your own, you will gain a true friend.

**Christian friends edify one another.** "Edification" means to build another person up emotionally, spiritually, and physically. This is done by encouragement based upon God's Word (1 Timothy 5:11).

**Christian friends are honest with one another.** Proverbs 27:6 indicates that "*the wounds of a friend are faithful*"--meaning that even when your friend says something difficult to you that is true, yet painful, they are being a faithful friend. Christian friends can be honest and confront one another when necessary without fearing loss of relationship.

**Christian friends respect confidences.** You are free to share anything with your friend, knowing that it will be kept in confidence.

**Christian friendships are mutually rewarding.** If you feel used, abused, or even smothered in a friendship, something is wrong. Seek to correct it if possible. If not, back off on the relationship.

**Christian friends respect boundaries.** Christian friends will never come between you and God or you and your spouse. They will respect boundaries you set in regards to time spent together and will recognize your need to develop other relationships.

## **DEALING WITH FRIENDSHIP:**

**Pray about your relationships.** Ask God to bring new friends into your life that will be in harmony with His will and purpose for your life. Ask God for a mentor and ask Him to send people that you can mentor as well. Ask the Lord to show you any negative relationships you might need to sever--people who pull you down or back into the old life.

**Frequent places where you can develop good friends.** Excellent places to find friends is in Church, Bible studies, or prayer groups. If you develop a friend at a local bar, what kind of friend do you think it will be?

**Take the initiative to make friends.** The Bible says: "*A man who has friends must himself be friendly*" (Proverbs 18:24, NKJV).

**Develop qualities in your life that foster good relationships.** In Galatians 5:16-26 Paul contrasts the qualities of character that result in bad relationships with those that foster good relationships. Attitudes and actions that abort positive relationships are hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy. Positive relationships are supported by the Fruit of the Holy Spirit being manifested in your life: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

**Always remember--your friendship with God is most important.** You cannot be a friend of the world and remain in intimate friendship with God. (James 4:4)

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT FRIENDSHIP:**

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. (Psalm 1:1)

A righteous man is cautious in friendship, but the way of the wicked leads them astray. (Proverbs 12:26)

He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm. (Proverbs 13:20)

A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends. (Proverbs 16:28)

He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. (Proverbs 17:9)

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. (Proverbs 17:17 )

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:24)

Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared. (Proverbs 22:24-25)

Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. (Proverbs 27:6)

Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel. Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you. (Proverbs 27:9-10)

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down,

his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!  
Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?  
Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. (Ecclesiastes. 4:9-12)

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."  
(Matthew 22:37-40)

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God  
(Romans 15:7)

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (1 Corinthians 6:14-18)

Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character. (1 Corinthians 15:33)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3)

And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God's friend." (James 2:23)

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God?  
Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. (James 4:4)

**Do not be friends with:**

- Gossips: Proverbs 20:19
- The bad tempered: Proverbs 22:24-25
- Those given to change: Proverbs 24:21-22
- Those given to drinking (addiction) and gluttony: Proverbs 23:20-21

- Liars, untrustworthy, and those who are inconsiderate: Proverbs 25:18-20
- Those given to violence: Proverbs 1:10-19

### **The types of friends to foster.**

- Those who display wisdom: Proverbs 13:20
- Those who give wise counsel: Proverbs 27:9; 13:14
- Those who are comforting instead of dragging you down: Proverbs 17:17 Proverbs 18:24

### **Things to avoid in friendships.**

- Repeating everything you hear: Proverbs 17:9; 26:20
- Senseless arguments: Proverbs 17:14; 26:21
- Overstaying your welcome: Proverbs 25:17
- Bad jokes at the expense of your friend: Proverbs 26:18-19
- Meddling in affairs that do not concern you: Proverbs 26:17
- Insincere flattery: Proverbs 27:14

### **Solving problems in friendships.**

- Be slow to anger: Proverbs 16:7
- Be slow to respond: Proverbs 18:13
- Avoid quarreling: Proverbs 20:3
- Speak gently: Proverbs 15:1
- Speak briefly: Proverbs 10:29
- Be quick to show love: Proverbs 10:12
- When necessary, it is better to rebuke than to flatter: Proverbs 28:23.

**The biblical emphasis on relationships** is evident when we note the number of times the words "one another" occurs, particularly in Paul's letters. We are commanded to:

- love one another: John 13:35
- be devoted to one another: Romans 12:10
- honor others above yourself: Romans 12:10
- live in harmony with one another: Romans 12:16
- comfort one another: 1 Thessalonians 4:18
- encourage one another: Hebrews 3:13
- stir up one another to love and good works: Hebrews 10:24
- show hospitality to one another: 1 Peter 4:9
- employ the gifts of God for the benefit of one another: 1 Peter 4:10
- clothe yourself with humility towards one another: 1 Peter 5:5
- pray for one another: James 5:16
- confess your faults to one another: James 5:16
- speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs: Ephesians 5:19

- submit to one another: Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5
- consider others better than yourself: Philippians 2:3
- be concerned about the interests of others: Philippians 2:4
- bear with one another: Colossians 3:13
- teach one another: Colossians 3:16
- build up one another: Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- be likeminded towards one another: Romans 15:5
- accept one another unconditionally: Romans 15:7
- admonish one another: Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16
- care for one another: 1 Corinthians 12:25
- serve one another: Galatians 5:13
- bear one another's burdens: Galatians 6:2
- forgive one another: Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13
- be patient with one another: Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13
- be kind and compassionate to one another: Ephesians 4:32

## **FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION**

**DEFINITION:** Forgiveness is the act of pardoning someone for an offense. Reconciliation is the ending of conflict between two or more people and the renewing of relationship. Included in the biblical concept of forgiveness is receiving forgiveness from God for sin, extending forgiveness to others, and forgiving ones' self. Forgiveness includes the releasing of grudges and bitterness over past offenses.

### **FACTS ABOUT FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION:**

**Forgiveness and reconciliation come through Jesus Christ.** *"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).*

**God promises forgiveness for your sin.** When you confess your sins to God and repent, you are forgiven because He promises this in His Word (1 John 1:8-9). By repenting and accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for your sin, you are reconciled to God. You may not "feel" forgiven, but the Christian walk is by faith not by feeling. God promised, and He cannot lie (Numbers 23:19). Jesus said: ...*"whoever comes to me I will never drive away"* (John 6:37).

**Broken relationships result in additional problems.** Bitterness, grudges, resentment, anger, etc., all result from broken relationships. These negative emotions affect you mentally, physically, and spiritually. They are all sinful emotions that must be dealt with in order to receive and extend forgiveness.

**The Bible teaches forgiveness.** You need forgiveness from God and you are required to forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15). You also need to forgive yourself.

### **DEALING WITH FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION:**

**Be reconciled to God.** A proper vertical relationship with God makes positive horizontal relationships with others possible. Confess your sins and ask God to forgive you. Read Psalm 51. You do not need to repeatedly ask forgiveness for a sin. Once you have confessed and asked forgiveness, God forgives and forgets (Isaiah 43:25). Remain reconciled to God by praying the model prayer, designed to be prayed daily, which includes "forgive our sins as we forgive others" (Matthew 6:12).

**Repent of your unforgiveness.** Repent of bitterness, anger, resentment, and holding grudges. These are all sin and must be dealt with as such.

**Forgive others.** You may not feel like it, but by an act of your will you must forgive others. Follow the directives given in Matthew 18:15-19. Forgiveness is not:

- Justifying someone else's wrongs which they have done to you.
- Denying you were hurt in the first place.
- Accepting with resignation what was done to you.
- Waiting for time to heal the hurt. (It doesn't).

True forgiveness comes by:

-Recognizing what was done to you was wrong, the result of sinful men in a sinful world. It is not necessary to go back and relive the event mentally, but neither can you deal with it by denying it. Acknowledge what happened and how it affected you.

-Confessing the hurt to God and asking Him to heal you of the harmful emotions. You may never forget the facts of the incident, but what is needed is healing for the negative emotions relating to it.

-Asking God to help you forgive others, even as Christ forgives you. Recognize that God extends forgiveness to you as you forgive others: *"Forgive us our trespasses AS we forgive those who trespass against us."*

**If others offend you again, forgive them again.** Peter asked Christ how many times he was required to forgive someone. Jesus answered: *"I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times"* (Matthew 18:21-22). He was actually saying that your forgiveness must be unlimited.

**Forgive yourself.** Distinguish between true remorse and guilt and shame. You are right to feel remorse, but guilt and shame are not from God. Jesus bore your sins, your guilt, and your shame on the cross (Hebrews 12:2). You do not have to bear these things (1 John 3:20). If you have confessed your sin to God and sought forgiveness and reconciliation with others, then you must also forgive yourself. See yourself as God sees you, a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Here are some guidelines to help you forgive yourself.

-Acknowledge the sin that is causing your feelings of guilt. Confess your sin to God, and repent. Ask God to forgive your sin and heal your emotions.

-Recognize when God forgives, He forgets--He casts your sins as far as east from west (Psalm 103:12).

-Claim the promises of 1 John 1:8-9 and Romans 8:1.

-By an act of your own will, release yourself from condemnation. Control future thoughts by casting down "vain imaginations" of guilt and shame and "forgetting those things behind" (2 Corinthians 10:5 and Philippians 3:3).

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION:**

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. (Psalm 32:1)

Read David's prayer of repentance in Psalm 51.

For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You. (Psalm 86:5)

He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us after our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his lovingkindness toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:10-12)

Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins. (Proverbs 10:12)

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)

"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." (Isaiah 1:18)

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. (Isaiah 43:18)

"I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more." (Isaiah 43:25)

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

(Isaiah 53:5-6)

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23-24)

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (Matthew 6:12)

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matthew 6:14-15)

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." (Matthew 18:21-22)

The parable about forgiveness in Matthew 18:23-35 illustrates how your forgiveness by God is related to forgiving others.

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. (Mark 11:25-26)

But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. (Luke 6:27-31)

Forgive, and you will be forgiven. (Luke 6:37)

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. (John 6:37)

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:34-35)

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. (Acts 3:19)

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin. (Romans 4:7-8)

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. (Romans 5:1)

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1)

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace. (Ephesians 1:7)

...by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. (Ephesians 2:15-18))

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:2-3)

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (Colossians 1:19-20)

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever

grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:13)

See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many (Hebrews 12:15)

And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."  
(1 Peter 4:8)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (1 John 1:8-10)

## FINANCES

**DEFINITION:** Finances involve the gaining, exchange, and management of money. A barter trading system is also a type of finance. Financing is the act of managing available resources like money, assets, and investments. Problems with finances may include an inability to meet financial obligations, excessive debt, and an inability to provide for basic needs.

### FACTS ABOUT FINANCES:

**Chief causes of financial problems** include not honoring God with tithes and offerings; living beyond one's income; credit buying; lack of a budget; laziness or refusing to work; co-signing for the debts of others--all of which are violations of God's Word.

**God's Word is our financial guide.** As believers, we do not look to the strategies of the world for principles to govern finances. We look to the truth of God's Word. Financial blessing comes through keeping the Word of God in every area of our lives, including finances (Deuteronomy 28:2).

**There are five principles** that should distinguish the believer's attitude from that of the world:

-The *master* of our money is God. We are guided by obedience to His Word in regards to our finances. As a steward, you are responsible for your resources, and God holds you accountable (Matthew 25:14-30).

-Our *motivation* is different from that of the world. Instead of amassing wealth for selfish purposes, we are motivated by a desire to use our resources for God's glory.

-Our *mindset* differs from that of the world. We seek contentment with what we have and we own our possessions instead of being owned by them.

-Our *means* of attaining finances differ. Scriptural mandates are honored to prevent fraud and deceit and we are governed by principles of honesty and integrity.

-Our *management* of money differs from that of the world. Our budgets include categories like tithes, offerings, and gifts to the poor.

**Tithes and offerings are part of the financial plan of true believers.** A tithe is 10% of your income. Offerings are gifts to the work of the Lord above the 10% tithe. The first record of tithing was when Abraham paid tithe to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:20). New Testament believers also tithed and gave offerings (1 Corinthians 16:2; Luke 18:12-13). If a person fails to tithe, it

considered robbing God (Malachi 3:8). You can borrow from the tithe, but if you do you must include 20% interest when you repay it (Leviticus 27:31). God blesses those who give tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:10).

**Why should believers give tithes and offerings?** We give because:

*-We want to pattern ourselves after our giving God.* God gives lavishly. We want to be like Him, so this means that we follow His example and give generously.

*-We want to obey God's commands to give.* God commanded Israel to make giving central in their personal, family, and national lives. New Testament teachings in the Gospels and Epistles emphasize giving as well. Examples in the history of the first church recorded in the book of Acts also illustrate this. God commands us to give by precept and example, and as His children we respond in obedience.

*-We love the world with the love of God.* God so loved the world that He gave His only Son (John 3:16). We give to the work of the Lord because we are filled with that same love and in so doing we help extend the Gospel to the world.

*-We are thankful.* The Jews gave sacrificial gifts to express gratitude for God's provision for their needs. We also express our thanks by giving to God.

*-We want to address legitimate need.* Some of our brothers and sisters in emerging nations struggle in difficult conditions, while those in western nations live in relative ease. The Bible teaches that we cannot truly have God's love manifested through us if we ignore the needs of our brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ. The Bible repeatedly addresses the importance of giving to the poor, to widows, orphans, and the nation of Israel.

*-We know it is more blessed to give than to receive.* This Kingdom principle is totally opposite of the world's advice which is to get all you can, get it any way you can, and then hoard it.

*-We want to lay up heavenly treasure.* We want to be among those who receive the awesome blessings which God has promised for those who invest in heavenly rather than earthly treasures (Luke 12:33-34).

*-We want our needs supplied.* Some people spend years clinging to their money in a vain attempt to meet their own needs, only to see God provide miraculously as soon as they start to give. Sadly, many never learn to give and remain in need their entire lives. God promises to supply all of your needs out of His infinite riches when you are obedient to His commands to give.

**The Bible mandates how we should give.** We are to:

*-Give generously.* "Generosity" means "giving widely". Do not measure your generosity by what you give. Measure it by what you retain (Proverbs 11:25; 22:9).

*-Give creatively.* Giving in Bible times included tithes, sacrifices, free-will offerings, gleanings, hospitality, funds for widows, collections for famine relief, expensive jars of oil, and even a burial tomb.

*-Give willingly.* God asks that people give willingly (Exodus 25:2; 2 Corinthians 8:12; 1 Chronicles 29:9).

*-Give cheerfully.* God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

*-Give proportionately.* Every believer should give as he is able, in proportion to his income and how God has blessed him (Deuteronomy 16:17).

*-Give with simplicity and without seeking recognition.* Don't give with fanfare or seeking recognition (Romans 12:8; Matthew 6:1-4).

*-Give sacrificially.* Sacrificial giving is measured by what you retain rather than by what you give (Mark 12:43-44).

*-Give with a pure motive.* Ask yourself: Why am I giving? If you are giving because you were pressured to do so or because you want to look good before others, your motive is wrong. Your giving should be from a heart filled with love (1 Corinthians 13:3; 1 Samuel 15:22).

*-Give expecting God to meet your need.* This is not a wrong motive. You are simply claiming God's promises and taking Him at His Word (Proverbs 3:9-10; Philippians 4:19).

*-Give your best.* In Old Testament times, God's people were instructed to bring their best and were forbidden to offer sick and injured animals or polluted offerings (Malachi 1:6-14). You also should give your best. The woman who offered her alabaster box of expensive ointment gave the very best she had, as did the widow woman who gave all that she had (Mark 26:7-10 and Mark 12:42-44). If it doesn't cost you something, it isn't your best gift. David said, "*I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God of that which costs me nothing*" (2 Samuel 24:24).

**The Bible indicates to whom we should give.** Here are some scriptural directives to guide your giving.

*-Give to the local church.* The first priority in giving should be to allocate a tenth of your income to your local church. Your tithes should be used to support the modern equivalents of priests and Levites--people who are involved in some form of ministry like pastors, missionaries, teachers, prophets, evangelists, church secretaries, musicians, youth workers, counselors, and caretakers of God's house. Your gifts should also be used for rent, utilities, maintenance, etc., of the local church.

*-Give to the poor.* In addition to financial gifts to the poor, your giving might include assisting orphanages, taking clothes and food to the homeless, giving your time to organize care facilities for poor children, establishing job centres for the unemployed, or delivering meals to the elderly. A portion of your tithes and offerings should go into a specific fund so that the church can help their local poor. (For examples, see Deuteronomy 15:10; Proverbs 19:17; 28:27; 22:9; and Psalm 41:1).

*-Give to ministries that mentor you.* You should support the ministries which bless you and help you grow in the Lord. In the New Testament, the Macedonian believers were committed, long-term financial partners of the Apostle Paul. They had been brought to faith in Christ by Paul and were blessed and mentored spiritually by him, so in return they helped support his ministry.

*-Give your spiritual gifts, talents, and time to worthy causes.* These should be offered to the Lord as well as your finances. Consider volunteering in your church or for a Christian organization.

*-Give to Israel.* Paul made it clear that we owe a spiritual debt to the Jews. Almost all of the Bible was written by Jews. Jewish believers first brought the Gospel to the Gentiles and they were the first to spread the Good News across the world. God prospers those who love Israel, and giving is one way to demonstrate your love (Psalm 122:6).

*-Give hospitality to other believers.* As our communities disintegrate, families break up, and the number of elderly people multiplies, hospitality among believers becomes ever more urgent. Our towns are increasingly filled with lonely people who would value a meal in another person's home. Many believers live alone and have empty rooms that could be used help others. For example, in America, many believers opened their homes for temporary shelter to the homeless after a terrible hurricane called Katrina ravaged a portion of the nation. Perhaps you could host a missionary who is home on furlough or provide temporary housing for someone who has been displaced from their own residence due to a disaster.

**-You can expect to receive when you give.** When you give consistently and scripturally, then you can expect to receive:

*-Provision for your earthly needs.* Both the Old and New Testaments contain clear promises that God will bless us in tangible ways when we give of our resources. In Deuteronomy 14:29 and 24:19 and Malachi 3:10, God promises overflowing blessing upon those who give biblically. When we give freely to the poor, we can expect God to bless us (Proverbs 19:17). The Prophet Isaiah explains the amazing blessings you will receive when you give God's way (Isaiah 58:7-11).. You will receive in the same measure that you give (Luke 6:38).

*-Supernatural growth and miracles.* The staggering growth in the early church was clearly related to their generosity. Miracles of salvation, healing, and deliverance cannot be separated from the sacrificial lifestyle of believers in the early church. When our churches give God's way, we will see miracles and dynamic growth such as the early church experienced.

*-Heavenly treasure.* You convert your earthly wealth into heavenly treasure by giving God's way (Matthew 10:42) .

## **DEALING WITH FINANCES:**

**If you have not been tithing, ask God to forgive you.** The prophet admonished the people to consider their ways, repent, and renew their covenant of tithing with the Lord (Haggai 1:5-11).

**Set aside 10% of all you** earn to give to the work of the Lord. Do this first before you pay any bills or spend money on anything else. In some cultures, as in Old Testament times, people may tithe off of the produce of their land when there is no monetary exchange for goods operative. Set aside funds above the 10% to give as offerings to special works like missions, the poor, etc.

**Get your eyes off of your lack.** Take your eyes off of your difficult circumstances and, by faith, look to God for His divine provision Your faith must be fixed to the infallible, impregnable Word of God and His unlimited resources.

**Believe that God wants to prosper you.** If you are going to effectively war against the enemy's attack on your finances, you must believe that God wants to prosper you (Deuteronomy 28:2,11-12; Malachi 3:10). He has promised to provide all of your needs--not every selfish want or desires that would not be good for you, but all legitimate needs through Jesus Christ (Philippians 4:19).

**Face your financial problems armed with the Word of God.** To effectively war against the devil's attack on your finances, you must face your problems head-on with a solid scriptural foundation concerning God's will for your finances. Learn what the Bible says about finances, and live by these mandates. Eliminate any scriptural violations regarding finances.

**Identify the real enemy.** The enemy of your finances is not your boss or the government. Get your eyes off your employer. Get your eyes off the economy. Your employer, the economy, or anyone or anything else in the natural world are not your enemies. Satan is the one who comes to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). You are not fighting against flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:12) so you must battle with spiritual weapons (2 Corinthians 10:4-5, Ephesians 6:13-18).

**Take control of your mind.** Take captive the thoughts that you will go under financially and that you are going to lose your house or your job. Reject these ideas in the name of Jesus! Cast down such "vain imaginations".

**Make a budget.** Ask God for wisdom to make and live within a realistic budget (James 1:5). Here are the steps to take.

*-Create a list of monthly expenses.* This might include a mortgage payment or rent, car payments, gasoline, telephone, trash service, insurances, auto repairs, public transportation, groceries, eating out, tuition, utilities, entertainment, laundry and dry cleaning, clothes, house and medical insurance, property and income taxes, baby-sitting, subscriptions or dues, alimony or child support, medical and dental, home repairs, money spent on pets, haircuts, etc. Use your check book, credit card statements, and receipts to make this list.

*-Divide this list of expenses into two categories.* The first category lists fixed expenses which are the same each month. For example, your rent and car payment are fixed. The second category is variable expenses that change from month-to-month. Examples are gasoline, groceries, utilities, etc.

*-Total your expenses.* Total your fixed expenses. Total your variable expenses. Then add them together for a grand total.

*-Total your monthly income.* List every source of income, how much you receive from each source, and then total it.

*-Compare your expenses and income.* You will have one of two results:

-If your results show more income than expenses you are off to a good start. This means you can designate extra money to reduce debt or put into savings for emergencies and future needs.

-If you have more expenses than income, then you must make some life-style changes.

*-Make adjustments to your expenses.* Examine your expenses and list areas where you can cut costs. Usually you can't cut fixed expenses like a mortgage, etc., so look closely at variable expenses to see where you can reduce expenditures. What can you live without? For example, could you give up your cell phones for a cheaper home phone? What can you cut out completely? Could you eliminate entertainment costs and eating out for a while? What expenses could you lower? For example, perhaps you could use less gasoline by combining errands or walking when possible. By lowering each variable expense, you will come closer to your goal of balancing income and expenditures.

*-Set a realistic monthly budget.* The budget should focus on your actual needs instead of extras you desire.

*-Review your budget each month.* This review will show you where you did well and where you need to improve.

*Note:* If you have large credit card balances, here is a strategy to help you retire those debts. Transfer your credit card balances to the card with the lowest interest rates. As an incentive for the credit card company to allow this, tell them they can make an automatic deduction from your bank account each month to assure they will be paid. Once you have moved your credit card debt to the card with the lowest interest rate, do not pay only the lowest monthly payment required. Keep your monthly payments as large as they were before you transferred everything to the one card. This way you will have a higher payment on the principal and be able to pay off your debt in a shorter time.

## **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT FINANCES:**

### **Tithes and offerings.**

A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. If a man redeems any of his tithe, he must add a fifth of the value to it. (Leviticus 27:30-31)

Honour the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. (Proverbs 3:9-10)

Consider your ways (and set your mind on what has come to you). Now therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways (and set your mind on what has come to you). You have sown much, but you have reaped little; you eat, but you do not have enough; you drink, but you do not have your fill, you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages has earned them to put them in a bag with holes in it...You looked for much (harvest), and it came to little; and even when you brought that home, I blew it away. Why? says the Lord of hosts. Because of My house which lies waste, while you yourselves run each man to his own house (eager to build and adorn it). Therefore the heavens above you (for your sake) withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its produce. And I have called for a drought upon the land and the hill country, upon the grain, the fresh fruit juice, the oil, upon what the ground brings forth, upon men and cattle, and upon all the (wearisome) toil of men's hands. (Haggai 1:5-6, 9-11, AMP)

"The silver is mine and the gold is mine," declares the Lord Almighty. (Haggai 2:8)

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me." But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." (Malachi 3:8-10)

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33)

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. (Luke 6:38)

...The Lord Jesus himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income...(1 Corinthians 16:2)

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

## **Financial principles in the Psalms.**

The book of Psalms opens with a promise that whatever you do will prosper: "*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper*" (Psalm 1:1-3, KJV). Here are the steps to prospering in all you do:

- Refuse to walk in the counsel of the ungodly.
- Stop hanging out with sinners.
- Stop scorning God's promises.
- Delight in the Word of God.
- Meditate on God's Word day and night...

...and you will prosper in all you do!

Here are some other key principles from the book of Psalms:

- God cares for the poor, as should we: 22:26; 9:18; 12:5; 14:6; 35:10; 40:17; 41:1; 68:10; 69:33; 72:4,12-13;19; 107:41; 109:31; 112:9; 113:7; 132:15; 140:12.
- God promises blessings when you give to the poor: 11:1-3.
- God delivers the poor and needy: 72:12-14; 132:15.
- If you regard iniquity in your heart, God won't hear you--which means He won't hear your prayers for financial blessing: 66:18.
- Do not charge a Christian brother interest or accept bribes: 15:5.
- Do not trust in wealth: 49:6-7, 10-12, 16-17; 52:7.
- Wealth and riches will be found in the house of one who serves the Lord: 112:3.
- It is better to have little than to have much and dwell with the wicked: 37:16.
- Do not borrow and fail to repay: 37:21.
- The righteous will never be forsaken and his children will never beg: 37:25.
- God provides for the righteous because of their generosity: 37:25-26.
- God provides lavishly for His people: 105:37-45.
- God bless those who give generously: 112:5.

## **Financial principles in Proverbs.**

- Warnings against ill-gotten gains: 1:13-15; 10:2; 11:16, 18; 12:11 13:11; 21:5-6; 23:4; 28:8,16, 19-20; 28:24.
- Wisdom is more important than wealth: 2:14-16; 8:11,18; 16:16; 4:15.
- Admonitions to give tithes and offerings: 3:9-10.
- Admonitions to be generous and rewards for generosity: 3:27-2; 11:24-25; 22:9.
- The danger of co-signing for the debts of others: 6:1-11; 11:15; 22:26-27.
- Avoid bribery: 6:35.

- The importance of saving: 6:6-8.
- Acknowledge God's divine provision: 10:3; 11:4.
- Warnings against laziness and admonitions to be diligent: 10:4-5; 13:4; 18:9; 20:4,13; 21:5; 21:20, 25-26; 21:17; 23:21; 24:30-34; 28:3.
- Warnings against trusting in riches: 11:28; 18:11; 20:21; 23:4-5; 27:24.
- Warning against hoarding: 11:26.
- The wealth of the wicked is stored up for the righteous: 13:22.
- Admonitions to care for the poor: 14:21, 31; 17:5; 18:23; 22:22-23; 19:17; 21:13; 22:9,16,22-23; 28:27.
- Warnings against greed: 15:27; 28:25; 28:4.
- Honesty in business is required: 11:1; 16:11; 20:23.
- Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth: 22:4.
- Avoid borrowing: 22:7.
- Don't be stingy: 21:26; 23:6-7; 28:22.
- There is value in being neither rich or poor: 30:8-9.
- Wealth obtained by fraud disappears: 13:11.
- Don't oppress the poor: 22:16.
- Reasons for poverty: 11:24; 13:18; 20:13; 23:21; 24:34; 28:19; 28:22.

**Financial principles in Ecclesiastes.** Despite the fact that Solomon--the author of Ecclesiastes--had great riches, he found them to be meaningless (Ecclesiastes 2:8-15). Read chapter 2 for his exhortation on the meaninglessness of riches apart from God. He acknowledges God as the source of wealth and of any joy that one might gain through riches (Ecclesiastes 5:19). In chapter 5 verses 4-5, Solomon emphasizes the importance of keeping vows made to God--which, of course, includes financial vows. He observes that one who loves money never has enough of it. He also presents the concept that the wicked store up wealth for the righteous (Ecclesiastes 2:26) and that if you give to others, in due time you will receive (Ecclesiastes 11:1).

**Financial principles in the prophetic books.**

- Isaiah:* Providing for the poor is important to God, so you are blessed when you give to the poor: 1:23;10:1-2; 41:17-20; 58:7.
- Jeremiah:* Do not glory in riches: 9:23.  
Pay fair wages: 22:13.  
A promise of restoration: 33:10-11.  
Do not oppress the poor: 18:17.
- Ezekiel:* Divine restoration is promised: 11:17.
- Hosea:* If you sow to the wind, you will reap the whirlwind: 6:6.  
God does not bless dishonesty: 12:7.
- Joel:* Divine restoration is promised: 2:25-27.
- Amos:* Divine restoration is promised: 9:11.  
A tremendous end-time harvest will occur: 9:13.

<i>Jonah:</i>	Divine provision was evident--even for God's errant prophet: 1:17; 3:6-7.
<i>Micah:</i>	Do not defraud others: 2:1-2. Ill-gotten gains will not last: 4:13b.
<i>Habakkuk:</i>	Stealing and extortion is forbidden: 2:6-7.
<i>Haggai:</i>	Priority should be given to the work of the Lord: 1:5-11. God blesses you financially from the moment you begin to obey His Word: 1:18-19.
<i>Malachi:</i>	Do not offer blemished sacrifices: 1:9,11. Pay workers a fair wage: 3:5. Do not rob God by refusing to pay tithes: 3:7-12.

### **Some extravagant givers in the New Testament.**

*-The wise men.* They gave valuable gifts to Christ (Matthew 2:9-12).

*-Anointing women.* Each of the gospels reports a story of a woman who worshiped Jesus by anointing Him with expensive fragrances. Read these accounts in Luke 7:36-50; Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; and John 12:1-11. What extravagant gift can you give to God? For sure, you can offer sacrifices of praise and worship. Don't let your giving become routine. Give as an act of worship.

*-Generous women.* These women offered hospitality to Jesus and His disciples during His earthly ministry: Luke 8:1-3 and 19:38-42 and John 11:1-45 and 12:1-12.

*-Joseph and Nicodemus.* Matthew 27:57 introduces a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who was Jesus' disciple." Mark 15:42-47 and Luke 23:50-54 describe Joseph's visit to Pilate, his request for Christ's body, and the gift of his own tomb for His burial. John 19:38-40 indicates that Joseph was helped by Nicodemus, who gave 100 pounds of myrrh and aloes for embalming the Lord's body.

*-Zacchaeus.* Read his story in Luke 19. Financial restoration to those he had cheated was the first response of this dishonest tax collector after he came to Jesus. Is there restoration you need to make to others in order to be blessed financially?

*-A small boy with a small lunch.* The boy in John 6 gave what he had and a multitude was fed. What do you have that you can give to God to be supernaturally multiplied?

*-The poor widow.* This lady is one of the greatest biblical givers. We do not know her name, but her story is recorded in Mark 12:41-44 and Luke 21:1-4. She gave all she had!

*-Luke's commendations to extravagant givers.* John the Baptist (Luke 3:10-11); the Capernaum centurion (Luke 7:5-6); Joanna and Susanna (Luke 8:1-3); the good Samaritan (10:25-37); Zacchaeus (Luke 19:8-10); the widow (Luke 21:1-4); and Joseph (Luke 23:50-54) How would Luke view your generosity?

### **Financial Principles In The Book Of Acts.**

In Acts chapter 2, new believers in the first church manifested immediate changes in their financial practices and made giving central to their lives (Acts 2:42-45). Acts 4:32-37 describes the believers' generosity. In Acts 9:36-39, Luke describes Dorcas as a giving person. Cornelius was introduced in Acts 10:1-2 as one who... "*gave much alms to the people*" and in Acts 16:15 a woman named Lydia gave hospitality to Paul and Silas.

Acts 5:1-11 tells the story of a man and his wife who gave deceitfully and suffered severe judgment for doing so. Acts 8:18-24 records the story of a man who thought he could buy the gifts of God with money and learned it cannot be done.

Acts 11:27-30 records an important development in giving. Barnabas and Saul were teaching Gentile believers in Syrian Antioch when some prophets visited them and told of a famine that was to come.

Acts 20:35 emphasizes the teaching of Jesus that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

### **Financial principles in the Epistles.**

#### *Romans.*

- One who works is worthy of his wages: 4:4.
- God, who gave His Son, will graciously give you all things: 8:32.
- The greatest gift you can give to God is to present your body a living sacrifice: 12:1-2.
- When you give, do it liberally: 12:8.
- Owe nothing to anyone: 13:8.
- The early church cared for the poor, as you should also: 15:25-27.

#### *1 Corinthians.*

- You already have all you need and are rich in Christ: 4:8.
- You should work hard with your own hands: 4:12.
- Those who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel--a minister can be supported by the church: 9:14.
- You should offer the gospel free of charge: 9:18.
- Each believer should give tithes and offerings in keeping with their income: 16:1-2.

### *2 Corinthians.*

- The command not to be yoked together with unbelievers applies to business associates as well as other relationships: 6:14.
- Generosity is encouraged: 8:1-12.
- Jesus became poor that you might become rich: 8:9.
- You should give willingly: 8:12.
- Believers should help one another when in need: 8:13-15.
- If you sow sparingly, you will reap sparingly: 9:6.
- Believers should purpose in their hearts what to give and give cheerfully, rather than grudgingly or out of necessity because they have to do so: 9:7.
- God wants you to abound in all things at all times so that you can accomplish good works: 9:8-9.
- God supplies your need so that you can sow more seed and reap a harvest so you can sow again: 9:10.
- God wants you to be made rich in every way so you can be generous and through your generosity God will be glorified: 9:11-13.

### *Galatians.*

- Paul remembered the poor, as should we: 2:10.
- You reap what you sow: 6:6-9.
- You should not grow weary in sowing: 6:9-10.

### *Ephesians.*

- As a believer, you are blessed with spiritual blessings: 1:3.
- You have unsearchable riches in Christ: 3:8.
- He is able to do immeasurably more than all you ask or think according to the power within you: 3:20.

### *Philippians.*

- Worldly profit is viewed as loss to a believer: 3:7-11.
- The Philippians gave to Paul, who mentored them in the faith. You should give to those who mentor you in the faith as well: 4:14-17.
- Believers may experience times of need as well as plenty, but God ultimately supplies your needs: 4:11-12.
- The secret in any circumstance is to be content with what you have: 4:12.
- Your offerings are a sweet-smelling scent before God: 4:18.

### *Colossians.*

- You have immense riches through Jesus Christ: 2:2-3.
- Avoid greed, which is actually idolatry: 3:5.

-Whatever you do, you should do it as if you are working for the Lord instead of men, for it is from Him you will receive your reward: 23-24.

### *1 Thessalonians.*

-Paul worked with his own hands in order not to be a burden to anyone while he preached the Gospel. There may be times that it is necessary for you to do this also: 1:9; 4:11.

### *2 Thessalonians.*

-Paul worked with his own hands while sharing the gospel, so as not to be a burden on the people to whom he was ministering: 3:8-9.

-If a person does not work, he should not eat: 3:10.

-You must earn the bread which you eat: 3:12.

### *1 Timothy.*

-You should not be a lover of money: 3:3.

-You should not pursue dishonest gain: 3:8.

-If a person does not provide for his family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever: 5:8.

-Believers should help widows in their family: 5:16.

-The church should help widows in need who do not have family to help them: 5:16.

-Workers are worthy of their wages: 5:17-18.

-Godliness with contentment is great gain: 6:6.

-You brought nothing into the world and can take nothing out of it: 6:7.

-You should be content with having your basic needs met--food and clothing: 6:8.

-People who pursue riches often fall into traps: 6:9.

-The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil: 6:10.

-The love of money has caused some to wander from the faith and experience much grief: 6:6-10.

-Those who are rich should not trust in their riches, but they should invest in eternity: 6:17.

-Those who are rich should be generous and willing to share: 6:18.

-You lay up treasures in heaven when you give to others: 6:19.

### *2 Timothy.*

-In the last days, people will love money more than they love God: 3:2.

-Have nothing to do with those who love money: 3:5.

### *Philemon.*

-God uses us to meet the needs of others: 1:18.

### *Hebrews.*

-Tithing was instituted when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek: 7:1-10.

- If your heart is not set on riches, the "spoiling of your goods" will not affect your faith in God: 10:34-35.
- Men and women of faith from biblical history are listed in Hebrews 11. They all are givers, having given up something, performed dangerous tasks for the Lord at personal risk, and/or laid down their lives as martyrs. The greatest gift you can give is to offer your life to Jesus Christ to fulfill His purposes: Hebrews 11.
- You should continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God. It is not a sacrifice when everything is going well. It is a sacrifice when you are struggling with difficult circumstances: 13:15.
- God equips you with divine provision so that He can work in you and through you: 13:21.

#### *James.*

- God generously gives wisdom to govern every aspect of our lives--including finances: 1:5-7.
- You cannot be double-minded and expect to receive anything from God: 1:7.
- You should not show partiality to the rich: 2:1-9.
- Giving necessities is a good work of faith: 2:15-16.
- If you ask and do not receive, perhaps it is because you have a wrong motive: 4:2-3.
- You should guard against divisions that arise out of covetousness and materialistic desires: 4:1-3.
- The rich should not hoard, withhold fair wages, live in luxury, or be unjust: 5:1-6.

#### *1 John.*

- The Father's lavish love for us is one of His greatest gifts: 3:1.

#### *3 John.*

- John's prayer for believers was that they would prosper and be in good health even as their soul prospered. God wants you to prosper in every area of your life--body, soul, and spirit: 3:2.

#### *Jude.*

- The gift of divine preservation will keep you from falling and present you faultless in the presence of the Lord: 1:24.

#### **Financial principles in the book of Revelation.**

- The church at Laodicea is chided by God for trusting in their riches. They did not recognize their spiritual poverty. True riches come from God: 3:17-18.
- "Hurt not the oil and the wine." The oil is a type of the Holy Spirit and the wine is a type of Christ's blood. The command here is to not touch God's people with the end-time economic chaos that is caused by the rider on the black horse: 6:6.
- God will create all things new--a new heaven and a new earth--and give this lavish gift and eternal life to His people: Chapter 21.

**Summary of Biblical financial principles.** To get the full benefit of this summary, look up each reference in your Bible and read the entire passage. This will enable you to study each teaching within the context it was given.

*Asking:*

- Ask, and you shall receive: Luke 11:9-10.
- Your Heavenly Father always responds to your appeals: Matthew 7:7-12; Luke 11:5-18.

*Covetousness:*

- Covetousness is sin: Mark 7:21.
- You should beware of covetousness: Luke 12:15.
- Be content with your wages: Luke 3:14.

*Fairness:*

- The Father is fair in bestowing rewards to His servants: Matthew 20:1-13.
- Those who experience true change in their lives will set their finances in order. Zacchaeus, the tax collector, is an example: Luke 19:1-9.

*Financial planning:*

- Plan wisely before you begin a project so you know that you have sufficient funds to finish it: Luke 14:28-30.
- God expects you to be a good financial manager. See the parable of the good manager: Luke 16:1-12.

*Forgiving debt:*

- You should be merciful and forgive others their debts, even as you have been forgiven. The parable of the unmerciful servant: Matthew 18:21-35.

*Giving:*

- Do not give to be seen by others: Matthew 6:1-4.
- Store up treasures in heaven rather than on earth: Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 12:32-34.
- When you give what you have, God multiplies it: Matthew 14:13-21; 15:29-38; Mark 6:30-44; 8:1-21; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:1-13.
- Whatever you give up to follow God, you will receive it multiplied back to you in this life and in eternity: Matthew 19:27-29; Mark 10:29-30; Luke 18:28-30.
- Jesus takes note of your giving. The widow who gave all: Mark 12:41-43; Luke 21:1-4. The extravagant gift from Mary: John 12:3-8.
- Give to those who ask of you: Matthew 5:42; Luke 6:30.
- You are to help those who are suffering, even as the good Samaritan did: Luke 10:25-37.
- The smallest act of giving does not go unnoticed: Matthew 10:42.
- Give and it will be given to you in abundance: Luke 6:38.

- When you give to those in need, you are giving to the Lord: Matthew 25:35-45.
- Giving does not absolve you of keeping the other laws of God: Matthew 23:23; Luke 18:10-14.
- You should give alms (offerings to the poor) based upon what you have: Luke 11:41.
- Give to the poor: Luke 14:12-14.

*Hindrances to giving and receiving:*

- If you have anything in your heart between you and a brother or sister, make it right before presenting your gifts to God: Matthew 5:23-24.

*Possessions:*

- Your life doesn't consist in the abundance of things you possess: Luke 12:15,23.
- Own your possessions, don't let your possessions own you: Mark 10:17-27.

*Priorities in regards to money:*

- Following the Lord, not money, must be your priority. The rich young ruler: Matthew 19:16-22; Luke 18:18-27.
- God's house should be a house of prayer, not merchandizing: Mark 11:15-17; John 2:13-16.
- Your eternal destiny is more important than amassed riches. The rich fool: Luke 12:13-21 and the rich man and Lazarus: Luke 16:19-31.
- Seek first God's kingdom, and all other things will be added to you: Luke 12:31.

*Riches--their danger:*

- It is difficult for rich people to be saved when they trust in their wealth: Matthew 19:23-26; Mark 10:23-27.
- You should guard against the deceitfulness of riches: Mark 4:19.

*Stewardship:*

- If you are not a good steward, what you have will be given to others: Matthew 21:33-41; Mark 12:1-9; Luke 19:11-26; 20:9-16.
- God has given you talents, spiritual gifts, and finances for which you will be held responsible when Jesus returns: Matthew 24:45-51; 25:14-30; Mark 13:34-37; Luke 14:42-48; 16:1-12.

*Taxes:*

- You should pay your taxes: Matthew 22:19-21; 17:24-26.
- Give to the government what is required and give to God what is His: Matthew 22:16-23; Luke 20:20-26.

*Theft:*

- Theft is a sin: Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21-23.
- You should not steal: Matthew 19:17-18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20.

*Trust in God's provision:*

- Do not worry about food, clothing, etc, because God will take care of you: Matthew 6:25-34; Luke 12:6-7; 22-31.
- Seek first God's Kingdom, and all else will be provided: Luke 12:31.
- Don't be limited by your own resources but trust in God's provision: Luke 22:35.

*Work:*

- When you do your work God's way, supernatural multiplication occurs: Luke 5:4-11; John 21:1-6.

## FEAR

**DEFINITION:** Fear is a sense of alarm or apprehension of danger. For a believer, fear is an expression of unbelief in God or a lack of understanding of His ways.

### **FACTS ABOUT FEAR:**

**All fear is not bad.** The "fight or flight" response that is common to all people is not negative. "Fight or flight" is a normal response that protects you in the face of perceived danger. For example, if you are threatened by a dangerous beast your "fight or flight" response will kick in so you can either escape or successfully confront the animal. This is a rational response to danger that differs from irrational and tormenting fears.

**Fear was first manifested** when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. When God came seeking them in the cool of the day, Adam replied: "*...I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid...*" (*Genesis 3:10*). One of the first negative emotion resulting from sin was fear.

**Fear is a spirit.** The Bible declares that God has not given us the spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7). If the spirit of fear is not from God, then it is from Satan.

**Fear is a tormenting emotion** According to 1 John 4:18, fear has torment.

**Fear fosters irrational phobias and negative emotions.** Its most severe manifestations causes people to withdraw from society and become agoraphobics--confined in their own home where they think they are safe. The spirit of fear will make you a slave to fear (Romans 8:15-16).

**Medical science has proven that fear results** in stress, high blood pressure, strokes, and heart attacks. The Bible speaks of men's hearts failing because of fear (Luke 21:26) and of people living in bondage all of their lives because of the fear of death (Hebrews 2:15).

**Fear is sin and leads to other sins.** You are either functioning in fear or in faith, and whatever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). There are numerous biblical examples of fear leading to additional sins. Abraham was so afraid of Abimelech that he lied to save his own life, saying Sarah was his sister (Genesis 20:1-13). Isaac feared for his life and committed the same sin (Genesis 26:7). Ten of the twelve spies who investigated the promised land were terrified of the giants and their fear resulted in Israel's disobedience and the death of a whole generation (Numbers 13). Saul tried to murder David because he feared him (1 Samuel 18:12,15,29) and later Saul sinned by offering a burnt offering because he feared the people would scatter (1 Samuel 13:11-12). Acting in fear cost Saul the kingdom. What will fear cost you?

**Fear focuses on the future**--whether it be today, tomorrow, or in the distant future. God designed the universe to run on a 24-hour period of time. That is why the prayer Jesus taught His disciples was to be a daily prayer for needs to be provided, forgiveness, etc. Fear enters in when you violate this principle and begin to worry about the future (Matthew 6:25-34).

## **DEALING WITH FEAR:**

**Ask yourself, "Why am I so fearful?"** Jesus asked His disciples this question (Mark 4:40).

**Deal with fear spiritually.** Because most fear is irrational, it cannot be dealt with through rational means. Fear must be dealt with spiritually. David said: *"I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears"* (Psalm 34:4).

**Repent of fear.** Whatever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). Fear is not faith, so it is sin. When you fear, you are functioning in unbelief--not trusting God to care for you and your concerns,

**Make your fears a matter of prayer.** When David sought the Lord, he was delivered from all of his fears (Psalm 34:4). Philippians 4:6-7 directs us to make every concern a matter of prayer instead of worrying, and we will function in God's peace instead of fear.

**Focus on God instead of the fear.** Isaiah 26:3 promises: *"You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you."* David said he sought the Lord, and He delivered him from all of His fear (Psalm 34:4).

**Do not fear the future.** Claim God's promise instead: *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future"* (Jeremiah 29:11).

**Eliminate things that feed your fear.** These include scare tactics generated by others and media violence viewed through news reports, horror movies, the Internet, or violent video games.

**Overcome fear by God's power, His love, and a sound mind.** These are the keys given in 2 Timothy 1:7: *"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind"*. You overcome fear by:

-*Power.* Jesus delegated to believers power over all the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19). Face your fears in the power of the promises of God.

-*Love*. You eliminate fear by really coming to understand the love of God. His perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:16-18).

-*A sound mind*. Irrational fear is just that: Not rational. It is the result of irrational thinking, so you cannot deal with fear by trying to be rational. You must develop a sound mind that cannot be tormented by fear (Romans 12:1-2). You do this by living by the Spirit rather than by the flesh (Romans 8:5-6). Fear begins in the mind, and it is in the mind where you must conquer it. Fear is a battle that starts with lies instigated by the god of this world and the father of lies, Satan (John 8:44). This is why the scriptures direct you to cast down vain imaginations. "Cast down" means to conquer, pull down, and hold under one's power. The word "imaginations" means logic. Your mind can develop strongholds that result from logical reasoning. A sound mind is one controlled by the Holy Spirit, rather than the logic of your own carnal mind.

**Do not play the "what if" game.** "What if this happens, what if that happens?" The power to face difficult situations is given when it is needed, not when you are worrying over the future (Hebrews 4:15-16).

**Reject the fear of death.** The fear of death is a major issue for many people (Hebrews 2:15). True believers need not fear death, because when you vacate your body you will immediately be in the presence of the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:8). The Apostle Paul said that to die would be gain (Philippians 1:21). Peter refers to death as putting off an earthly tabernacle (2 Peter 1:14). David wrote: *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me"* (Psalm 23:4). When Jesus returns, you will be reunited with your loved ones (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

**Make this declaration daily.** *"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me ..In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me"* (Psalm 56:3-4,11).

**Be of good courage.** Courage is not the absence of fear, rather it is acting and persevering in spite of fear. God repeatedly told His people to be of good courage (Deuteronomy 31:6-7,23; Joshua 1:6,9,18; Joshua 10:25; 1 Chronicles 28:20). The psalmist said if you wait on the Lord and are of good courage you will receive the strength you need to face the difficulties of life (Psalm 27:14; 32:24).

**Praise the Lord in the face of fear.** David did so and God delivered him from all of his fears (Psalm 34:1-4).

## **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT FEAR:**

The Bible is filled with references about fear--so many that we cannot include them all. Use a concordance to study the subject of "fear" in the Bible. Here are some key selected references.

Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today." (Exodus 14:13)

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

"Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." (2 Kings 6:16)

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)

The Lord is my light and my salvation--whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life --of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)

I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. (Psalm 34:1-4)

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. (Psalm 46:2-3)

When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me? When I am afraid, I will trust in you. (Psalm 56:3-4)  
You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. (Psalm 91:5-7)

The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? (Psalm 118:6)

The Lord watches over all who love him. (Psalm 145:20)  
...but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.

(Proverbs 1:33)

The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

(Proverbs 28:1)

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe. (Proverbs 29:25)

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. (Isaiah 12:2)

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.

(Isaiah 26:3)

Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear, your God will come." (Isaiah 35:3-4)

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

But now, this is what the Lord says--he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze." (Isaiah 43:1-2)

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:31-34)

You of little faith, why are you so afraid? (Matthew 8:26)

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of

your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.  
(Matthew 10:28-31)

Don't be afraid; just believe. (Mark 5:36)

I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. (Luke 10:19)

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32)

Peace I leave with you; My [own] peace I now give and bequeath to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. [Stop allowing yourselves to be agitated and disturbed; and do not permit yourselves to be fearful and intimidated and cowardly and unsettled.] (John 14:27, AMP)

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. (Romans 8:15-16)

... everything that does not come from faith is sin. (Romans 14:23)

Stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel, without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. (Philippians 1:27-28)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.  
(2 Timothy 1:7)

Since the children have flesh and blood, he (Jesus) too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. (Hebrews 2:14-15).

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16).

The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. (Hebrews 13:6)

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4, NKJV)

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. (1 John 1:18, NKJV)

Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)

## FASTING

**DEFINITION:** Fasting is the willing abstinence from or the reduction of food, drink, or both for a period of time.

### **FACTS ABOUT FASTING:**

**The purpose of fasting.** Fasting does not change God. It changes you. God relates to you on the basis of your relationship to Him. When you change, then the way God deals with you is affected. Read the book of Jonah for an example of how this worked for the city of Ninevah.

**There are two types of fasts.** The total fast is when you do not eat or drink at all. An example of this is found in Acts 9:9. The partial fast is a restricted diet. An example of this is in Daniel 10:3.

**Public and private fasting.** Fasting is a personal matter between an individual and God. It is to be done in private and not boasted about (Matthew 6:16-18). Leaders, however, may also call a public fast and request the whole church to fast (Joel 2:15).

**God's chosen fast.** Isaiah 58 describes God's "chosen" or divinely approved fast. God's chosen fast is one:

- Where you humble yourself before God: Verse 5
- To loose the bonds of wickedness: Verse 6
- Which undoes heavy burdens: Verse 6
- That frees the oppressed: Verse 6
- Done with unselfish motives and manifested charity: Verse 7

**The results of fasting.** When you fast, God begins to reveal Himself to you. The Father says, *"Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here am I'"* (Isaiah 58:9). Other results of fasting revealed in Isaiah 58 are:

- Illumination: Verses 8 and 10 declare that the dark periods of your life will become like noonday. When others think they have extinguished your spiritual light, it will rise again and break forth like the morning.
- Direction: Verse 11 promises that "the Lord will guide you continually."
- Provision: Verse 11 declares God will "satisfy your soul in drought." This can apply to both material and spiritually lean times. Verse 11 also describes unlimited spiritual resources. You will be like a "well watered garden," and "a spring of water whose waters do not fail."
- Rejuvenation: Verse 11 declares God will "strengthen your bones" and verse 8 proclaims that "your healing shall spring forth speedily."

-Restoration: Verse 12 indicates that you and your spiritual seed "shall build the old waste places...raise up the foundations of many generations...And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In."

**Prayer with fasting was practiced in the early Church** and Paul encourages us to "give ourselves" to it (Acts 14:23; 1 Corinthians 7:5).

### **DEALING WITH FASTING:**

**Consider making fasting part of your spiritual discipline.** Perhaps a weekly, monthly, or annual fast--or as the Lord leads you.

**Length of the fast.** How long you fast depends upon what God impresses on your spirit. He may lead you to fast a brief or lengthy time. Remember the story of Esau and Jacob? Jacob was originally making a meal for himself but denied himself in order to obtain the birthright. How much better if Esau had fasted that meal!

**How to begin.** If you have never fasted, start by fasting one meal. Next you might try fasting from sundown one day to sundown the next night, which is the measure of the Old Testament day. Then you might increase your fasting to more lengthy periods of time. You should always drink water on long fasts. You can go without food for long periods, but water is needed to maintain bodily functions.

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT FASTING:**

Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. (2 Chronicles 20:3)

I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread. (Job 23:12)

Study Isaiah 58 which reveals God's Chosen Fast.

So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer. (Ezra 8:23)

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. (Nehemiah 1:4)

So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. (Daniel 9:3)

The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth... When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened. (Jonah 3:5 and 10)

So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. (Joel 1:14)

"Even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity." (Joel 2:12-13)

Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord. (Joel 1:14)

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. (Matthew 4:1-2)

When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:16-18)

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:2-3)

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. (Acts 14:23)

### **Study these Biblical examples of fasting.**

-Abraham's servant fasted while seeking the right bride for Isaac (Genesis 24:33).

-Moses fasted for 40 days and nights while receiving the revelations of the law and the tabernacle (Exodus 34).

-Hannah fasted for a child (2 Samuel 1:7-8).

-Nehemiah fasted for the restoration of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:4).

- The Jews fasted for deliverance following Haman's evil decree of death (Esther 4).
- The entire city of Ninevah fasted in response to Jonah's call for repentance (Jonah 3:5-10).
- David fasted prior to assuming his God-given destiny as King of Israel (1 Samuel 31).
- Daniel fasted for 21 days and received the message from God that was the turning point for the Hebrews in captivity.
- Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast prior to battle (2 Chronicles 20:3).
- Ezra called a fast of repentance for the exiles by the river Ahava (Ezra 8-9).
- Jesus fasted prior to entering His ministry (Matthew 4).
- The Apostle Paul fasted after his conversion (Acts 9).
- It was during a time of fasting that Peter received his commission to share the Gospel with the Gentiles and Cornelius was prepared to receive the revelation (Acts 10).
- The disciples were fasting and praying when the Holy Spirit separated Paul and Barnabas for missionary service (Acts 13:2).

**Reasons for fasting.**

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| -In response to a message from God:   | Jonah 3:5                       |
| -During times of testing:   | Luke 4:1                        |
| -During the threat of national calamity or war:   | 2 Chronicles 20:3               |
| -When revelation was needed from God:   | Daniel 9:3-4                    |
| -When making decisions:   | Acts 13:2-3                     |
| -When making special requests before authorities:   | Esther 4:16                     |
| -To prepare for confrontation with demonic activity:  | Mark 9:29                       |
| -To humble one's self:  | Psalms 35:13; 69:10             |
| -To repent of sin:  | Joel 2:12                       |
| -To feed the poor, both physically and spiritually:   | Isaiah 58:7                     |
| -To be heard of God:  | 2 Samuel 12:16,22; Jonah 3:5,10 |
| -To loose bands of wickedness, lift heavy burdens, set the oppressed free, and break every bondage: | Isaiah 58:6                     |

## FAITH

**DEFINITION:** Faith is belief or trust in someone or something without overt proof. Biblically, faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1). The basic tenets of our faith are based on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **FACTS ABOUT FAITH:**

**Faith is not the same as "mind over matter."** Mind over matter teaches that man can overcome all problems by using his mind, reason, or willpower. These teachings are man-centered. They rely on self and not on God. "Mind over matter" is not based on the Word of God. Faith is God-centered, not man-centered. It is a gift of God, not something you produce through your mental abilities.

**Faith can be misplaced.** Faith is not just "faith in general"--it is directed faith in the one and true God. You can have misdirected faith in natural resources (Psalm 44:6; 20:7); great men (Psalm 146:3); idols (Isaiah 42:17); false prophets (Jeremiah 7:4,8); wealth (Psalm 52:7); friends (Psalm 41:9); and by placing trust in yourself instead of God (Proverbs 28:26).

**You are commanded to have faith in God.** Jesus commanded: *"Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22).*

**It is impossible to please God without faith.** You must not only believe in God, but you must believe that He acts in your behalf: *"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).*

**Atheism is an extreme form of lack of faith.** It is refusing to believe that God exists (Psalm 14:1).

**Saving faith is a gift of God.** God grants everyone a measure of faith in order for them to obtain salvation: *"But what does it say? 'The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,' that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" (Romans 10:8-10).* It is through faith you are saved: *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-10).*

**Faith cannot be increased by works.** You cannot increase your faith by doing things for God. Faith, however, is demonstrated through your works (James 2:14-18).

**Faith increases through the Word of God.** The Bible reveals that everyone is given a certain amount of faith as a gift from God (Romans 12:3b). Your faith can be increased by studying the Word of God because the scriptures were recorded to increase your faith (John 20:31). The Apostle Paul declared: *"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).*

**Faith affects how God works in your life.** There are various levels of faith that can be developed after your conversion to Christ. Jesus spoke of people who did not use their faith as being "faithless" (Matthew 17:17). He spoke of those with little faith (Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; Luke 12:28) and of those with great faith (Matthew 8:10; 15:28; Luke 7:9). Jesus did no great works in Nazareth because of their lack of faith (Matthew 13:58). When a centurion came to Him with a request, Jesus said: *"Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." (Matthew 8:13)* and to a woman seeking healing *"...your faith has healed you" (Matthew 9:22).*

**Faith is an important spiritual virtue.** Faith is a shield against Satanic attacks (Ephesians 6:16). Faith is the victory that helps you resist the enemy (1 Peter 5:9) and overcome the world (1 John 5:4). Faith gives you endurance (James 1:3) and results in blessings in your life (1 Peter 1:5). Faith gives assurance of eternal life (John 5:24) and dispels the darkness of this world (John 12:46). You are sanctified by faith (Galatians 2:20) and receive the promise of the Holy Spirit by faith (Galatians 3:14). Faith is a fruit of the Holy Spirit that is to be manifested in your life (Galatians 5:22-23). Christ dwells in your heart by faith (Ephesians 3:17). Your entire Christian walk is based on faith (Romans 1:17; 2 Corinthians 5:7).

#### **DEALING WITH FAITH:**

**Confess your lack of faith as sin.** *"...for what is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23).* Lack of faith means you do not believe God at His Word. As the father who brought his ailing child to Jesus, cry out by faith, *"Lord I believe. Help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).*

**Immerse yourself in the Word of God.** Faith is increased through hearing, reading, and studying God's Word (Romans 10:17). There are approximately 500 references to faith and belief in the New Testament. Read through the New Testament and study each reference to faith and belief.

**Spend time in prayer.** Prayer is linked with faith in Matthew 17:20 and James 5:15. As you pray regularly and receive answers to your prayers, your faith will increase.

#### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT FAITH:**

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." (Psalm 14:1)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would."  
(Matthew 8:13)

"...your faith has healed you" (Matthew 9:22)

"According to your faith will it be done to you..." (Matthew 9:29)

Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. (Matthews 13:58)

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. (Matthew 17:19-21, NKJV)

If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." (Matthew 21:22)

He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" (Mark 4:40)

He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." (Mark 5:34)

Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe."  
(Mark 5:36)

"Lord I believe. Help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).

"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road. (Mark 10:52)

"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." (Mark 11:22-24)

Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.  
(Mark 15:14, NKJV)

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. (Mark 16:16)

For nothing is impossible with God. (Luke 1:37)

"Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples. (Luke 8:22)

"Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well." (Luke 12:27-31)

If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead. (Luke 16:31)

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" (Luke 17:5)

Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." (Luke 17:19)

Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God. (Luke 18:42-43)

If you are the Christ," they said, "tell us." Jesus answered, If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. (Luke 22:67-68)

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" (Luke 27:5)

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (John 1:12-13)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (John 3:16-18)

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him. (John 3:36)

Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders, Jesus told him, you will never believe. (John 4:48)

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." (John 5:24)

I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. (John 6:47)

The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe. (John 6:63)

For even his own brothers did not believe in him. (John 7:5)

I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins. (John 8:24)

Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. (John 12:37)

I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. (John 12:46)

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:31)

By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see. (Acts 3:16)

I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me. (Acts 26:17-18)

For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." (Romans 1:17)

Read Romans chapters 3-4 for several key references to faith.

Yet he (Abraham) did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:20-21)

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. (Romans 5:1-2)

But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" (Romans 10:8-10).

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)

Read 1 Corinthians chapter 13. Faith is one of the three main virtues of the Christian life.

...for by faith you stand. (2 Corinthians 1:24)

Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified. (Galatians 2:16)

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." (Galatians 3:11)

(Read Galatians chapter 3 for several key references to faith)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. (Ephesians 6:16)

If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. (1 Timothy 4:6)

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1 Timothy 6:11-12)

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. (2 Timothy 4:7)

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. (Hebrews 3:12-13)

Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:23)

Now faith is the assurance, the confirmation, the title deed of the things we hope for, being the proof of things we do not see, and the conviction of their reality. Faith is perceiving as real what is not revealed to the senses. (Hebrews 11:1, AMP)

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

(Study Hebrews 11 in its entirety. It defines faith and gives multiple examples of faith in action.)

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. (James 1:5-8)

Study James chapter 2 for numerous references to faith.

And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. (James 5:15)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-5)

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:6-9)

And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. (1 John 3:23)

...for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. (1 John 5:4)

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. (Jude 3)

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit (Jude 20)

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

## FAILURE

**DEFINITION:** Failure is a lack of success in achieving something. It is falling short of what is required or expected, failing God, others, or one's self.

### **FACTS ABOUT FAILURE:**

**Failure to live up to the mandates of God's Word is sin.** This requires repentance. "Forgive our sins" is part of the model prayer to be prayed daily (Matthew 6:12).

**All failure is not sin.** Sometimes you fall short of goals or expectations you set for yourself or those that are set for you by others. For example, you might fail at meeting your employer's expectations in a certain area or fail an examination at school. This is not sinful. It is simply a setback that, if handled properly, you can learn from and turn into a comeback.

**Failure makes you realize your dependence on God.** The world says "you can do it". Failure eliminates this idol of self-effort and makes you realize you can and be successful through Jesus Christ. Even the great Apostle Paul admitted that the difficulties in Asia were beyond his ability to endure and were permitted so that "...we might not rely on ourselves but on God..." (2 Corinthians 1:8-11).

### **DEALING WITH FAILURE:**

**If you have failed to live up to the mandates in God's Word, repent.** This type of failure requires repentance and forgiveness by God. You will not succeed if you continue to conceal your sins (Proverbs 28:13).

**If you have failed to live up to expectations, forgive yourself.** Many expectations are imposed upon you by others or yourself. Realize that you are an imperfect person living in an imperfect world. Failure to achieve a self-imposed goal or one imposed upon you by others is not sin. Forgive yourself and move on.

**Forget the past.** You can learn from the past, but you cannot live in the past if you want to succeed. As long as you are living in the past, you will never have a future. Like the Apostle Paul, forget the past and keep pressing towards the future (Philippians 3:13-14)

**Confess your dependence on God.** Rely on God for strength to succeed (2 Corinthians 1:8-11). Make Philippians 1:6 your daily confession: "*I can do everything through him who gives me strength*".

**Confess your confidence in God:** You are not destined to fail. If you are a true believer, God will complete what He has started in you. "*...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 1:6).

**Do not quit!** Failure is not permanent. You never truly fail until you quit trying!

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT FAILURE:**

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. (Deuteronomy 31:8)

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Psalms 73:26)

...for though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity. (Proverbs 24:16)

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. (Isaiah 60:1)

But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers. (Luke 22:32)

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us. (2 Corinthians 1:8-11)

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. (2 Corinthians 4:7-9)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

..being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6).

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:8-10)

## GENERATIONAL CURSES

**DEFINITION:** Generational curses are spiritual bondages or predispositions for sinful behaviors that are passed down from one generation to another.

### **FACTS ABOUT GENERATIONAL CURSES:**

**Natural heredity** is a term used to describe how living organisms reproduce after their kind. It concerns the presence or absence of certain characteristics--physical, emotional, and personality traits that are passed biologically from one generation to another.

**Spiritual heredity** refers to spiritual blessings or curses that are passed from one generation to the next. Spiritual heredity--what you received spiritually from your ancestors--can be either positive or negative in your life. You may have had godly parents who gave you a good spiritual heritage, or you may have had unsaved parents who were hostile, angry, and addicted and passed some of these issues on to you.

**Blessing and cursing** are invisible forces of spiritual power which are transmitted by words (Proverbs 18:21). You can speak positive words of blessing over someone, or negative words of curses that cause despair, discouragement, and destruction in a person's life.

**Generational curses are negative spiritual traits passed down from a previous generation.** These are sinful spiritual strongholds that have controlled the attitudes and actions of your ancestors. In the natural world it is possible to have a propensity towards certain physical conditions--cancer, heart disease, diabetes, etc.--due to heredity. The same is true in the spiritual world. For example, if your ancestors were involved in the occult, you may have a predisposition to dabble in it also and you may be affected by it. Chronic sickness can be a generational curse passed down from your ancestors, as well as a tendency to use addictive substances. Children often repeat the sins of their parents.

**You can initiate and pass on curses to following generations.** Through your personal sin, you can erect spiritual strongholds that will be passed on to your children and succeeding generations.

**Generational curses can be broken through the blood of Jesus.** Galatians 3:13 says "*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."* Jesus not only redeemed you from sin when He died at Calvary, but He also redeemed you from every curse.

**You can pass on spiritual blessings.** Just as curses can be passed to succeeding generations, so can blessings. See Deuteronomy 5:8-10 and Psalm 103:17.

## **DEALING WITH GENERATIONAL CURSES:**

**Acknowledge known sin.** Acknowledge your sin and take personal responsibility for any sinful practices in which you are engaged. Confess and repent of these sins (Ezekiel 18:20).

**Identify generational curses.** If you are struggling with issues passed down from your parents--and if your siblings also struggle in these areas--you most likely are living under a generational curse.

**Break every curse in the name of Jesus.** A stronghold is an area in your life where the enemy has established control. It may be a hold he has over your attitudes, behaviors, emotions, or your finances. Claim the power of the blood of Jesus and take authority over Satan in every area of your life. Pray a prayer of deliverance, binding the power of Satan and breaking any curses or generational spirits operating in your life. Here is a sample prayer: *"In the name of Jesus, I confess the sins and iniquities of my ancestors and declare that these strongholds have no hold over my life. In the name of Jesus, and by the power of His blood, I declare that every generational curse is broken over my life. I am no longer in bondage and I declare myself and future generations freed from bondages passed down by our ancestors."*

**Refuse to engage in curse-causing behavior.** Things like rebellion, negative emotions, witchcraft, the occult, addictive substances, and sexual sins all result in spiritual curses in your life. Reject such behaviors so that you do not erect spiritual strongholds and pass curses on to your descendants.

## **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT GENERATIONAL CURSES:**

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation." (Exodus 34:6-7)

The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation. (Numbers 14:18)

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [ generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments. (Deuteronomy 5:8-10)

But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children-- with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts. (Psalm 103:17-18)

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. (Proverbs 18:21)

In those days people will no longer say, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.' Instead, everyone will die for his own sin; whoever eats sour grapes--his own teeth will be set on edge. (Jeremiah 31:29-30)

You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the fathers' sins into the laps of their children after them. O great and powerful God, whose name is the Lord Almighty, great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve. (Jeremiah 32:18-19)

The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. (Ezekiel 18:20)

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:36)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." (Galatians 3:13)

## GUILT

**DEFINITION:** Guilt is a feeling of wrongdoing, sinfulness, and a failure to measure up that arises from your conscience. It is the discernment and ability to evaluate your conduct in terms of what is right or wrong.

### **FACTS ABOUT GUILT:**

**There are two types of guilt.** True guilt and false guilt. For a believer, true guilt results from breaking God's law and is a justified emotion. Sorrow, which arises from real guilt, leads to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10). False guilt--unmerited guilty feelings--occur because of unjustified accusations by Satan who brings up past sins that have already been forgiven by God.

**True guilt results from sins of commission and omission.** Sins of commission are wrong things you do. A sin of omission is when you know the right thing to do but do not do it (James 4:17).

**True guilt is a positive emotion.** Feelings of guilt over doing wrong lead you to repent and confess your sin. Godly sorrow--which is also called guilt--leads to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10).

**False guilt is a tool of the enemy.** Satan will bring up past sins and failures and try to instill false guilt. But the Bible declares that there is no condemnation to those in Christ who have received Jesus as Savior and had their sins forgiven (Romans 8:1).

**Guilt results in negative physical and emotional reactions.** Unrequited guilt affects your emotions, which ultimately causes stress which can lead to stress-related physical and mental conditions. It can cause you to be critical of and constantly blame others and gives rise to feelings of unworthiness and/or shame.

### **DEALING WITH GUILT:**

**Do not try to cover your sin.** Adam tried to deal with guilt by blaming Eve. Eve tried to blame the serpent. You will not prosper by covering your sin (Proverbs 28:13). Confess your sin to God, ask forgiveness, and ask Him to remove the guilt you are feeling.

**Reject false guilt.** When Satan tries to cause guilt over your past sins, remember that these sins have been forgiven and forgotten by God (Psalm 103:12). Since God does not remember them, who are you to do so (Jeremiah 31:34)? Pray that God will give you a conscience that is clear before God and man (Acts 24:16). Immediately reject all attempts of the enemy to plague you with false guilt.

## **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT GUILT:**

Read how the Prophet Nathan confronted King David regarding the sin that resulted in his justified guilt (2 Samuel 11-12:25). Read how David dealt with his guilt in Psalm 51.

Forgive my hidden faults. (Psalm 19:12)

Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways. (Psalm 25:7)

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. (Psalm 32:1)

Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord" - and you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Psalm 32:5)

My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear. (Psalm 38:4)

I am troubled by my sin. (Psalm 38:18)

Save me from all my transgressions. (Psalm 39:8)

When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions. (Psalm 65:3)

If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness. (Psalm 130:3-4)

... as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:12)

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)

Though our sins be like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are as red as crimson, they shall be like wool. (Isaiah 1:18)

I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. (Isaiah 43:25)

I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you. (Isaiah 44:22)

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (Jeremiah 31:34)

It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners. (Mark 2:17)

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: (John 1:12)

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:36)

So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man. (Acts 24:16)  
What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? (Romans 6:1-2)

You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. (Romans 6:18)

I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:18-25)

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1-2)

...Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Romans 10:13)

You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. (2 Corinthians 7:10)

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace. (Ephesians 1:7)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin. (James 4:17)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (1 John 1:8-10)

## GRIEF (Bereavement And Sorrow)

**DEFINITIONS:** Grief is intense emotional suffering caused by personal loss or tragedies of life. Bereavement is sorrow caused by the loss of a loved one.

### **FACTS ABOUT GRIEF:**

**Bereavement is part of life.** The Bible says that it is appointed to man to die (Hebrews 9:27). Even the great prophet Elisha--who did many miracles of healing--finally became sick and died (2 Kings 13:14). Bereavement, tragedies, and other losses are part of life. You will experience them if you live very long in this world. You need not fear death, because Jesus conquered it through His own death and resurrection (Hebrews 2:14-15). As a believer, you have eternal life.

**God never intended grief, bereavement, and sorrow.** These all came into the world because of the original sin of Adam and Eve in the garden (Acts 3). All the losses you experience are due to sin--not necessarily your personal sin--but because of the presence of sin in the world.

**Psychologists have identified stages of grief** over loss to include the initial shock of a grief-causing event; emotional release through weeping; feelings of regret that one should have done more or done something differently; anger because of the loss; and a period of inertia when one doesn't care to go on or think they can do so. Psychologists say that the grieving period varies. It is longer for some, shorter for others.

**But the Bible says that Jesus bore your grief and sorrow.** It may be normal for you to experience the stages of grief, but it is not really necessary. The Bible says Jesus was not only familiar--acquainted with grief--but that He bore your grief and sorrow (Isaiah 53:3-5). Jesus bore your sin so that you no longer have to bear it. If He also bore your grief and sorrow, why are you bearing it? Yes--there is a time to mourn over losses, but extended grief is different than experiencing sorrow from a loss. The Bible says you are blessed if you mourn--not because you remain sad, but because the Holy Spirit comforts you: "*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted*" (Matthew 5:4). Jesus carried both your grief and sorrow so that you do not have to do so. He wants to give you the garment of praise for the spirit of mourning (Isaiah 61:3).

**Unrequited grief and sorrow manifests in different ways.** Unrequited grief can affect you physically, mentally, and spiritually. If you do not cast your grief on Jesus, it may lead to anger, withdrawal, depression, etc.

**Grief and sorrow can obscure your recognition of God's presence.** We are sometimes blinded spiritually by our sorrow and preoccupied by grief and despair. Mary did not recognize

Jesus at the tomb because of her intense grief. Jacob cried out in grief: "*All these things are against me*" (Genesis 42:36), not realizing every sorrow he experienced was leading him to a glorious destiny. God still comes to you in the garden of your sorrows. There are angels in the tomb--the graves of your lost dream, your lost loved one, the sorrow your disappointments. Grief and sorrow over failed ambitions, bad health, fleeting youth, negative circumstances--all of these can obscure your recognition of God's presence.

**Errant spiritual decisions cause grief and sorrow.** The rich young man who refused to put all he had into the hands of Jesus went away "sorrowing" (Mark 10:22). Sometimes the root of unrequited grief and sorrow is spiritual--a refusal to surrender some aspect of our lives, abilities, possessions, family, friends, or losses into the hands of the Lord.

**The loss of a child is particularly devastating.** Although we cannot know why a child died, we know that children are precious to God (Matthew 19:14). We also know that they go immediately into the presence of the Lord and that, as believers, we will be reunited with them again someday. When King David's son died, he declared "*...I shall go to him..*" (2 Samuel 12:23).

#### **DEALING WITH GRIEF:**

**Do not try to find reasons for your losses.** This was the original sin--wanting to know. Eve wanted to become as God and know all things (Genesis 3). The reasons for some things will be revealed, others will not. You must learn that the secret things belong to the Lord (Deuteronomy 29:29).

**Ignore clichés about death, sorrow, and grief.** For example: "God needed another angel in Heaven"--which is not only inaccurate, but not at all comforting to the one who lost a loved one. Or "Maybe God took him because he might have not continued to follow the Lord"--again, not comforting and casts aspersions on a loved one's spiritual experience.

**Release your feelings to God.** If you feel guilty because you did something wrong or could have done something more for a loved one, confess it to God, ask forgiveness. If feelings of guilt try to manifest again, reject them in the name of the Lord. Believe that you did the best possible given your mental, emotional, and spiritual state during difficult times. If you are angry about a loss, confess it to God. Ask God to heal your emotions. Know that the feelings you are experiencing are common in times of loss, but that it is not necessary for you to continue suffering from these because God is able to heal them.

**Call upon the Comforter.** One of the purposes of the Holy Spirit is to comfort in times of grief and sorrow. When you are overwhelmed with grief, call upon the Holy Spirit to come and fulfill His purpose of supernatural comfort (John 14:6). As a believer, the Comforter is resident with

you. He is always available in your times of need. You are not alone. The Lord is near those whose hearts are broken (Psalm 34:18).

**Focus on eternal things.** As a believer, you have the hope of the resurrection and of seeing your lost loved ones again (John 11:25-26). The words in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 are supernaturally charged to bring you comfort. For a believer, death is not final. It is a new beginning. Your soul and spirit will go to be with God until Jesus returns. Focus on God, eternity, and the promises in the Word of God. Place your hope in God (Psalm 43:5).

**Know that all things are working together for your good.** God takes all things--even the bad things, the losses, and sorrows--and weaves them together for good in the fabric of your life (Romans 8:28).

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT GRIEF:**

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever... (Deuteronomy 29:29)

Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)

You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. (Psalm 30:11-12)

Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. (Psalm 31:9)

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. (Psalm 34:18)

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (Psalm 43:5)

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. (Psalm 116:15)

My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word. (Psalm 119:28)

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (Psalm 147:3)

A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit. (Proverbs 15:13)

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. (Proverbs 17:22)

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die ... a time to weep and a time to laugh ... a time to mourn and a time to dance... (Ecclesiastes 3:1-4)

Death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart. (Ecclesiastes 7:2)

Sorrow is better than laughter, For by a sad countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, But the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. (Ecclesiastes 7:3-4, NKJV)

The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces. (Isaiah 25:8)

The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. (Isaiah 51:11)

He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:3-5)

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion--to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. (Isaiah 61:3)

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. (Matthew 5:4)

Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. (Luke 6:21)

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." (John 11:25-26)

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. (John 14:1-3)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. (John 14:16)

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:26-27)

I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. (John 16:20)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. (Romans 14:9)

Then the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." (1 Corinthians 15:54)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. (2 Corinthians 5:1-9)

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. (Philippians 1:21-23)

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will

certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words. (I Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil---and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. (Hebrews 2:14-15)

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:27-28)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.(1 Peter 1:3-4)

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4)

## **GREED**

**DEFINITION:** Greed is an overwhelming desire to have more of something than is actually needed, especially in regards to possessions and wealth.

### **FACTS ABOUT GREED:**

**Money is not evil.** It is the love of money and the greed associated with it that is evil. (1 Timothy 6:10). You are commanded to keep your life free from the love of money (Hebrews 13:5).

**Greed is a trait of the ungodly.** In Romans 1:29-30, the Apostle Paul describes characteristics of ungodly people. Greed is listed as one of the traits.

**Greed enslaves a person.** Jesus said you cannot serve God and money. You must choose one or the other as the master you will serve (Matthew 6:24).

**Greed causes division.** Arguments, contention, and division all arise from evil, selfish, greedy desires (James 4:1-3).

**Greed affects your prayer life.** The Bible says you do not receive if you ask for greedy, selfish motives (James 4:1-3).

**One qualification for church leadership** is that a person should not be greedy (1 Timothy 3:3, 8).

**Greed is a sign that you love the world.** The Bible commands you not to love the world, nor the things that are in the world--including money and possessions (1 John 2:15-16).

### **DEALING WITH GREED:**

**Ask God to forgive your greed.** Repent of your love of money, your desire to have more and more material things, and of coveting the possessions of others.

**Learn to be content with what you have.** Paul told Timothy that godliness with contentment was great gain (1 Timothy 6:4-10). Jesus told the soldiers to be content with their wages (Luke 3:14). Paul said he had learned to be content--confirming that contentment is a learned behaviour (Philippians 4:11). Hebrews 13:5 says to be content with what you have.

**Focus on eternal rather than material things.** The psalmist said that he focused on the Word of God instead of selfish gain (Psalm 119:36).

**Practice giving instead of hoarding.** Make it a habit to give of your resources--both possessions and money--to those who are less fortunate. A good practice is that when you get something new--like a new dress or suit--give one you have away to others. This practice will help you guard against greed and selfish hoarding.

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT GREED:**

In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises. He boasts of the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the Lord. (Psalm 10:2-3)

Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. (Psalm 119:36)

A greedy man brings trouble to his family. (Proverbs 15:27)

He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich--both come to poverty. (Proverbs 22:16)

Death and Destruction are never satisfied, and neither are the eyes of man. (Proverbs 27:20)

A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he who trusts the Lord will prosper. (Proverbs 28:25)

Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind. (Ecclesiastes 4:6)

As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owner except to feast his eyes on them? (Ecclesiastes 5:11)

Naked a man comes from his mother's womb, and as he comes, so he departs. He takes nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hand. (Ecclesiastes 5:15)

All man's efforts are for his mouth, yet his appetite is never satisfied. (Ecclesiastes 6:7)

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. (Matthew 6:24)

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:31-33)

Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely--be content with your pay." (Luke 3:14)

Watch out! Be on guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. (Luke 12:15)

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1:29-30)

Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:11-12)

...he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself. Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (1 Timothy 6:4-10, NKJV)

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4:1-3)

Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in

the last days. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you. (James 5:1-6)

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15-16)

## GOSSIP

**DEFINITION:** Gossip is sharing private information with those who are not part of the circumstances, problem, or solution. It includes idle talk, spreading rumors, or outright slander about someone.

### **FACTS ABOUT GOSSIP:**

**Gossip is not limited to spreading information.** It includes improper involvement in another person's affairs--what the Bible calls busybodies (1 Timothy 5:13). Gossip is spreading rumors and making false accusations about someone, and it causes division and confusion.

**Gossip is sin.** The Bible commands: *"You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:16, NKJV).*

**Associating with a person who gossips is sin.** The Bible says: *"He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; therefore associate not with him who talks too freely" (Proverbs 20:19, AMP)*

**Your tongue is unruly.** It is compared to a fire (James 3:5); a burning fire (Proverbs 16:27); a world of iniquity (James 3:6); a beast that needs taming (James 3:7-8); a fountain of either fresh or bitter water (James 3:11); a tree bearing either good or evil fruit (James 3:12); an unruly evil (James 3:8); deadly poison (James 3:8); a sharp razor (Psalms 52:2); a sharp sword (Psalms 57:4; 59:7); a poisonous serpent (Psalms 140:3); a deep pit (Proverbs 22:14).

### **DEALING WITH GOSSIP:**

**Repent of the sin of gossip.** Whether you have been spreading gossip or listening to it, ask God to forgive you.

**Ask God to set a watch before your mouth.** Pray the prayer of the psalmist: *"Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3).*

**Ask forgiveness of anyone** whose reputation has been harmed by the gossip you have spread.

**In the future, before speaking, ask these questions:**

- Will what I am about to say bring glory to God?
- Is it the truth?

- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?
- Will it edify others?
- Have I talked to the person I am talking about?
- Is what I am saying a fact that needs to be shared or is it based on rumors and does not need to be said?
- Is it absolutely necessary that I share this?

**Separate yourself from those who gossip.** *"Stay away from a foolish man, for you will not find knowledge on his lips" (Proverbs 14:7).* Do not hang out with them and allow them to pour their tidbits of gossip into your spirit. *"A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much" (Proverbs 20:19).* The Bible says to warn a divisive person, then separate from them if they do not listen (Titus 3:10-11).

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT GOSSIP:**

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. (Exodus 20:16)

Do not spread false reports. Do not help a wicked man by being a malicious witness. (Exodus 23:1)

Do not go about spreading slander among your people. (Leviticus 19:16)

Not a word from their mouth can be trusted; their heart is filled with destruction. Their throat is an open grave; with their tongue they speak deceit. (Psalm 5:9)

Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (Proverbs 12:18)  
The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly. (Proverbs 15:2)

A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends. (Proverbs 16:28)

He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. (Proverbs 17:9)

A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered. Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue. (Proverbs 17:27-28)

The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts. (Proverbs 18:8)

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer. (Psalms 19:14, KJV)

He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets; Therefore company not with him that openeth wide his lips. (Proverbs 20:19 NAS)

Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. (Psalms 34:13)

I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. (Psalms 39:1, KJV)

My enemies say of me in malice, "When will he die and his name perish?" Whenever one comes to see me, he speaks falsely, while his heart gathers slander; then he goes out and spreads it abroad. (Psalm 41:5-6)

You love every harmful word, Oh you deceitful tongue! (Psalm 52:4)  
Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret, him will I put to silence. (Psalm 101:5)

Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips. (Psalm 141:3)  
Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. (Proverbs 4:24)

Hear; For I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. (Proverbs 8:6-8, KJV)

...Whoever spreads slander is a fool. (Proverbs 10:18)

With his mouth the godless destroys his neighbor, but through knowledge the righteous escape. (Proverbs 11:9)

A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret. (Proverbs 11:13)

A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends. (Proverbs 16:28)

A wicked man listens to evil lips; a liar pays attention to malicious tongue. (Proverbs 17:4)  
He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. (Proverbs 17:9)

A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much. (Proverbs 20:19)

The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts. (Proverbs 18:8)

The mouth of the wicked gulps down evil. (Proverbs 19:28)

A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much. (Proverbs 20:19)

Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down. (Proverbs 26:20)

Do not let your mouth lead you into sin...(Ecclesiastes 5:6)

Do not pay attention to every word people say. (Ecclesiastes 7:21)

Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaks with deceit. With his mouth each speaks cordially to his neighbor, but in his heart he sets a trap for him. (Jeremiah 9:8)

Men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matthew 12:36-37)

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1:29-30)

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things (Romans 2:1)

The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. (Romans 3:13-14)

For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults. (2 Corinthians 12:20, NKJV)

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. (Ephesians 4:29, KJV)

Let all...evil speaking be put away from you...(Ephesians 4:31, KJV)

But now also put off...filthy communication out of your mouth. (Colossians 3:8, NKJV)

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17)

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. (1 Timothy 5:13)

Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men. (Titus 3:1-2)

Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. (Titus 3:10-11)

Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you--who are you to judge your neighbour? (James 4:11)

...be holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, be holy; for I am holy. (1 Peter 1:15-16)

Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. (1 Peter 3:10)

## GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**DEFINITION:** The word "spiritual" means "characterized or controlled by the Holy Spirit." A "gift" is something freely given from one person to another. A spiritual gift is a supernatural ability given by the Holy Spirit to a believer for the purpose of service in the Body of Christ.

### **FACTS ABOUT GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:**

**There is a difference between the "gift" and "gifts" of the Holy Spirit.** The "gift" was given at Pentecost (Acts 2) when the Holy Spirit was given in answer to the promise of Jesus: *"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter...Even the Spirit of truth..."(John 14:16-17a)*. "Gifts" are supernatural abilities given by the Holy Spirit to enable effective ministry, and are distributed to each believer as the Holy Spirit wills.

**There is a difference between spiritual gifts and natural talents.** A talent is a natural ability inherited at birth or developed through training. A spiritual gift is a supernatural ability given by the Holy Spirit to be used for specific spiritual purposes.

**The purposes of the gifts of the Holy Spirit** are listed in Ephesians 4:12-15. The purposes are to perfect the saints, promote the work of the ministry, and edify Christ and the Church. The goals of these spiritual gifts are that we will become united in the faith, develop our knowledge of Christ, develop in perfection, with Christ as our model, become stable, not be deceived by false doctrines, and mature spiritually in Christ.

**There are many gifts which come from one source.** The source of spiritual gifts is the Holy Spirit who gives and operates these gifts in the lives of believers (1 Corinthians 12:4-7).

**Each believer has at least one spiritual gift.** *"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10)*. See also 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11.

**You are only a steward of your spiritual gifts.** A steward does not own that with which he works. He uses something given to him in behalf of the person who gave it to him. You are a steward of your spiritual gifts to be used for the advancement of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 4:1).

**The key to using spirit gifts is love.** See 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

**A spiritual gift can be abused.** You abuse spiritual gifts by not using the gifts given to you (1 Timothy 4:14, 2 Timothy 1:6); attempting to use gifts not given to you (Acts 8:20-21; 19:15-16); and not using gifts properly (1 Corinthians 14:33,40).

**The main passages identifying spiritual gifts are** Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Ephesians 4:1-16; and 1 Peter 4:7-11.

**Spiritual gifts include the following.**

-Leadership gifts.

*Apostle.* An apostle is one who has a special ability to develop new churches in different places and cultures and to oversee a number of churches as a supervisor. Apostle means "a delegate, one sent with full power and authority to act for another."

*Prophet.* Prophecy is the ability to receive and communicate an immediate message from God to His people through a divinely-anointed utterance. A prophet is one who is in a leadership position in addition to his gift of prophesying.

*Evangelist.* An evangelist has a special ability to share the Gospel with non-believers in a way that men and women respond and become responsible members of the Body of Christ.

*Pastor.* Pastors are leaders who assume long-term responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.

*Teachers* are believers who have the ability to communicate the Word of God effectively in such a way that others learn and apply what is taught. As a leadership gift, they also assume a leadership role in addition to teaching.

-Speaking gifts.

*Prophecy* is speaking by the special inspiration of God to communicate an immediate message to His people.

*Teaching* communicates the Word of God in a way that others can learn and apply what is taught.

*Exhortation* is the ability to draw close to individuals in time of need, counseling them correctly with the Word of God. To "exhort" means to call a person aside, to advise, recommend, admonish, encourage, or comfort.

*Word of knowledge* is the ability to understand things which others cannot comprehend and to share this knowledge with them under the inspiration of the Spirit.

*Word of wisdom* is the ability to receive insight as to how knowledge may be applied to specific needs.

-Serving gifts.

*Discerning of spirits* is the ability to evaluate people, doctrines, and situations as to whether they are of God or of Satan.

*Leadership* is the ability to make plans in accord with God's purpose and to communicate these goals to others. A person with this gift motivates others to accomplish these goals for the glory of God.

*Administration.* A person with the gift of administration has the ability to give direction, organize, and make decisions on behalf of others.

*Faith* is a special ability to believe with supernatural confidence and trust God in difficult circumstances.

*Giving.* A person with the gift of giving has a special ability to give material goods and financial resources to the work of the Lord. The gift of giving also includes giving time, strength, and talents to the work of the Lord. All Christians are to give to the work of the Lord, but the gift of giving is a special ability given to give above and beyond the average believer.

*Helps.* A person with the gift of helps assists others in their work for the Lord.

*Serving* is an ability to assume routine but necessary duties to free others to fulfill their giftedness.

*Mercy* is the ability to show special compassion on those suffering and help them

*Hospitality* is a special ability to provide food, lodging, and care for those in need.

-Sign gifts.

*Miracles.* Through a person with the gift of miracles God performs powerful acts which are beyond the possibility of occurring naturally.

*Healing.* A believer with the gifts of healing has the ability to let God's power flow through him to restore health apart from the use of natural methods. All believers can pray for the sick, but a believer with a healing gift is used specifically and consistently by God in this area of ministry.

*Tongues* is the ability to receive and communicate a message of God to His people through a language unknown to listeners, a message which is subsequently interpreted by someone with the gift of interpretation.

*Interpretation of tongues* is the ability to make known in a language understood by listeners a message from God given through one with the gifts of tongues.

#### **DEALING WITH GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:**

**Become a believer.** You must be a believer in order to receive a spiritual gift. If you do not know Jesus Christ as Savior, confess your sins, repent, and accept Him into your life.

**Receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.** See "Baptisms" in this database for guidelines to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

**Pray for spiritual gifts.** The Apostle Paul said to desire spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31). Ask the Holy Spirit to manifest in your life the gifts necessary for you to minister effectively in the realm of your spiritual calling.

**Have church elders lay hands on you to bestow and confirm your gifts.** They did this for Timothy, a young minister in New Testament times (2 Timothy 1:6).

**Use your spiritual gifts.** God has given you spiritual gifts and expects you to use what you have been given. Read the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30.

#### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:**

I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong--that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. (Romans 1:11-12)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is his good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. (Romans 12:1-8)

Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. (1 Corinthians 1:7-9)

Read 1 Corinthians chapter 12.

Read 1 Corinthians chapter 14.

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Ephesians 4:7-16)

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. (2 Timothy 1:6)

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:7-11)

## HYPOCRISY

**DEFINITION:** Hypocrisy is the claim or pretense of holding standards, beliefs, qualities opinions, virtues, and behaviors that one does not actual possess. In a biblical sense, a hypocrite confesses and claims salvation and spiritual maturity when they are actually void of these qualities. Some versions of the Bible translate "hypocrite" as "godless person." A hypocrite is one who acts a false part, makes a false profession, and is a deceiver, imposter, and cheater.

### **FACTS ABOUT HYPOCRISY:**

**Hypocrisy is instigated by Satan.** The Word describes Satan as a "liar," and that is exactly what hypocrites do: They lie and deceive. 1 Timothy 4:2 speaks of "deceiving spirits", and that is what operates in the lives of hypocrites.

**Hypocrisy is sinful.** Because lies and deceit are condemned by God, they are sinful.

**There are hypocrites in every realm of life.** Just as you would not judge all businessmen by one dishonest businessman, do not judge true believers by what you see in the life of a hypocrite.

**Jesus taught against hypocrisy.** He condemned the Pharisees, who were the religious leaders of the day, for their hypocrisy. See Matthew 6:2-6 and Matthew 23:13-32.

**Hypocrites are legalists.** First Timothy 4:3 states that hypocrites forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods. They demand of others what they, themselves, do not adhere to (Matthew 23:2-3).

**Hypocrites are critical.** Jesus described them as being concerned over a "speck of sawdust" in the eyes of others, while ignoring the "plank" in their own eyes (Matthew 7:3-5).

**Their worship is in vain.** Jesus said that hypocrites honor Him with their speech, but their hearts are far from Him, so their worship is in vain (Matthew 15:7-9).

**Hypocrites look good on the outside.** By outward appearances, you might think they are true believers, but they are not (Luke 11:39-44).

**Hypocrites teach demonic doctrines.** According to 1 Timothy 4:3, deceiving spirits and things taught by demons cause people to abandon the faith.

## **DEALING WITH HYPOCRISY:**

**Ask God to forgive you if you have been living a hypocritical life.** Hypocrisy is sin, and as all sin, must be confessed and forgiven.

**Study the Word of God.** The Word is truth and will help you live in truth rather than by deceitful doctrines that foster hypocrisy.

**Separate yourself from hypocrites.** Do not make hypocrites your close friends because you become like those with whom you associate (Proverbs 22:24).

**Do not sit under the teaching of hypocrites.** If the life-style of your minister, teacher, or spiritual leader does not line up with their confession, do not continue to sit under their teaching. It is deceptive and will cause you to depart from the faith (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

## **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT HYPOCRISY:**

For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he may gain much, if God takes away his life? (Job 27:8, NKJV)

The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor, But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered. (Proverbs 11:9, NKJV)

So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:2-6)

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:3-5)

You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men." (Matthew 15:7-9)

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. (Matthew 23:2-3)

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are. Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.' You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers! You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? (Matthew 23:13-32)

These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men. You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men. (Mark 7:6-8)

Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? But give what is inside [the dish] to the poor, and everything will be clean for you. Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all

other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone. Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which men walk over without knowing it." (Luke 11:39-44)

Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time? (Luke 12:56)

Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely. (Luke 20:46-47)

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. (1 Timothy 4:1-2)

## HOPELESSNESS

**DEFINITION:** Hope is an optimistic attitude of anticipation and confidence based on expectations of positive outcomes in the circumstances of one's life, the future, and the world at large. Hopelessness is the loss of hope.

### **FACTS ABOUT HOPELESSNESS:**

**The Bible is the ultimate source of eternal hope.** *"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15:4).*

**What you think is a faith crisis may be a hope crisis.** Hebrews 11:1 speaks of faith being the substance of hope. If you are hopeless, you have no substance for your faith and it is affected.

**Some causes of hopelessness** include associating with negative people, unanswered prayer, failure to control your thoughts, disappointment in other people, devastating circumstances, world conditions, and weariness from prolonged adversity.

**How hope can be generated.** Hope comes by making peace with God through Jesus, rejoicing in the hope of your eternal destination, and rejoicing despite sufferings: *"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (Romans 5:1-5).*

**Hope is an anchor for your spiritual experience.** Hebrews 6:19 refers to hope as an "anchor of the soul". As an anchor prevents a boat from drifting off course, hope will do likewise for you spiritually. Hope continually pulls you back to the ways of God. Hope is related to your heart condition because "hope deferred makes the heart sick" (Proverbs 13:12). Hope is related to your joy, in that you rejoice in hope (Romans 12:12). Hope is also related to your salvation, as you are saved by hope (Romans 8:24).

## **DEALING WITH HOPELESSNESS:**

**Ask God to renew your hope.** *"Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord" (Psalm 31:24).*

**Put your hope in God instead of man.** Very often, hopelessness results when you have been disappointed by trusting in man instead of God. The Psalmist said: *"Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him" (Psalm 62:5).*

**Spend time in God's Word.** It is the source of eternal hope and your hope will be renewed as you study and practice its mandates. The Word of God was given so that we, through the scriptures, might have hope (Romans 15:4).

**Choose hope-filled associates.** Do not maintain close relationships with people who are negative, despondent, and hopeless. You learn the ways of those with whom you associate (Proverbs 22:24).

**Control your mind.** Negative, uncontrolled thoughts often lead to hopelessness. See the topic of "Mind And Thoughts" in this database.

**Encourage yourself in the Lord** as the psalmist did (1 Samuel 30:6). He said: *"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God" (Psalm 42:5).*

**Realize the purpose of tribulation** is not to create hopelessness, rather it leads to developing hope: *"...we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (Romans 5:3-5).*

**Start a gratitude journal** where you record what God is doing for you and the things for which you are grateful. When you see how God is working in your life and all the things for which you can be thankful, your hope will be strengthened.

## **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT HOPELESSNESS:**

No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame. (Psalm 25:3)

You are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. (Psalm 25:5)

Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord. (Psalm 31:24)

May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you. (Psalm 33:22)

Those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land. (Psalm 37:9)

For you have been my hope, O Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth. (Psalm 39:7)

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (Psalm 42:5)

In your name I will hope, for your name is good. (Psalm 52:9)

Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. (Psalm 62:5)

But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you. (Psalms 71:5)

But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. (Psalm 71:14)

I have put my hope in your word. (Psalm 119:74)

Sustain me according to your promise, and I will live; do not let my hopes be dashed. (Psalm 119:116)

My soul faints with longing for your salvation, but I have put my hope in your word. (Psalm 119:81)

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life. (Proverbs 13:12).

Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him. (Lamentations 3:21-25);

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. (Romans 5:1-5)

But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. (Romans 8:24-25)

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. (Romans 12:12)

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (Romans 15:4)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. (2 Corinthians 3:12)

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. (Ephesians 1:18-19)

Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:12-13)

There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called--one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation--if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. (Colossians 1:21-23)

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-15)

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. (1 Thessalonians 2:16-17)

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. (Titus 2:11-14)

... so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:7)

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. (Hebrews 6:19)

Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses]. (Hebrews 11:1, AMP)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-5)

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1 Peter 1:13)

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. (1 Peter 3:15-16)

Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. (1 John 3:3)

## HOMOSEXUALITY

**DEFINITION:** Homosexuality is sexual attraction and sexual intimacy with the same sex--men with men, women with women. The term "homosexual" is used to denote men who engage in such practices, and the term "lesbian" is used for females. In some cultures homosexuals are also referred to as being "gay". Related terms are "transvestite"--one who wears clothing of the opposite sex for sexual gratification--and "transsexuals", people who claim to be of the opposite sex and sometimes seek surgery and hormone therapy in order to become so.

### **FACTS ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY:**

**Views about homosexuality.** In the past, homosexuality was viewed by most people as being abnormal. In many nations now, the trend is towards acceptance. But the attitudes of people and society are not the important issue. What God says about homosexuality has not changed: *"Forever, O Lord. Your word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89, NKJV).*

**Homosexuality is sin.** Romans 1 explains how homosexuality develops. It is not learned behavior and you are not born that way, neither do you become that way because of your environment. We are all born with the basic sin nature, and homosexuality is one manifestation of sin. As with all sins, forgiveness from God must be sought by one engaging in such activities.

**Homosexuality is classified as fornication in the Bible.** Fornication is sexual intercourse between people who are not married according to the biblical definition of marriage--which is one man with one woman. Any form of sexual activity outside of marriage is considered fornication by the Bible. Homosexuality is just one of several sins that are called fornication.

**Jesus condemned fornication.** In Matthew 19:1-8, Jesus condemned any sinful sexual relationships outside of marriage--which includes homosexuality. The established order was to be one man married to and engaging in sex with one woman for life. Homosexuality is a departure from God's established order for the sexes.

**The book of Jude condemns "strange flesh."** It describes how certain men in the church had gone after "strange flesh", which means "another flesh with the same quality." A so-called "gay

or homosexual church" is not part of the true church because they are not teaching and living by the mandates of God's Word.

**A practicing homosexual who refuses to repent is not a Christian.** If you are a practicing homosexual, you are sinning according to God's Word. As with any sin and other acts of fornication, a true believer can be tempted and drawn into this sin through his lust. But, as with all regressions into evil, you must seek forgiveness and extricate yourself immediately from the sinful lifestyle.

**A person who claims to be bi-sexual--**desiring and having relations with both men and women --is committing fornication according to the Word of God.

**Homosexuality, as all sin, will be judged by God.** The good news is that you can be forgiven and escape this judgment: *"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).*

**You can be set free from homosexuality.** *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17, TLB)*

**You can overcome homosexual temptation.** *"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." (1 Corinthians 10:13).*

#### **DEALING WITH HOMOSEXUALITY:**

**Do not reject a relative or friend** if they are a practicing homosexual or lesbian. Continue to love and pray for them just as you would someone who is unsaved and bound by drugs, prostitution, or other immoral conduct. Condemn the sin, not the sinner. You must, however, take a firm scriptural stand when questioned.

**If you are a homosexual or lesbian seeking help,** the first step is to agree with what God says about it. It is sin. It is not learned behavior and you were not born that way.

**Ask God for forgiveness.** Homosexuality is sin, and as with any sin it must be confessed and forgiven. If you are not a born-again believer, accepting Christ as your Savior is the first step

towards eliminating homosexuality. If you are a believer who has been tempted and/or committed homosexual acts, ask God for forgiveness (1 John 1:8-9).

**Pray a prayer of deliverance.** Ask God to deliver you from homosexuality and to restore a healthy, God-given sexual desire.

**Do not associate with practicing homosexuals.** Seek friends who are not involved in or sympathetic towards the homosexual lifestyle.

**Do a spiritual housecleaning.** If you have any music, videos, pictures, literature, or clothing that promotes homosexuality, get rid of it. If you are a member of a "gay" group, resign. Remove any homosexual sites from your Internet links.

**Renew your mind and keep your new commitment** through the Word of God, prayer, and affiliation with a Bible-believing church.

**Know that you will be tempted again.** Satan will return to tempt you, but you can be assured on the basis of God's Word that... *"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."* (1 Corinthians 10:13). When Satan comes with temptation, take control of your mind immediately, submit yourself to God, rebuke Satan, and he will depart (James 4:7). Take the way of escape!

#### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY:**

They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing." (Genesis 19:5-7)

Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable. (Leviticus 18:22)

If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable... (Leviticus 20:13)

For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths. (Proverbs 5:21)

The look on their faces testifies against them; they parade their sin like Sodom (a city that flaunted homosexuality); they do not hide it. Woe to them! They have brought disaster upon themselves. (Isaiah 3:9)

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. (Romans 1:26-27)

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:11-14, 22-23)

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. (1 Corinthians 6:13)

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:18-19)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17, TLB)

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. (Galatians 6:1)

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made

us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:1-5)

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. (Ephesians 5:3)

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8)

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (Hebrews 2:18)

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. (1 John 3:6)

## HEALING

**DEFINITION:** Healing, as used in a biblical sense, refers to being made whole and restored spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically. It is also called divine healing because it is when the one true God reveals His nature, fulfills His promises, and acts upon His provision in the atonement of Christ by curing a person and making him whole in body, soul, and spirit.

### **FACTS ABOUT HEALING:**

**Sickness entered the world through sin.** God never intended for the spiritual sickness of sin or emotional, mental, or physical illness to be part of our world. Sickness entered the world through sin (Genesis 3). Although God sometimes uses it as punishment on sinners (Deuteronomy 28:22-35), sickness is not a sign of personal sin. See the story of the man born blind in John 9.

**Reasons for sickness.** Although sickness entered the world through sin, not all sickness is caused by personal sin. Spiritual sickness is, of course, caused by sin and it is true that sometimes physical conditions result from sin. But sickness can also result from a violation of natural laws, i.e., improper diet, overworking, lack of exercise, abuse of drugs and alcohol, or even violating the natural law of gravity. Satanic attacks also result in sickness as in the case of Job (Job chapter 2). Some sickness is caused by demons. See the accounts in Matthew 12:22-23; Matthew 9:32-33; Mark 9:25; and Luke 13:11.

**God views sickness** as captivity (Job 42:10); bondage (Luke 13:16); and oppression (Acts 10:38).

**Healing is a gift from God.** The psalmist declared: *"Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits--who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases"* (Psalms 103:1-3).

**All true healing comes from God,** even when the gifts of natural or medical means are used.

**Spiritual healing**--salvation from sin--is the greatest healing. It addresses sinful behaviors that need to be corrected. Spiritual "sickness" is anything that adversely affects your spirit.

**Emotional healing** is the healing of damaged emotions. No wound is so deep that God cannot heal it. A wounded spirit is difficult to bear (Proverbs 18:13). This is why you need inner healing. Your spirit becomes wounded by sin (Psalm 38:4-6,8); by your enemies (Psalm 143:3-4,7); and through anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness. These attitudes must be dealt with in order to receive emotional healing.

**Mental healing** is a healing of your mind from hurts, actual brain damage, or wrong thinking.

**God has redeemed you from the curse of sin.** This includes the curse of sickness that resulted from sin (Galatians 3:13). This does not mean you will never be sick, but it does mean that healing is available for every condition.

**Healing is a benefit of the death of Jesus on the cross.** The prophet Isaiah declared: *"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed"* (Isaiah 53:5).

**Some believe that divine healings no longer occur,** but the Bible says Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). As Jesus healed in Bible times, so He heals today. There are also many medically documented healings that have occurred after prayer to God.

**Doctors and legitimate medicines are not in opposition to the Bible.** Every good gift--such as doctors, legitimate medicines, and natural remedies--come from God (James 1:17). There is no conflict between divine healing and medical healing. Even when doctors and medications are used to facilitate healing, the ultimate healing is from God.

**God heals all sickness and diseases**--event those classified as incurable or terminal by medicine, because nothing is impossible to God (Luke 1:37).

**All believers can minister healing.** Jesus declared: *"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover"* (Mark 16:17-18).

**Some believers have a special gift of healing.** First Corinthians 12:9 speaks of those who have a special gift of ministering healing.

**There is a sickness unto death;** John 11:4 speaks of a sickness that was not unto death. Second Kings 13:14 speaks of a time when Elisha was sick of the illness of which he would die. As a believer, you should continue to pray for healing unless God reveals that it is a person's time to die. Sometimes a person will say, "I am ready and believe it is my time to go be with the Lord." If they have that assurance, then you need to help them prepare by setting things in order and being with them in death. Draw encouragement from 1 Corinthians 15:51-55; Psalm 116:15; 2 Corinthians 5:1-8.

**Not everyone is healed immediately.** Job was healed when he forgave his friends and prayed for them. Unforgiveness can block healing, as can personal sin. Sometimes a person does not receive healing because they don't believe in divine healing. Some people don't really want healing because they are using their illness as an excuse not to work or to draw government assistance. Jesus delayed ministering to Lazarus because He had a greater miracle planned. There are many variables involved in healing, and we cannot accurately judge why healing does not occur immediately. This is one of the secret things that belongs to the Lord (Deuteronomy 29:29). Not everyone who hears the gospel gets saved. Not everyone to whom healing is ministered receives healing.

**The end result of sickness** for a believer is that it is either for the glory of God through divine healing (John 9:3) or it is a sickness unto death to usher you into Christ's presence ( 2 Kings 13:14). As a believer, you will be either healed in time or eternity, but you will be healed.

#### **DEALING WITH HEALING:**

**Determine the healing needed.** Is it spiritual, emotional, mental, or physical or a combination of these? In order to be whole, each of these areas must be healed. For example, a person may ask for healing for a vision problem, but he may not know Jesus as Savior and his greater need is for spiritual healing.

**Study what God's Word says about healing.** This will increase your faith to receive and minister healing.

**Eliminate any preconceived notions concerning healing.** Doctrines such as "healing is not for today" must be eliminated in order to believe for healing. Just as one believes and confesses the Lord Jesus in order to be saved, one must believe and confess He heals in order to be healed.

**Seek first the greatest miracle of spiritual healing.** Healing from sin is vital to healing in the mental, emotional, and physical realms. If you do not know Christ as your Savior, you need a spiritual healing.

**Determine if any conditions are caused by errant behavior.** For example, smoking, drugs, and alcohol addictions can affect a person physically, emotionally, and mentally. The behaviors contributing to conditions in any area must be bound spiritual and revoked lest *"a worse thing come upon you"* (John 5:14).

**Pray for healing.** If the condition is caused by demons, pray for deliverance. If you need an emotional healing, confess your feelings to God and ask Him to heal your inner wounds. Bind Satanic influences over your mind if you need a mental deliverance. Pray for physical healing if you are sick. If you are in a Bible believing church, call for the elders to anoint and pray over you: *"Is any of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up"* (James 5:14-15).

**Receive your healing by faith.** Just as you received salvation by faith--with no immediate visible signs apparent--so you can receive healing by faith even if there are no immediate signs are apparent. Sometimes there are miraculous signs accompanying a healing. At other times, the healing occurs gradually. When you receive salvation, the outward changes in your life are apparent gradually, and the same is sometimes true in healing.

**Act upon your healing.** James 2:17 says that faith without action is dead. Do something you could not do before prayer. For example, if you could not bend over, bend over. If you have been under a doctor's care, return to your doctor to confirm your healing.

**Maintain your healing.** Stand in faith on the Word of God. Rather than believing your symptoms, believe God's Word. Continue to stand on the promises of healing in God's Word. Commit yourself to total trust in God for healing. Change your lifestyle, if your former way of life contributed to your sickness. Resist the attempts by Satan to cause sickness to return.

**Do not become discouraged if healing is not received immediately.** Some healings in the Bible were instantaneous, others were delayed. Continue to pray for healing. Continue to build your faith in the Word of God. Where applicable, change your lifestyle and eliminate sinful and unhealthy practices. Claim the promises of God for healing.

## **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT HEALING:**

### **Old Testament**

Genesis 17:18-19: God promised to heal Sara's barrenness.

Genesis 21:1-7: Sara's barrenness is healed.

Genesis 20:17: God healed Abimelech.

Exodus 4:1-18: Moses' leprous hand.

Exodus 15:25-26: God reveals His name as "Jehovah-Rapha" which means, "The Lord Your Physician." He promised that none of the diseases of Egypt would come upon Israel.

Exodus 23:25: God promised to take away sickness from among His people.

Leviticus 13:1-46; 14:1-32: Regulations regarding leprosy.

Leviticus 15:1-33: Health regulations.

Leviticus 16:29-30: Healing of sins.

Numbers 12:1-15: Leprosy of Miriam and Aaron.

Numbers 16:41-50: A plague affects Israel.

Numbers 21:4-9: Healing through the symbolic serpent of brass.

Deuteronomy 7:15: Obedience to God results in health.

Deuteronomy 28:1-68: Sickness results when you do not observe God's law.

Deuteronomy 29:22: The Lord lays sickness on the land.

Deuteronomy 30:20: God is life and length of days.

Deuteronomy 32:39: God wounds and heals.

Deuteronomy 7:15; 28:60: Diseases of Egypt.

Judges 13:2-24: Manoah's wife is healed by a "man of God."

1 Samuel 6:3: A trespass offering brought healing.

1 Samuel 16:14-23: An evil spirit troubles Saul.

1 Kings 5:23; 2 Chronicles 16:12: Diseases in the feet.

1 Kings 8:37-40: Plagues in the land.

1 Kings 13:4-6: A man with a withered hand.

1 Kings 17:17-24: Elijah raises a child from the dead.

2 Kings 1:2; 8:8-9: Shall I recover of this disease?

2 Kings 2:19-22: Healing of waters by Elisha.

2 Kings 4:8-37: Raising of the Shunamite's son.

2 Kings 5:1-14: The healing of Naaman.

2 Kings 13:14,21: Elisha is sick with a sickness unto death.

2 Kings 20:1-11: Hezekiah's illness.

2 Chronicles 6:26-31: Prayer of repentance and sickness.

2 Chronicles 7:14: "I will heal their land."

2 Chronicles 16:12: A man with a serious disease does not seek God.

2 Chronicles 20:9: God hears when you cry in affliction.

2 Chronicles 21:12-30: An incurable disease of the bowels.

2 Chronicles 24:25: Disease is called great.

2 Chronicles 26:19: Uzziah's leprosy.

2 Chronicles 30:20: Healing of people by Hezekiah's prayers.

2 Chronicles 32:24-26: Hezekiah's illness.

Job 1-2: These chapters reveal the sources of Job's problems, including his sickness.

Job 5:18; 30:18: Job talks about His disease.

Psalms 6:2-3: "O Lord heal me."

Psalms 27:1: "The Lord is the strength of my life."

Psalms 30:2: "I cried and you healed me."  
Psalms 32:3-5: Acknowledged sin results in healing.  
Psalms 34:19-20: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all."  
Psalms 38:3,7: Anger and sin affects your health; disease is called "loathsome."  
Psalms 41:1-8: "Heal my soul for I have sinned against thee." Disease is called evil.  
Psalms 42:11; 43:5: God is the health of your countenance.  
Psalms 42:1-5: Healing for a downcast spirit.  
Psalms 55:1-2: Persevering prayer and healing.  
Psalms 67:2: "That Your way may be known upon earth, Your saving healing among all nations."  
Psalms 72:13: You are to pity the weak.  
Psalms 91:9,10: "Neither shall any plague come nigh your dwelling."  
Psalms 103:1-5: "Forget not His benefits...Who heals all your diseases."  
Psalms 105:37: Israel came forth without one feeble person among them. Three million people were all well and strong.  
Psalms 107:17-20: "He sent His Word and healed them."  
Psalms 119:25-28: You are strengthened by the Word.  
Psalms 119:67: "Before I was afflicted, I went astray."  
Psalms 147:3: "Who heals all your diseases." Healing for a broken heart.  
Psalms 105:37: "He brought them forth...not one feeble among them."  
Proverbs 3:7-8: How to be healthy.  
Proverbs 4:20-23: The issues of life are affected by your heart attitude. God's promises are life to those that find them and health to all their flesh.  
Proverbs 12:18: The tongue of the wise brings healing.  
Proverbs 15:4,30: A wholesome tongue is life; good reports affect health.  
Proverbs 16:24: The Word of God brings healing to the bones.  
Proverbs 17:22: A broken spirit affects the bones.  
Ecclesiastes 3:3: There is a time to heal.  
Ecclesiastes 5:17: Sorrow and wrath are related to sickness.  
Isaiah 6:10: Understanding, conversion, healing.  
Isaiah 19:22: When God is entreated He heals.  
Isaiah 32:3-4: Healing is part of the Kingdom of God.  
Isaiah 33:24: Inhabitants shall say, "I am not sick."  
Isaiah 35:5-6: Healing in the Millennium.  
Isaiah 38:1-12,16: Hezekiah's illness and his return to health.  
Isaiah 53:5: We are promised healing and deliverance through the atonement.  
Isaiah 57:18-19: Draw near for healing.  
Isaiah 58:8: Health shall spring forth.  
Isaiah 61:1: Jesus was sent to bind up the brokenhearted (emotional healing).  
Isaiah 58:8: Health springing forth speedily.

Jeremiah 3:22: God heals backsliding when you return to Him.  
Jeremiah 8:14-15; 20-22: A time of healing. Bitterness of sin is tied to physical health.  
Jeremiah 15:18: How to deal with an incurable wound.  
Jeremiah 14:19: Is there no healing for us?  
Jeremiah 17:14: "Heal me and I will be healed."  
Jeremiah 30:12-17: God will restore health.  
Jeremiah 33:6: "I will cure them."  
Jeremiah 51:8-9: Healing of Babylon.  
Lamentations 2:13: "Who can heal you?"  
Lamentations 3:33: "God does not willingly afflict."  
Ezekiel 14:19: "Is there no healing for us?"  
Ezekiel 17:14: "Heal me and I will be healed."  
Ezekiel 30:17: "I will restore health."  
Ezekiel 30:12-13: Incurable wounds medicine cannot heal.  
Ezekiel 30:21: What God breaks cannot be healed.  
Ezekiel 33:6: "I will heal them."  
Ezekiel 34:4,16,21: A warning to shepherds who have not healed.  
Ezekiel 47:8-12: Healing of the waters.  
Daniel 4:34,36: Nebuchadnezzar's healing.  
Hosea 5:13: Man cannot cure a wound inflicted by God.  
Hosea 6:1: "He has torn and He will heal."  
Hosea 7:1: Healing for Israel.  
Hosea 11:3: "They knew not I healed them."  
Hosea 14:4: "I will heal their backslidings."  
Nahum 3:19: A terminal condition.  
Zechariah 11:16: A warning to shepherds who do not heal.  
Malachi 4:2: Healing in His wings.

## **New Testament**

Matthew 8:13: The point of contact sets the time.  
Matthew 8:17: Jesus bore our sicknesses.  
Matthew 10:1: Power over sickness and demons is given to the disciples.  
Matthew 18:19-21: Any two agreeing receive what is asked.  
Mark 2:17: Christ came to heal sinners.  
Mark 3:15-17: Christ gives power to heal sicknesses.  
Mark 4:18-19: Healing is part of the anointing; Jesus was sent to heal.  
  
Mark 11:24: If you believe when you pray (not after you receive), you will receive.  
Mark 16:18: In Jesus' name believers will heal sick and cast out demons.  
Luke 5:31: The sick need a physician.

Luke 7:6: Unworthiness is viewed by Jesus as faith.  
Luke 7:22-23: The most convincing argument is experience.  
Luke 17:6: Small faith can bring great results.  
Luke 18:7-8: Do not give up before your answer comes.  
John 6:53-58: The body and blood of Jesus bring life.  
John 10:10: Jesus came so that you can have life. Satan came to kill, steal, and destroy.  
John 11:1-45: A sickness not healed immediately leads to a greater miracle.  
John 14:12-13: The works Jesus did, you are to do.  
John 15:7: The importance of abiding in Christ in relation to asking and receiving.  
John 16:24: Ask in His name and you will receive.  
Romans 2:4 The goodness of God leads to repentance.  
2 Corinthians 4:16: Your outward man perishes, but your inward man can be renewed.  
Ephesians 3:20-21: God has the power to work in you above all that you ask or think.  
Philippians 2:25-27: The illness of Epaphroditus.  
Colossians 4:14: Luke, a physician, was part of Paul's evangelistic team.  
2 Timothy 4:20: Trophimus' illness.  
Hebrews 4:15: He is touched with your infirmities.  
Hebrews 11:1: Faith is the evidence of things (healing) not seen.  
James 1:8: You must ask in faith and not waver.  
James 1:17: Every good gift (healing, doctors, legitimate medicine) is from God.  
James 5:14-15: Call the elders for anointing with oil, the prayer of faith, healing, and forgiveness.  
1 Peter 2:24: You are healed by His wounds.  
1 John 3:22: Whatever you ask you can receive if you are obedient.  
3 John 1:2: Health is related to the condition of your soul.  
Mark 7:36, 8:26; Matthew 8:4: Do not sensationalize healing.  
Revelation 20:2-3: When Satan is bound, there is no more sickness and death.  
Revelation 21:4: The final healing: No more sickness and death.

## **HATRED**

**DEFINITION:** Hatred is an intense emotional feeling of hostility towards an individual, a group, or an authority figure in your life.

### **FACTS ABOUT HATRED:**

**Hatred is often the root cause** of negative emotions like anger, bitterness, rebellion, and hostility.

**Hatred never operates in isolation.** According to the Word of God, "*hatred stirs up strife*" (*Proverbs 10:12*). Hatred affects others around you because you become an angry and bitter person.

**Hatred is multi-faceted.** It affects you spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically. Many mental, emotional, and physical maladies have been linked to the negative emotion of hatred.

**Hatred usually involves** a refusal to forgive someone.

**Hatred is sin.** The Bible states that if you hate your brother, you are in spiritual darkness (1 John 2 :9). God compares hatred to murder (1 John 3:15).

**You cannot love God and hate someone.** The Bible declares: "*If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen*" (1 John 4:20).

### **DEALING WITH HATRED:**

**Confess hatred as sin.** That is what it is, according to the Bible. Ask God to forgive you.

**Forgive the one who offended you.** You may need to confront the person and ask for or extend forgiveness. You must resolve the root causes behind your hatred.

**Pray for your enemy and extend mercy.** Luke 6:27-36 directs you to pray for your enemies, respond to their needs, and extend to them the same mercy that a merciful God has extended to you.

**Keep your heart from hatred.** Do not allow bitterness and unforgiveness to fester into hatred. *"Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life"* (Proverbs 4:23, NKJV) You "keep your heart" through prayer and study and application of God's Word.

**Ask God to release love to replace the hatred.** Study 1 Corinthians 13 and ask God to develop in your life the qualities of love listed there.

#### **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT HATRED:**

Do not hate your brother in your heart. (Leviticus 19:17)

Do not drag me away with the wicked, with those who do evil, who speak cordially with their neighbors but harbor malice in their hearts. (Psalm 28:3)

Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs. (Proverbs 10:12)

You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:43-44)

But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:27-36)

If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. (Luke 17:3)

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. (Ephesians 4:31)

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander of every kind. (1 Peter 2:1)

Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him. (1 John 2:9-11)

Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. (1 John 3:15)

If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother. (1 John 4:20-21)

## HABITS

**DEFINITION:** A habit is a routine behaviour that is repeated regularly and tends to occur unconsciously. It is a fixed way of thinking, feeling, and acting.

### **FACTS ABOUT HABITS:**

**There are good and bad habits.** All habits are not bad. Habits like a daily devotional time, prayer, and study of God's Word are good habits to foster. Bad habits are the problems for which you should seek change.

**Some examples of bad habits** are addictions, laziness, being critical, gossiping, selfishness, cursing, etc. For believers, bad habits are anything that turn you from God and lead you to respond in an unbiblical way.

**Habits begin in the mind.** Lust conceives the thought, the thought becomes an action, and the repeated action becomes a sinful habit (James 1:13-15). Guard your thoughts because they become words and actions, these become habits, and habits affect your character.

**Bad habits become strongholds.** Spiritually speaking, a stronghold is anything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). A stronghold is a spiritual point of operation from where Satan can attack you further. Strongholds include things like sinful attitudes and addictions as well as habits that enslave you and result in you doing what you don't want to do.

**Habits can be changed.** The Bible says: "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*" (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). Your spiritual weapons,

described in Ephesians 6, have supernatural power to demolish strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

## **DEALING WITH HABITS:**

**Take personal responsibility for your bad habits.** Do not blame someone else because they modeled or taught you such behaviour.

**Analyze the root cause of your bad habit.** Why are you doing what you are doing? When did you develop this habit? For example, did you start smoking because everyone else was doing it? Discovering why you are doing something will help you conquer it.

**Pray about your habits.** Confess sinful habits to God, ask forgiveness, and claim His strength to help you overcome it (Philippians 4:13).

**Put off old habits and replace them with new.** For each bad habit, attitude, or behaviour that the Bible admonishes you to put off, you are also admonished to "put on" good ones to replace them. This means you deliberately--by a decision of your mind--cultivate the opposite of your negative behaviours. See Appendix Three of this database for behaviours the Bible mandates believers to put off and the new qualities that are to replace them. Focus on building good habits rather than eliminating the bad (Ephesians 4:22-24).

**Renew your mind in the Word of God.** Habitual behaviour begins in the mind. It starts as a decision to act or think in a certain way. As you renew your mind with the Word of God, you will be transformed and break the power of bad habits (Romans 12:1-2).

**Use the buddy system.** If you are trying to break a bad habit like smoking or binge eating, find someone else who is wanting to eliminate the same habit and encourage one another in the Process (James 5:16).

**Conquer your bad habits in the strength of the Lord.** Philippians 4:13 declares that you can do all things through the strength given by Jesus Christ. Hebrews 4:15-16 states that you will have help in times of need.

**Develop positive spiritual habits.** Habits like a daily devotional time, prayer, and study of God's Word are excellent habits to foster.

**Use your spiritual weapons** when Satan tempts you to resume old habits (Ephesians 6 and 2 Corinthians 10:4-5). These weapons have supernatural power to demolish strongholds. Submit yourself to God, resist the devil, and he will flee (James 4:7).

## **WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT HABITS:**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16)

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged

away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. (James 1:13-15)

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (1 John 1:8-10)

