(I feel the urgent need to write this letter to you… as we're running out of time)

-- A small story that points to a much bigger Story →

Basic question: What is your biggest wish ever? Your greatest desire?

I already know what the answer is. Same answer for every single person. Whether you realize it or not, this is a fundamental desire that every living, conscious being has:

The desire to live forever in absolute peace, happiness, and joy.

Well, guess what?

YOU CAN LIVE FOREVER… IN ABSOLUTE PEACE, HAPPINESS, AND JOY!

Note: This is not just another postcard throwing Bible verses at you, but the true story of how a 'below average' Christian came to absolute faith… and is now saved for Eternal Life.

After I lived through a series of steps (sequentially), it has become a lifestyle to live all these steps daily now. Seven steps that can take a person from total unbelief to true discipleship:

Believe.
Receive.
Submit.
Repent.
Guard.
Crucify.
Share.

This letter explains a lifestyle of salvation that has worked for me, but there are probably other lifestyles too (same path though). You can't dispute this method because I'm proof that it works.

It may seem like a long read here, but this topic is most important for every single one of us. Please set aside enough time to read through this letter at least once. Maybe a couple hours of your life to read about how you can live forever, which can start happening as soon as today!

If life is already good for you today, what do you have to lose by just reading this message?

If life is being rough for you today, what do you have to lose by just reading this message?

If even one single person can be helped by this personal story of faith, then it's worth writing.

PREFACE

With so many different messages being delivered in this world today, the truth is being pushed further away… and lies are being promoted as the new truth instead.

It's certainly true that any person can be saved instantly by GOD, but it's also true that many people are being falsely led into the wrong understanding of 'salvation'. I've seen both extremes being taught: superficial beliefs (too tolerant of our sins) or strict traditional beliefs, including a list of things that you must do. Varying interpretations of our Bible will cause confusion too.

This letter will break down a proven path of true salvation. Not a list of things that you must do, but a series of steps to achieve the kind of lifestyle that guarantees you are truly saved forever.

The first three steps in this letter can lead you to that salvation, by the grace of GOD. The only requirement is faith in GOD's Word, achieved by surrendering your world to Jesus Christ.

Working through the remaining four steps is a result of being truly saved and can only be achieved by the strength that Jesus provides, after surrendering your world to Him.

Eternal Life is a gift from GOD, but only available to those who believe in Jesus Christ; it's not something we automatically deserve or can earn. Jesus wants us to be disciples for Him.

The true test of a person's salvation is a constant, strong desire to remain obedient to the teachings of Jesus Christ. You must desire to put Jesus as more important than yourself.

~~~~~~

You may not understand this part until you read the full letter, but just some preliminary info here. If needed, you can revisit this text with better understanding later:

We must fully acknowledge the finished work of Jesus Christ. We can only be saved because of his love and sacrifice for us. There is nothing we can do to save ourselves; we only need to believe in the truth of Jesus Christ, who is Savior for all generations of mankind.

The point is that **our belief** is what gets us in good graces with GOD, **not our actions**. True belief results in actions that can serve as evidence of said belief. True belief in GOD is not only knowing that HE exists, but it also means becoming a child of GOD; which includes a quality relationship with HIM. Just like humans, the child is expected to remain obedient to the parent.

With that being said, nobody is perfect. As you know, there is nothing we do in this life that we are perfect with; mistakes will happen. The same applies to belief in GOD. Jesus already paid the price for your sins by being the perfect life/death. True believers will not be perfect by any means, but will always have the desire for obedience to GOD (in their heart).

The focus of the 7 steps detailed in this letter is not a series of things that you 'do', but a series of things you 'become'. The quality of a person's true belief in GOD is witnessed by the person we are (not the things that we do). 'Believing in' GOD is more than just superficial believing.
~~~~~~

This message is a seed of faith... and a sower will spread the seed wherever that faith can grow.

7 Steps to FOREVER

[A letter to 'average' Christians and unbelievers]

1) BELIEVE

John 3:16 – 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.

Most of us who call ourselves Christians know this Bible verse or at least recognize the verse number, when seeing it posted on billboards or displayed at some large event.

[For those folks who have never heard of the biblical verse 'John 3:16' or read the actual text, no worries. Read the words above, so now you know too]

With that being said, will **you** have Eternal Life? What will happen after **you** die?

Reviewing John 3:16 is where I started my faith journey. Gaining knowledge of this verse can help you understand the most fundamental trait of our awesome creator, which is LOVE.

{1.1 The Verse}

What exactly does John 3:16 mean? Why is it referred to so often, even among those who may not be religious in their daily lives?

Without any other context, it might be difficult to grasp the full meaning of this verse. Yet, at the same time, this verse is simplistic enough to understand the basic meaning.

All of us know who is referred to when speaking of **GOD**, right? Even the atheists of this world (who claim there is no god) will know that we are speaking of an almighty power; the supreme ruler, the creator of everything.

The **world** is obviously referring to this planet we live on (and everything in it), but most importantly, we can see from this verse, the world refers to us; **the people** who live in this world.

The verse also refers to the **Son** of GOD. That is Jesus Christ, the one who Christians claim to follow (hence the word "Christian"). The verse tells us that GOD gave his only Son Jesus to us, the people of this world… because of GOD's love for us.

The word **perish** means ‘to suffer complete ruin or destruction’. In relation to humans, it means death.

So, what does it mean when the verse says **Eternal Life**? Everybody is aware of our own mortality. We all understand there will be a day when we physically die.

However, the verse refers to Eternal Life here… which means… you guessed it:

LIVE FOREVER!!!

Wow! The Book of John (from our Christian Bible), chapter 3, verse 16 is a message to all people, telling us about a promise from GOD (who created us) that anybody who believes in Jesus Christ (the Son) will not die… but instead will live forever!

{1.2 The Message}

What a powerful message, right? Our creator loves us so much that HE wants us to live forever!

This message is directed to **‘whoever believes in Him’**, referencing the Son of GOD.

Do you want to live forever? If so, don’t you want to learn more details of this remarkable possibility?

One might claim that life can be challenging, painful, depressing, even boring; therefore may not want to live forever (hence the high suicide rates).

Before hanging it up right here (stop pursuing the desire to live forever), let’s put this in a little more perspective.

Please see the primary reason of this opportunity to live forever: **‘For GOD so loved the world’** (remember the world includes all of us people).

GOD is a reference to our creator (the ONE who created all of us) and the verse tells us that HE loves us enough to give us his own Son and wants us to have **Eternal Life**.

Since HE wants us to live forever -- doesn’t it stand to reason the Eternal Life that GOD wants us to have will also reflect his love for us (which was enough for HIM to give us his own Son)?

Let’s put it this way: At this point, you may have doubts about John 3:16 and it’s true meaning (and how it applies to you specifically) or you may not have a desire to live forever, but don’t you think it’s worth exploring at least a little deeper?

I mean, if there is a chance the Bible verse known as ‘John 3:16’ is referring to an Eternal Life of absolute peace, happiness, and Joy… isn’t it worth further investigation?

Of course, it is.

{1.3 Absolutes Defined}

Let's continue exploring beyond the basic text of John 3:16. You're not expected to be completely sold on it yet, but we need to focus on the word **BELIEVE** now.

It's best to first understand three 'absolutes':

Absolute belief.
Absolute truth.
Absolute love.

Definitions
Absolute – Complete, not limited in any way.

Belief – Trust, faith, or confidence in someone or something.

Truth – An indisputable fact, the state of reality.

Love – A deep feeling of affection, caring, loyalty and devotion.

From the definitions above →

Absolute belief means 'complete trust in someone or something'.

Absolute truth means 'complete, factual reality'.

Absolute love means 'complete devotion towards someone'.

So, for starters… we need to believe the truth.

While that statement may seem so obvious and simple enough, it can be more deceiving than expected.

We've evaluated the verse for its basic meaning, but how do we know it speaks absolute truth?

To gain absolute faith in the words of John 3:16, it's necessary to have **absolute belief in the absolute truth and understand absolute love**.

**No offense is meant to anybody (with any content in this letter), but getting to absolute belief requires breaking down absolute truth to the fundamentals… and then building up absolute faith from there*.

{1.4 The Physical Creation}

How do we know there is a god?

Most of us claim to believe there is a supreme being, whom we call God. We also know this God is not somebody we can physically see, hear, touch, or smell.

So why do we believe there is a god? Most of us don't realize that we inherently desire to believe in a god, but that is not enough in itself to have 'absolute belief'.

The path to achieving absolute belief in the one and only GOD starts by realizing the awesome work of his invisible hands.

Scientific discoveries have been occurring since the beginning of mankind. Modern science understands this physical earth very well. The laws of gravity, chemical composition of earth's atmosphere, the oceans, land masses, climates, etc.

Astronomers have long studied the planets, the stars, and many galaxies in the universe. The most accepted belief is this universe began from a big bang → a huge explosion that originated from a single point in space/time.

We can't dispute these physical realities because they can be scientifically proven or at least discerned from other known facts.

So, if a 'big bang' started this grand universe and subsequently formed everything in it, **how** did it happen as such? Do we know **why** these physical realities exist?

The word '*random*' defined: made, done, happening, or chosen without method or conscious decision.

There are <u>only two basic possibilities</u> of how the universe and everything in it came to be:

1) Some random, unplanned series of events occurred. It started with a massive ball of stardust that exploded in a big bang and then proceeded to randomly create the cosmos, planet earth, atmosphere, oceans, etc.

2) Somebody planned and started this universe (with a big bang), then carefully created the cosmos, planet earth, atmosphere, oceans, etc.

Why?

If we believe that an unplanned series of random events created everything as we know it, then there is no reason as to why that happened. If nobody had any control over the formation of universal objects and the physical laws that govern them, then there is no reason for any of it.

If we believe the universe and everything was planned and created by somebody, then we should believe there is a reason as to why the universe was created. Of course, the one who created everything knows the reasons for doing so, and therefore would be able to explain it.

So, which is it? Is everything in this universe a result of some unexplainable, random series of events OR was it created by somebody greater than us (with great precision)?

Scientists always require verifiable proof before considering anything to be a scientific fact. Without actual evidence that can be seen and/or tested, we should not believe something to be true.

Although that is commendable (solid evidence is required to claim absolute truth), there is a big flaw in scientific theory regarding the creation and governance of this vast universe; specifically related to the requirement that any evidence of universal creation must be explained using the known physical laws of the same universe.

While the physical objects and laws of our universe are proven to be true, scientists cannot find physical proof as to the cause or reason why these things exist. Without such physical evidence (based on our known physical universal laws), they cannot confirm any root cause or reasons for this universe as absolute truth.

The problem with studying this physical creation to determine proof of the creator, with expectations the creator must also follow the same physical laws, is one of incorrect thinking.

Instead, we should inherently know that any creator of this universe must be at a higher level than the creation itself and therefore not subject to the same physical realities.

It makes basic sense the creator of this earth would not be seen in the same physical realm as the creation. While the creation we know is here, the creator would be somewhere else; somewhere external to here (which explains why we can't see the creator here with us).

Much like a child who builds a toy city, using Lego bricks. The child builds it very carefully and maintains full control… but doesn't live in the Lego city with the toy characters. The child lives above that toy city, the same as our creator must exist above our world.

Of course, while that might create at least a reasonable doubt this universe was created by a series of unexplainable events, one might argue it's still not absolute proof of a creator whom we call God.

{1.5 Universal Proof}

Let's continue to focus on the physical realities that we can prove.

*Note: Laws of chemistry, astronomical forces, and quantum mechanics (study of atoms) are beyond the scope of this letter, but please feel free to research it yourself.

Modern science has discovered that all physical materials are derived from a finite number of basic chemical elements, present throughout our universe. We've discovered the most basic building blocks (called 'atoms') are too tiny for us to see without the help of very powerful microscopes, which proves just because we can't see something doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

Scientific proof indicates that a big bang is what generated the first known chemical elements and then supernova (big star) explosions created the remaining elements. The discovery of atoms proves the composition of the elements.

We know that different kinds of atoms can bond together to build every known physical thing in our universe (using 'molecules'). These compound substances are all proven through scientific analysis, but does that explain how microscopic building blocks were able to bond together to form everything that we can see, touch, hear, smell and taste?

Very smart astronomers have been able to provide a good estimate of when the universe was born (the big bang), many billions of years ago. Some might argue this astronomical time frame might allow for the creation of everything, with no explanation. Astronomers have determined our own solar system to be approximately five billion years old.

In that amount of time, could it be possible for these random chemical elements to somehow bond together in perfect combinations to create the earth and all the natural objects; without any external, intelligent designer?

Have you seen a beautiful sunset or the calmness of the ocean on a bright, breezy day?

Let's examine that possibility in terms we might be able to understand more easily:

What if we were able to throw a pile of wood, concrete, bricks, vinyl, mixed in with some plastic, glass and a bunch of nails into space… and then let them continue traveling through space for a very long time? Is it likely the various materials will eventually bond together, on their own, and form a beautiful, fully functional house? What if we were able to wait many billions of years? Do you believe a nice, livable home would ever be built completely on its own, by just randomly bonding the various materials to each other?

Of course not!

So, why should we believe there is a possibility that a large explosion such as the big bang could randomly cause the resulting space fragments to somehow bond together in the exact combinations to create the earth as a perfect livable environment, a home for mankind?

Based on our understanding of the laws that apply universally, we know it would be physically impossible for a fully functional home (with working plumbing) to be constructed completely by itself, with no intervention from an external home builder.

Some will also argue that, due to the astronomical numbers of stars and vast amount of space, it seems likely that at least a few of them would randomly create everything as we know it. With trillions of stars out there, spanning an area that is too large for humans to even comprehend, wouldn't there be a possibility that even just a few of those solar systems will randomly create the perfect world for us to live in?

Back to the original conclusion that it would be physically impossible for a fully functional house to get constructed completely on its own (with no help from anybody), just by throwing all the materials up in the air; the same still applies to the entire universe.

Our planet earth, residing within our solar system, producing a welcoming atmosphere, with temperatures that provide a stable environment, in an otherwise very hot or very cold universe could not have been created by some random explosion only, as that would be impossible!

Impossible means ‘not able to occur, exist, or be done’… ever.

Therefore, the only other possibility to explain how this earth (and the universe) was created from stardust is that a much higher, intelligent being carefully designed and built it!

{1.6 Living Proof}

Even with quality proof that all physical objects in this universe were created by somebody, not randomly created from the chaos of a big bang, there is an even bigger source of proof that a much higher, intelligent being is at work here:

You… and me… and everybody else.

While it’s possibly more believable that all physical materials in this universe originated from a random, stellar explosion of the distant past, how could the same processes have created life?

The definition of life: the condition that distinguishes animals and plants from inorganic matter, including the capacity for growth, reproduction, functional activity, and continual change.

Let’s start with our physical bodies, understanding what is scientifically/biologically provable.

It’s true that our physical flesh is composed of the same type of chemical elements that are present in all other physical objects (as described above).

We could make the same basic statement about our bodies as the analogy of the house mentioned above… in that construction of it would not be possible without a builder.

Furthermore, our bodies are much more advanced than the house. While the house is a static building, our bodies are built to be much more mobile. We can travel across distances and move around very flexibly (at various speeds).

If any part of the house breaks, it cannot repair itself (any more than it could have built itself). However, our body is created with the ability to repair itself. When we get an injury, the body has the capabilities to heal the damaged material back to normal!

Think of the complex structure that makes up our physical body. The eyes are constructed perfectly so we can see the world, the ears are perfectly made for hearing, the nose allows us to smell things, and the digestive system contains many organs working together to convert the food we eat into energy.

The respiratory system provides a perfect pathway for oxygen to be inhaled from this atmosphere. The cardiovascular system includes the heart, which pumps the blood required by all other organs, using arteries and veins as a delivery mechanism. The nervous system allows us to feel other physical objects, while also providing a very effective warning system of physical harm to the body (in the form of pain).

All these different systems work together perfectly. Our physical bodies not only survive in our earthly environment, but have the ability to thrive in it.

The lifecycle of this human growth is also amazing. We start as a tiny embryo in our mother, allowing us to continue growth through birth, childhood and into adulthood.

In addition to humans, we just need to look around at the animals on this earth. Many various species of living animals are uniquely built to adapt to the type of environment in which they live. The lions, tigers and monkeys in the jungle, the fish in the sea, and the birds of the air have bodies built perfectly to allow them to also thrive in their earthly environment. They are similar in nature to us humans, in that they too are mobile, experience the same senses… and feel pain.

There is also another category of earthly life: trees and other vegetation. We see the grass grow. Many varieties of plants and beautiful flowers. A small seed can grow into a huge tree, spanning hundreds of years.

All these types of life forms share a common trait; one that ensures their survivability and generational expandability: reproduction. The ability to reproduce other life forms of the same species. Reproduction proves a type of action that goes well beyond a big bang or supernova explosions.

All these scientifically proven facts are absolute living proof that a higher power whom we call GOD created all of it!

{1.7 Systematic Proof}

You've seen proof that universe, earth, and our physical bodies are all created by GOD. Let's now focus on the convergence of these entities. We'll see how the physical laws of gravity and other natural processes, which govern this vast universe, work perfectly together in harmony.

Expanding the universe in general, we see how galaxies provide an organized environment where clusters of stars call home. We have a star in our own locality, which we call the sun. The sun is the center of our solar system, and the earth revolves around the sun. It takes exactly 365 and ¼ days for a single revolution of earth around the sun; other planets have also been in their same orbit for billions of years. There is nothing random about our solar system.

The sun is the perfect size and distance from the earth, generating the perfect amount of light and heat for the life forms described above to inhabit the land, sea, and air. Its chemical composition creates a big ball of fuel that can burn its energy very efficiently, allowing it to provide this generous amount of light and heat for many billions of years.

Science has already proven that our moon is also the perfect size and distance from this earth, revolving in its same exact orbit around the earth, providing the correct amount of gravitational pull to ensure the earth remains stable (doesn't wobble too much). The moon is critical in keeping the oceans under strict control (the tides stay on schedule).

As we explore the earth's atmosphere, we've discovered a perfect combination of invisible gases, which provide a livable environment for the various life forms. This atmosphere creates a 'greenhouse effect' which maximizes the sun's heat by trapping it in the lower environment (which happens to be exactly where us humans live), kind of like wrapping a blanket around the earth.

The oceans and rivers help regulate the earth's climate and provide the earth's plumbing. Oceans cover the majority of this earth's surface and are a major contributor to the air we breathe. Rivers are very important to provide life sustaining water to the land, including drinking water for us. Science has discovered the process called 'evaporation', which is powered by energy from our sun and will cause ocean water to become a vaporized gas, removing salt and impurities in the process, and then condensing in the clouds of the sky. These clouds then move across the lands and will become liquid water again… and fall from the clouds to the ground (in the form of rain). This water is critical to the plants and vegetation of the earth to survive. The many rivers will eventually force the excess water to flow back to the oceans and complete this perfect water cycle.

The earthly plants and trees live in perfect harmony with humans and other animals too. We've known that oxygen is essential for humans and animals to live. Without oxygen, we will die within minutes. Another known fact: all plants and trees require carbon dioxide to live. Biologists have discovered the process called 'photosynthesis', which allows the plants to use sunlight to convert the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to the food they need… and this chemical process will then release oxygen into the atmosphere… which is required by humans to breathe… which is then exhaled as carbon dioxide (which is required for plants). The cycle continues naturally.

Therefore, without the plants and trees, humans and animals cannot survive.

In addition, there needs to be the right amount of oxygen. Too little oxygen and we suffer from asphyxiation (suffocation). Too much oxygen and we can experience severe discomfort and lung damage.

The greenery also provides food for humans. In fact, the healthiest foods for us are grown on plants and trees. Think of all those fruits and vegetables we eat.

These various types of scientific and biological processes show absolute evidence of an intelligent creator. There is no way to explain all these natural interactions and dependencies between inanimate objects and life forms and/or between the different types of life forms as a product of some random explosion in space.

Do you absolutely believe in GOD now? Regardless, there is even more quality proof that GOD is our creator.

{1.8 Spiritual Proof}

Spiritual - relating to or affecting the spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things.

So far, all the evidence presented has shown absolute proof of GOD, based on the physical realities that have been scientifically proven. Some of which includes our planet earth and all living creatures, including humans.

While all that is certainly an awesome display of GOD's quality workmanship, there is something else that is even more impressive.

You... and me... and everybody else.

Not referencing our physical body (already discussed), but the person inside that physical body.

You are somebody that is much more than just physical flesh. Your innermost self is something that you are most fully aware of. Something that others cannot physically touch, but we all know about it (because all living people have an inner self).

What is that inside our bodies? It is who we truly are. The physical body, while very perfectly engineered for our physical environment, is just flesh. Our brain is where we physically maintain our memories and the abilities to interact with this world, but what about the person we are; the inner self with our 'non-physical' thoughts and understandings?

That is our spirit. We cannot physically see it or touch it, but we know it's there. Scientists cannot prove the existence of our spirit using standard tests, so it's not taught in any biology class.

We still have the burden of proof; the obligation of absolute proof that is required to ensure absolute belief.

So, what kind of proof do you need about you? Don't you already know that you exist?
Do you need a scientist to prove (to you) that you exist?

Of course not!

Since you can prove that you exist, and you know that your inner self cannot be defined in the physical sense… you must be a spirit. That is <u>proof of spiritual existence</u>.

Since you are proof of spiritual existence (and so is everybody else), we know the creator can certainly be spiritual too … right?

Please note that using the word 'spirit**' has often been interchangeable with the word '**soul**'; biblical studies will reveal that spirit and soul are independent entities. We're focusing on the spirit in this context (partly for ease of understanding).*

Just in case you still have doubts about GOD, think about your spirit now. If we are to believe that all this physical creation (including the life forms that we know) was created by the big bang, can we also explain our spirit as being created by that same big bang?

Which requires a greater leap of faith here: that our innermost being (our spirit) was created by somebody or that physical fragments from a big explosion created our spirit?

How can we think that our living spirit could have possibly developed solely from a big bang of stardust or some other completely random event?

We certainly cannot prove that inanimate physical objects can ever form any kind of spiritual life. In fact, based on our advanced scientific understanding, we can prove that inanimate physical objects are not capable of somehow being converted into a life form of any kind (ever).

You may hear about the possibility of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies reaching a point of 'consciousness', with the ability to develop emotions, etc. However, make no mistake about it: Anything related to AI technologies is still logical in nature and requires a fixed set of input instructions and lots of data to determine its output… so there is zero chance that any kind of life is created (certainly not at a spiritual level).

Therefore, if our living spirit could not have been created by atoms randomly bonding together or any kind of physical process, that only leaves one remaining explanation of how our spirit came into existence: We were created by a superior, higher power.

HE is called GOD.

{1.9 Meet GOD}

Now that you have absolute belief that GOD created everything as we know it, including us humans, you may have other questions.

Why did GOD create us?

What does GOD expect from us?

The answers can be found by comparing you and me… with GOD!

Since you have a spirit, you are a spiritual being. We know that our creator GOD is also spiritual. That means you can understand spiritual qualities, just like GOD. The physical flesh can experience feelings like being hungry, cold, or tired; but the spiritual nature can experience deeper level feelings such as love, peace, joy… and passion.

Passion – a strong liking or desire for or devotion to some activity, object, or concept.

So, why did GOD create us? Since we are spiritual (like GOD), we can investigate our own lives to get a better understanding.

We know that humans can each have their own personal passions in life. These vary among individuals and can really be anything that we take a very strong liking towards. We're willing to commit much of our time and resources to pursuing these passions. We dedicate ourselves to fulfilling these passions and they become the object of our love much of the time.

Think of examples for human passions. For some, its playing or watching sports. For others, it's the love of music. Many people are passionate about technology or video games. Remodeling an old house or fixing up a classic car are other examples.

What is the driving force behind our passions? Why are we so dedicated to our passions?

Answer: we pursue our passions for <u>our own enjoyment</u>. We love the satisfaction we receive from committing ourselves to these passions.

Does the mechanically inclined person have a passion for building custom cars because he wants to please the cars? No! That person loves building custom cars for self-enjoyment. The sense of accomplishment when driving the car, the sound of the engine, the beautiful paint job, etc. That person absolutely loves the car that was built with their own hands and is willing to sacrifice much to ensure the car remains in tip-top condition. If the car suffers a breakdown or gets in a crash, it goes against the enjoyment the car was meant to bring to its builder.

Likewise, we understand that GOD has passion too, specifically when it comes to his creations. GOD has created everything we've discussed, including us humans… for his own enjoyment!

Note: You may not feel "loved" now… but remember that we are referencing how much your creator GOD loves you, not referring to how much you love yourself or even how much other people may (or may not) love you.

What does GOD expect from us?

Like the car enthusiast example, GOD wants us to be the best we can be too. HE is passionate about us. Just like the guy with the custom-built car, GOD doesn't like it when we are broken either, as it goes against the enjoyment that we are made to bring to HIM.

Unlike the car enthusiast example, GOD's love is much deeper than just our physical attributes. As much as GOD delights in his physical creation, HE loves our inner self even more. GOD loves our spiritual being.

[You must understand that GOD doesn't need us. GOD is fully self-sufficient, not requiring anything from any of his creations**]**

Even though GOD created us for his own enjoyment, we are not just toys built for amusement. GOD didn't develop humans to be robots that will automatically do whatever HE wants. Instead, we are created with a personality. Each of us is unique to GOD. His passion for us is obvious, based on his carefully crafted physical creations combined with our spiritual nature.

Just like a car collector knows every little detail of each automobile in the collection, GOD knows every little detail of every human too. It may seem unreasonable (to us) that HE could possibly know every single human in such detail, but we must remember that GOD is so much greater than us. HE has knowledge, memory and understanding to levels that we are not capable of comprehending (as proven by the fact that HE created us).

We can see that GOD loves us and created each of us to know HIM. We also have our own will. The freedom of choice to make our own decisions. You already know this to be true.

To summarize it: GOD loves our spirit (the prize of his creations) … and our spirit can understand spiritual qualities (such as love) … and HE created us with freedoms to make our own choices.

We also understand that when a person has a passion towards another person, there is a strong desire for that love to be returned.

If somebody loves another person, but that love is not returned, it is a rejection.

Likewise, we can know that GOD has similar expectations. When we don't recognize GOD's true love for us (and express our love back to HIM), it is our rejection of GOD.

Please realize that you are GOD's prized possession. Remember the example of the car fanatic, and how much they love and care for their prized car collection? Obviously, the cars can't love their owner in return… but you can love and appreciate your OWNER in return.

The custom-built car serves its builder/owner by providing transportation and a sense of accomplishment. You can show your love for GOD by serving and praising HIM!

Also note that, because GOD loves **all** of us and wants the best for **all** of us, whenever we show love to other people, it's showing our love for GOD too.

That's it! GOD isn't asking us to do or become something we aren't capable of accomplishing. GOD just wants us to believe and love HIM too!

{1.10 Absolute Truth}

While the basic questions of why GOD created us and what GOD expects from us have now been answered, it brings up the next questions:

Does GOD communicate with us?

If so, how does GOD communicate with us?

Is GOD able to fulfill his promise?

How do we know that GOD is telling us the truth?

Those are certainly valid questions that must also be answered in your quest for absolute truth.

With absolute belief that GOD created us and understanding why HE created us, there are really two potential reactions to his creation now:

Did GOD create everything, including us, then decide to just sit back and watch how everything turns out? Maybe HE got bored and moved on to other things?

Did GOD create everything, including us, then decide to stay involved in his creation, carefully working out the details of what happens next?

Would a loving mother bring her young children to an open playground, then just walk away?

Does the owner of a prized car collection just allow the cars to maintain themselves over time? Never performing tune-ups or changing the oil?

Of course not!

We certainly don't get oil changes, so how does GOD ensure that we can remain working in best possible condition?

We have a living spirit, with understanding of spiritual things. That means GOD can simply tell us what we must do to remain operating as planned.

Since we know that GOD loves us and cares deeply for our well-being, we can be assured that HE does communicate with us (and wants us to listen to HIM).

How does GOD communicate with us?

There are many ways that our almighty CREATOR can communicate his expectations to each of us, but the most certain method that all of us can understand the same:

GOD's living Word. You probably know this as the Bible.

The Bible is GOD's full message to all his people: past, present, and future. If we commit ourselves to understanding GOD's message (in the Bible), we can absolutely live as GOD intends for us.

The full story of our Christian Bible is more fascinating than any fictional book you've ever read. When one is fully engaged in it, the complete Bible is better than any science fiction, thriller, romantic, comedy, war, or horror movie ever!

Just like the oil change provides the car engine with fresh oil regularly, GOD's Word is intended to renew our spirit on a regular basis too.

With that being said, why should we believe the Bible is absolute truth?

You will probably hear the argument that our Bible was written by ordinary men, therefore subject to mistakes or even malicious corruption.

For any normal situation, that would be a valid point. However, we must remember the Bible is GOD's living Word. Even though it was written by men, it was authored by GOD.

We're talking about GOD here: the CREATOR of the universe, earth, you, me, everything. Do you honestly believe that GOD would allow inaccuracies to be written about HIM in his message to us? Do you think a single human can overpower GOD and write lies about HIM, specifically in a book meant to be read by all his beloved humans?

Of course not!

Even though humans wrote all books of the Bible, they were absolute believers… and GOD can easily work through spiritual means to ensure the absolute truth was written!

Bible Facts
The entire Christian Bible is delivered in two major parts:
Old Testament (39 books)
New Testament (27 books)

A total of 66 books, written by approximately 40 different people, over a period of approximately 1500 years, covering a period of 5,000+ years.

There is very accurate consistency in all the books; no errors can be found between any of the books and it covers the entire story of mankind, from the first man through the end of this world.

Archeologists have been digging up our past for centuries since the final chapter of the Bible was written and haven't found anything that definitively contradicts any facts presented in the Bible. On the contrary, real evidence of kings and cities documented in scripture has been proven by archeological finds.

There were many prophets of the Old Testament who wrote about futuristic events and visions. Looking back from our perspective today, we know that all future events written about in ancient times (relating to time periods that have already occurred by now) have come to be realized as true events. In other words, while there are still yet to be realized prophesies, all those events that were predicted to become a reality by now have been fulfilled. Not a single prophecy that was stated has ever been proven incorrect. That means 100% accuracy in futuristic predictions, an accomplishment that we know is impossible, when relying on humans only.

Is GOD able to fulfill his promise?

As told in John 3:16, GOD promises Eternal Life for those who believe in his Son. That means we can live forever. How can we know that GOD is able to follow through on such a promise?

Simple answer here: GOD created the physical universe. GOD created all known physical life. GOD created our spirit from nothing. Those major accomplishments all prove one thing that can assure us HE is more than capable of keeping our spirits alive forever:

Luke 1:37
For nothing will be impossible with GOD.

How do we know that GOD is telling us the truth?

GOD created us for his pleasure, and HE loves us very much (his prized creation). GOD wants us to love HIM too. Therefore, we can know that GOD will give us the most accurate instructions to ensure that we are able to do that.

Does the car owner in our example ever use bad quality oil or put antifreeze in the gas tank?

Of course not.

Likewise, GOD delivers his message directly to us, without any errors.

Our Bible is ABSOLUTE TRUTH!

{1.11 Absolute Love}

It's obvious that our creator GOD loves us very much and has created a perfect environment for us to live (within this vast universe).

GOD created us to be more than just fleshly bodies, and each of us is a unique person… with a spirit. Because HE is also spiritual, our spirit can personally relate to GOD.

Our spirit can experience the fullness of GOD's love and is therefore capable of returning that love to GOD. Because GOD loves all people, the obvious expectation is to share our love with all people too.

We know that GOD created us for his enjoyment. HE gets the most enjoyment when we return the love, respect, and glory that HE most certainly deserves, and when we remain living in peace with each other (sharing his love with all).

You have a purpose on this earth. I have a purpose on this earth. All people have a purpose on this earth.

While many of us have our own priorities in this life, we all share a single, primary purpose for our existence on this earth today:

We are here to serve and praise GOD. We must worship our CREATOR.

However, we are broken people…… living in a broken world.

Without getting into the reasons for it (yet), you already know this world is far from perfect. There is much heartache, sorrow, and pain in this world. With so much hate and anger in this world, it seems the majority of people are completely rejecting GOD's love.

So, if GOD loves us so much, why does HE allow this grievous condition to remain in the world?

Remember that GOD gave us free will. The freedom to choose our words, actions, and beliefs. HE wants us to love HIM because we want to do so, not because it is forced upon us.

We can choose to listen to GOD… or we can also choose to not listen to GOD.

Due to the influence of other spiritual forces (to be discussed later), the world has chosen to largely reject GOD's plans. Instead of working together for the advancement of GOD's overall plan for us, many of us have chosen to follow our own selfish plans for life. The world now sees the consequences of those tragic decisions.

So, the real question we should be asking is why does GOD even put up with us anymore? It's hard to believe that we're providing much of any enjoyment to HIM, so it seems feasible that GOD could just wipe us away from this earth… and be done with us for good!

The answer: GOD loves us that much. Even though many of us have corrupted his original plans for us, HE wants to give us opportunity to change; ensuring those of us who do commit to his plans will be saved for Eternal Life, as promised in the 'John 3:16' verse.

In order to achieve that kind of eternal salvation (in this severely corrupted world), there is a price. More details to come in the next step, but the only hope to save anybody for Eternal Life was by GOD sending his own Son… **to suffer and die an excruciating death in this world**.

That is what is meant by "**For GOD so loved the world that HE gave his one and only Son**".

Please think about this kind of love: GOD, our almighty CREATOR, who controls everything in our world (and beyond), loves you so much that HE was willing to sacrifice his own Son to die for you!

Any loving parent can't even imagine making the decision to give up their own child to a bunch of murderers, then allowing (and watching) their child get tortured, beaten and subjected to a slow, extremely painful death. Right?

Well, GOD did exactly that… for you and me. That alone makes me personally feel unworthy of such an awesome GOD.

You must also understand the Son (Jesus Christ) accepted the selfless task of living perfectly in this corrupted world among us and then sacrificing himself in the manner described above.

That is the ultimate show of love for us (from both GOD and the Son). They did not need to sacrifice anything for us, as it was not a requirement to save themselves.

It was a requirement to save us though. GOD sacrificed his Son to give each of us an opportunity for Eternal Life… in absolute peace, happiness, and joy!

That is ABSOLUTE LOVE.

That sounds like it would incur a very big cost, right?

How can we accept this opportunity for Eternal Life?

We've already answered part of this question. GOD loves us, so we need to return that love to GOD.

How much can we love GOD in return? Remember that we exist solely because of GOD, and we are given an opportunity for Eternal Life with GOD.

While both GOD and the Son showed absolute love for us by their sacrifice, we're not expected to return that much love to them; in that GOD doesn't ever require a loving parent to intentionally sacrifice their own child (certainly not as brutal as what HE did for us).

Instead, the way we can return GOD's love is by serving and praising HIM every day. You might be asking how you can serve and praise GOD every day.

That answer is provided in John 3:16: "**whoever believes in Him**" (Jesus Christ).

GOD already told us the requirement of serving HIM: by believing in his Son, Jesus Christ.

{1.12 Absolute Faith}

Do you have absolute belief in GOD now? There is absolutely an almighty GOD, who created everything… including you.

Do you believe the Bible is absolute truth now? The Bible is absolutely the perfect Word of GOD, specifically written for everybody… including you.

Do you believe in absolute love now? GOD created you. GOD provides for your needs every day. GOD sacrificed his only Son for you. HE doesn't just have love, but GOD **is** love.
GOD absolutely loves everybody… including you.

Jesus sacrificed his own life and died an excruciating death for everybody… including you.
The Son is also love.

Absolute Faith = Absolute Belief in the Absolute Truth, understanding GOD's Absolute Love.

I have many times gazed at a beautiful sunrise or the wonderful nature we see all around us. Those awe-inspiring moments reinforce my absolute faith in a loving GOD. You should try it too.

Make no mistake about it: GOD loves all people and provides for all to have Eternal Life with HIM. However, only those of us who commit to faithfully serving GOD, by means of believing in Jesus Christ, will be saved for Eternal Life.

So……. what does it mean to **believe in** Jesus Christ?

2) RECEIVE

John 1:11-12
He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive Him. Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in his Name, He gave the right to become children of GOD.

With absolute belief in GOD and knowing his promise of Eternal Life for my spirit, I needed to understand what it means exactly to believe in the Son. Those who believe in Jesus Christ are the spiritual children of GOD.

Truly, I needed to receive Jesus Christ as my personal savior. We are first born of the flesh, but we must be born again of the spirit.

I know many people get immediately turned off by hearing others who go around preaching about being "born again", but please hear me out:

Receiving Jesus Christ as your Savior is the **only** guaranteed way that you can be on the path of Eternal Life. Me too.

As explained in the first step, the Bible is absolute truth. There is just no way around it:
to understand what it means to believe in Jesus, you need to know Bible scripture.

So, let's start here. The remainder of this letter is directed to your spirit and is fully dependent on the Bible.

Unless otherwise specified, all verses are from New International Version (NIV) or NET Bible. Great reference: Bible Hub, biblehub.com (no embedded link here).

{2.1 The Beginning}

The LORD – Absolute authority; GOD is LORD.

Testament – A statement of truth. Testimony of facts.

Covenant – A sacred agreement between two partners.

Sin – An immoral act considered to be a transgression against the law of GOD.

Grace – Undeserved favor; receiving something that we don't deserve.

Mercy – Undeserved forgiveness; not receiving something that we do deserve.

Righteous – Morally right with GOD.

Gentiles – Not Jewish. The Jewish people were chosen by GOD to bring the salvation of mankind to this world. Jerusalem is GOD's city. Many generations of Israelites were the lineage to the birth of Jesus Christ. The nation of Israel was set apart from all other nations. The gentiles are other worldly nations.

As mentioned previously, our Bible consists of two major parts. Very brief summaries:

Old Testament – The story of a nation, including the fall of mankind.
New Testament – The story of a man, including the restoration of mankind.

Many people of various religions have heard the story of Adam and Eve, the first man and woman in the Bible. They were placed on this earth by GOD, in the Garden of Eden… which was a perfectly designed 'paradise on earth' (Book of Genesis, chapters one through three).

Remember, as discussed in the first step, you understand that GOD created humans as spiritual beings, just like HIM.

GOD had a very close relationship with Adam and Eve.

Genesis 1:27
So GOD created mankind in his own image, in the image of GOD HE created them; male and female HE created them.

The Book of Genesis explains how GOD gave rulership of the entire earth to Adam and Eve, telling them to live abundantly in it. The plans were for Adam and Eve to live forever and be the first parents of all mankind. They would populate this world and the subsequent generations of humans would continue to rule over the world, while always serving and praising GOD.

GOD had also told Adam that he could eat fruit from any tree in the Garden, except forbid him of eating fruit from one, specific tree. GOD warned Adam that, if he ate a bite of the fruit from the forbidden tree, then he would die (Genesis 2:16-17).

The same freedoms applied to both. They could eat fruit from any tree in the beautiful garden, except the one forbidden 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil'.

Then, the primary spirit of evil, known as the serpent (also known as the devil), tricked Eve into disobeying GOD's specific command… and she ate fruit from the forbidden tree. Eve then tempted Adam, and he also ate fruit from the only tree they were commanded not to eat from.

The seriousness of sin cannot be overlooked. Because GOD keeps all his promises, both Adam and Eve immediately suffered the full consequences of their disobedient action. They both lost their spiritual connection to GOD. Their bodies were no longer perfect for Eternal Life, and they started the aging process … which of course leads to bodily death (Genesis 3:16-19).

Much more was lost than just Adam and Eve's bodies. By breaking the spiritual bond with GOD, they lost their rulership over the earth and instead handed it over to the serpent (devil).

Because the devil now had rulership of the earth, he brought all evil with him too. With the connection to GOD now broken and the devil taking control of this world, all new generations of mankind have also suffered the same consequences of that evil day.

It must be stated that, while the devil may rule this world (for now), GOD still maintains full control of this world and everything else.

Evil now tempts every single one of us... and we all fall victim to it. **We all have sinned**.

Jesus was also tempted by the same evil, but never obeyed it. Instead, Jesus lived a perfect life and died a perfect death (according to GOD's law). **Jesus never sinned**.

Therefore, GOD has given full authority for Jesus to rule over all of us… and judge all of us.

{2.2 The Old Testament}

The Old Testament covers the period from Adam and Eve to the birth of Jesus Christ. It shows the relationship of GOD with the ancient world (**B**efore **C**hrist). It includes an older covenant between GOD and his people, which added specific laws that must be obeyed. These books are a very good resource to learn the character of GOD and the rich history of his people.

What we should learn from the Old Testament is, not only GOD's loving Spirit towards those who love and believe in HIM, but also his disgust with human sin. For example, after many generations of early mankind, the human population was indeed expanding greatly and yet the people continually strayed from GOD:

Genesis 6:5-8
But the LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind had become great on the earth. Every inclination of the thoughts of their minds was only evil all the time. The LORD regretted that HE had made humankind on the earth, and HE was highly offended. So the LORD said, "I will wipe humankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth – everything from humankind to animals, including creatures that move on the ground and birds of the air, for I regret that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the sight of the LORD.

The people became so sinful that GOD decided to wipe out the entire population and start over. HE did so with a big flood. Luckily for mankind, GOD did save a righteous man and his family. Noah was considered righteous because of his absolute faith in GOD. Read the story of Noah's Ark in the Book of Genesis, chapter 7.

After the flood waters receded, GOD promised to never again wipe out mankind with a flood. HE placed a rainbow in the sky as the reminder of this promise (Genesis 9:12-16). Whenever you see any rainbow, always give thanks to GOD… for the rainbow will always symbolize GOD's promise.

The flood didn't stop sin in this world. It wasn't too much later when GOD was angry because the people tried to build a 'tower of Babel', attempting to physically reach HIM on their own. HE aborted their plans by changing the language spoken by each builder, thereby confusing their ability to communicate. That is the reason so many languages exist in this world, even today. Read about the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9).

The ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by GOD as well, due to wickedness of the people. Not by a flood this time, but destruction by fire:

Genesis 19:24
Then the LORD rained down sulfur and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah. It was sent down from the sky by the LORD.

GOD then made a covenant with a true believer, named Abraham. Due to his faith in GOD, Abraham was willing to sacrifice his 'only' son Isaac. When GOD saw that Abraham was willing to kill his own beloved son for HIM, which proved absolute faith, GOD immediately stopped it from happening. Because Abraham obeyed GOD, people of all nations can be saved through his descendent, who is Jesus (Genesis 22:1-18).

As mentioned in the first step of this letter, the thought of a loving GOD expecting any father to sacrifice his own son seems outrageous; yet this was a foreshadow of what was to come… because GOD the FATHER did exactly that (sacrificed his only Son, Jesus).

Because of his absolute faith, Abraham was called GOD's friend:

James 2:23 (NLT)
And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: "Abraham believed GOD, and GOD counted him as righteous because of his faith." He was even called the friend of GOD.

There are many other people and places detailed in Old Testament scripture. Relationships, conquests/wars, prophesies, miracles, etc. The story of David & Goliath, a young shepherd boy who defeated a giant (1 Samuel 17:48-51); followed by his rise to become King David of Israel (who wrote most of the Book of Psalms). David's son was named Solomon, one whose wisdom was beyond this world (and he wrote most of the Proverbs).

There is the story of Jonah in the belly of a whale for three days (the Book of Jonah), the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus, chapter 14), even a talking donkey (Numbers 22:21-39).

Another important understanding of GOD is his ability to forgive us. All the people mentioned above had also committed sins, including murder. They all knew their sin and asked for GOD's forgiveness.

Three truths about all these Old Testament servants:

1) They were all sinners before GOD.
2) They all had absolute faith in GOD.
3) They were all forgiven by GOD.

In addition to GOD's infinite Love, that is what this story is about: **FAITH and FORGIVENESS**.

So… how did our LORD speak to his people in the days B.C.?

There are the Ten Commandments, delivered to Moses (Exodus 20:1-17). All GOD's people were required to follow these basic commands. There were many, many other ceremonial laws that are detailed within the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These are collectively known as 'the Mosaic Laws'.

GOD created these Mosaic Laws in the best interest of mankind. It provided governance of the people. If not for strict laws, the people would have unknowingly turned to sin all the time. With these laws in place, there could be no doubt as to what GOD wanted for those who loved HIM. By following his laws, it showed GOD who was truly faithful to HIM.

With that being said, the only way that people could satisfy GOD would be if they lived a perfect life without ever breaking any of GOD's laws; without ever committing a sinful act against GOD or anybody else.

That is an impossible reality in this fallen world, as the power of evil is too strong for us to defeat alone!

Therefore, everybody fell short of obeying GOD's law. Nobody could ever follow GOD's laws perfectly. Everybody committed sin. Everybody failed.

Why are sins so terrible?

Because the law of GOD requires payment for all sins committed by his people, nobody can spiritually enter into GOD's perfect Kingdom without paying the price for their sins committed while in the flesh.

What method of payment does GOD require for our sins? **Blood… and death**.

Romans 6:23
For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of GOD is Eternal Life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If a person sins, that person is no longer fit for Eternal Life with GOD… unless a completely pure, innocent life is sacrificed in place of the sinner.

In the Old Testament days, GOD required bloodshed in the form of sacrificing animals. While it sounds very barbaric, this form of atonement shows us the seriousness of our sins.

It required bloody sacrifice of the first born or most flawless animals in the flock. Raising these flocks was a primary means of livelihood for many. It had to be a true sacrifice of the best animals for it to matter, as GOD doesn't want the leftovers.

The story of Cain and Abel shows GOD's expectations early on. Both of them made sacrifice offerings to GOD. Abel sacrificed the firstborn of his flock, and GOD was pleased. Cain offered only 'some' of his fruits, not the best… and GOD rejected it (Genesis 4:3-5).

Genesis 4:7 (NLT)
"You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master."

I can imagine the sins became very numerous and so many animals had to be sacrificed. The sacrifices were only good enough to pay for past sins, therefore any new sins also required new animal sacrifices.

That system of animal sacrifice was never meant to be a permanent solution, as payment for people's sins.

However, the blood payment is still required for forgiveness of human sin.

GOD is always right and just. GOD must enforce his laws. When HE promises real eternal consequences, GOD must follow through on what HE says. If GOD relinquishes on his promise of eternal punishment, doesn't that mean HE can also relinquish his promise of Eternal Life?

Numbers 23:19
GOD is not human, that HE should lie, not a human being, that HE should change his mind. Does HE speak and then not act? Does HE promise and not fulfill?

Luckily for us, GOD does not ever lie or break his promises. This includes both promises of Eternal Life or eternal death.

Since GOD, who desires for us to be accepted into his Family, couldn't rely on the people to meet the requirements of his law, HE came up with another way to allow his people a chance to be saved for Eternal Life with HIM:

Deuteronomy 18:18
"**I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my Words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command Him. I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in MY NAME**."

Our loving GOD knew the only way to fully satisfy his law would be to send his own Son, not born of man, to dwell among his people … and live a perfectly sinless life… then get crushed… murdered by the people, and for the people … so that he could take the punishment for the sins of the people. This was prophesized 700 years before his coming to earth (Isaiah 53:4-6).

2 Corinthians 5:21
GOD made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of GOD.

Instead of many perfectly innocent animals being sacrificed for the sins of the people on a regular basis, GOD allowed one perfectly innocent man to be sacrificed for the sins of the people, once and for all! That man was Jesus Christ.

{2.3 The First Coming}

Romans 5:8
But GOD demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Peter 3:18
For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to GOD. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

Hebrews 9:26
Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But He has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Romans 3:22-24
This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of GOD, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

It was over 2000 years ago when Jesus Christ was born into this world, in an animal stable, basically homeless and poor. Not much is known about the childhood of Jesus, but the Bible does mention that he was very wise and eager to read Old Testament scriptures and learn with the religious experts of the day.

Luke 2:46-47
After three days they found Him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard Him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.

Jesus worked as a carpenter, probably in his twenties. He lived a completely sin-free life. Those years were preparing Him for his true mission: to be the Savior of GOD's people.

Jesus was about thirty years old when He was baptized by another known prophet, John the Baptist. It was immediately following this baptism with water that Jesus began his ministry on this earth to start baptizing the people with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:13-17).

{2.4 Jesus Serves}

Romans 5:19
For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one Man the many will be made righteous.

Disciple – A person who learns from a master teacher, applies that knowledge in their own life and then teaches others the same lessons.

Jesus Christ first came to serve GOD's people. Not just those who lived in that age, but all of GOD's people, for all time. Because of his dedication to serve mankind… Jesus, who is the Son of GOD, is also known as the 'Son of Man'.

Mark 10:45
"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

The earthly ministry of Jesus Christ started by building a solid team of dedicated followers, known as the twelve apostles. Even though these first disciples were following Jesus as their leader, He taught them a valuable lesson about serving others: Instead of being served by those he was leading, Jesus washed the dirty feet of his disciples (serving their needs instead). Washing the feet of all guests was a customary tradition in those days, usually reserved for the lowly slaves.

John 13:4-5
So He got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him.

It should be noted these apostles debated amongst themselves about which one of them was 'the greatest', while Jesus (who is the greatest of all) shows that humbling yourself and serving others is what defines our greatness (Matthew 23:11-12, Luke 22:24-27).

Matthew 18:4 (ESV)
"Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven."

Jesus and his twelve apostles went on a mission to teach about GOD's Kingdom.

{2.5 The New Covenant}

As mentioned, in the Old Testament days, GOD required his laws to be strictly followed.
With the ministry and sacrifices of Jesus Christ, GOD authorized a new covenant between HIM and his people (those of us who believe in Jesus).

Does that mean that GOD's moral law has changed or been abolished?

No! Absolutely not. GOD doesn't change his expectations, just our path of salvation.

Believing in Jesus Christ is our new (and only) path to be saved for Eternal Life. By living a perfect and sacrificial life, Jesus has already met the full requirements of GOD's law.

Matthew 5:17
"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

No need to remember a long list of rules; we just need a true relationship with Jesus Christ.

John 14:6
Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the FATHER except through Me."

There isn't any flexibility in the words of John 14:6. Without any room for misinterpretation, you must decide if you truly believe it.

Only three real possibilities to analyzing this statement, as well as all words spoken by Jesus:

Jesus Christ was either crazy in his beliefs, lying to everybody, or telling the truth.

You already know that GOD promises us the same: Eternal Life will be granted to those who believe in his Son (Jesus). You already know the Bible is absolute truth. There were many eyewitnesses during the ministry of Jesus who also testify to the same. It's the truth.

Therefore, following the way of Jesus Christ is your only path to Eternal Life… period.

{2.6 The Basics}

While the judicial and ceremonial laws don't apply anymore, GOD's moral law is still valid. It should be fully understood that, by following the teachings of Jesus, you are obeying all of GOD's required laws.

Our CREATOR GOD wants to have a personal relationship with each of us. You need to understand the type of relationship here is one of authoritative rule, where Jesus is King. Not just a 'casual' relationship; Jesus must be ruler over your entire life (Ephesians 1:17-23).

Galatians 3:26 (NLT)
For you are all children of GOD through faith in Christ Jesus.

As this verse says, those who have faith in Jesus Christ are the children of GOD. Compare that to the relationship between a human parent and their own children. Good parents love their children very much and want the absolute best for them. Because a child is not wise enough to understand the dangers in this world, the parents must teach the child proper behaviors. They don't want rebellious kids, but desire their children to live a life of peace, happiness, and joy.

Likewise, our FATHER doesn't want rebellious kids, but wants his children (believers in Christ) to experience a life of peace, happiness, and joy.

GOD has absolute trust in Jesus, who teaches us proper behaviors and the spiritual dangers to avoid. Those rebellious people who reject these teachings will displease the FATHER.

One of the big speeches delivered by Jesus is known as the 'Sermon on the Mount', which included a series of attitudes that pleases our FATHER.

Blessed – to be satisfied, in GOD's favor.

These are often called the Beatitudes (the spoken words of Jesus Himself) →

Matthew 5:3-12
"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them."

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied."

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see GOD."

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of GOD."

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them."

"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things about you falsely on account of Me. Rejoice and be glad because your reward is great in Heaven, for they persecuted the prophets before you in the same way."

What exactly do these statements mean?

This is qualifying the basic traits of those people who will be blessed by GOD. Not just with Eternal Life in the Kingdom of Heaven, but they can be blessed in this life on earth too.

Those who are poor in spirit are the ones who realize they are not worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven and must trust in GOD for everything … unlike those who think too highly of themselves.

Those who mourn are the ones who grieve this fallen world and for their own life, because they actively choose not to participate in this sinful world … unlike those who live solely to enjoy themselves. Those who mourn dead loved ones on earth can be comforted with peace too.

Those who are meek are the ones who are humble and do not seek glory from others … unlike those who are prideful and live to exert their selfish power in the world. Being meek does not equate to being 'weak', as it takes strength to overcome the desire for self-glory.

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are the ones who desire to learn and live their life in a way that is right by GOD, living a wholesome life … unlike those who choose to only live for their own pleasures.

Those who are merciful are the ones who show compassion and mercy for others … unlike those who are unkind or mean-spirited towards others.

Those who are pure in heart are the ones who act righteously and have innocent motives for their words and actions … unlike those who have deception in their hearts and only selfish motives for their words and actions.

Those who are the peacemakers are the ones who promote peace among others, wherever possible (sometimes at the expense of their own ego) … unlike those who stir up hate and controversary among others (many times for no good reason).

Those who are persecuted for righteousness are the ones who get mocked and hated for living a 'clean' life in this world and promoting good behaviors … unlike those who only live to have fun and influence others to bad behaviors.

Those who get insulted, persecuted, and falsely accused due to living for Jesus are the ones who will get richly rewarded with Eternal Life … in the Kingdom of Heaven!

{2.7 Jesus Teaches Us}

Obviously just believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of GOD is not enough. As the Bible tells us in John 3:16, "whoever believes in Him" will be saved for Eternal Life. That means we need to believe in what Jesus teaches us… and if we believe what Jesus teaches us, we will work towards living these truths too.

In addition to the Beatitudes, we are taught many specific words of wisdom, regarding what GOD expects from us. Jesus not only spoke these beliefs, but He also lived them.

The verses in this section are solely from the Gospel (Good News), the words of Jesus Christ

Matthew 5:13
"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot."

Back in those days, salt was the primary means to preserve meat. The salt was added so the meat wouldn't spoil as quickly. Of course, the salt didn't completely prevent the meat from rotting, it just delayed the process.

Likewise, when Jesus says that we are the salt of the earth, it means those of us who believe and follow Jesus can preserve this earth. You don't need me to tell you this world is corrupt and full of hate and evil… just watch the news, or maybe even in your own home. The believers in Christ are the 'light' in this dark world. Similar to how salt delays meat from rotting too quickly, the believers in Christ can delay the moral rotting of this world.

If we turn away from these beliefs (lose our 'saltiness'), then we're no longer helping to preserve this world, so will be thrown out with the rest of world. It could be argued that salt cannot lose it saltiness (once saved, forever saved); regardless, you must stay salty.

Matthew 5:38-39
"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also."

Many people have probably heard this one before. So, what exactly does it mean?

It means believers in Christ need to accept that evil is in this world, and at times will harm us. Somebody with evil intent can harm us physically, emotionally, financially, etc. When it happens, we must not retaliate with any evil act. Repaying evil with evil only promotes… well, evil.

Try to picture the actual scenario where a person slaps another person on their right cheek. Not talking about a closed fist punch, but a hard slap across the face. While the slap itself is not a threat to your life (not even enough to knock you down), it will still be painful… and that pain could be compounded. You might experience the physical sting of being slapped as well as the emotional pain, due to the other person's mean-spirited actions. Even if the slapper was totally in the wrong, do not fulfill your desire to slap that person back.

Instead, Jesus tells us to "turn to them the other cheek also". You must not retaliate against the slapper in any sinful manner. Turning the other cheek is how the one who was slapped can show the love of Jesus. While it includes physical harm done to you, it also refers to any harm inflicted to your finances, emotional state, reputation, personal property, and so on.

If somebody insults you or unjustly lies about you to others, you should not cause any type of harm to the accuser; physically, emotionally, or otherwise. You should understand they are acting on evil urges (for whatever reason), and maybe even try to help them.

Being slapped on the right cheek refers to verbal attacks, unfair mistreatment, being scammed, and even mild physical assaults. Of course, it doesn't mean that, if somebody hits you with a brick on the right cheek, you should turn the other cheek.

If you are being physically attacked, you absolutely have the right to defend yourself and fight back, if needed. But, even in that situation, do not persist in anger, hate, or even fear. Instead, maintain a strong, faithful posture. Use the legal system to counteract the evil deed, if needed.

Owning firearms for protection is totally fine, but never to be used with malicious intent. Turning the other cheek means no sinful retaliation, but it means you should not allow fear to take over either. This shows others that such evil actions do not cause you to fade away in your faith.

Basically, this statement tells us that we must understand this evil world will persecute and hate believers (and cause pain for those believers), but we are expected to carry ourselves in a manner that keeps us free from any evil in our own heart … and stand strong in our faith.

Matthew 26:52
Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back in its place! For all who take hold of the sword will die by the sword."

Matthew 5:40
"And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well."

Not an easy path to follow, but remember that Jesus showed us a living example and promises "blessed are the peacemakers". The rewards from GOD outweigh any pain experienced on earth… for those who follow these teachings.

Matthew 5:43-45

"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 children 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."

While this verse seems easy to understand (although difficult to follow), you need to also understand the full context:

Jesus says that, instead of hating your enemies (and those who mock you), you must "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you". This is basically stating that your enemies are your neighbor too… and they are people. We all have the same CREATOR. Even though they may persecute you and cause harm, you should pray for them to come to Jesus too.

The other reason to love and pray for your enemies is not for their benefit, but for your benefit. Do not maintain any anger or hate in your heart towards anybody or you will corrupt your own faith. If you always keep love in your heart, you can be considered blessed.

The final message in this verse also reminds us that GOD is CREATOR of all people and loves all people. Therefore, blessings as well as tough times will come to all, including those who serve HIM faithfully as well as those who don't.

Matthew 6:14

"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly FATHER will also forgive you."

Forgiving people is a central theme throughout the Bible. Thank GOD for that too, since everybody is a sinner. This verse tells us that, like our FATHER will forgive each of us, we are also expected to forgive other people.

If somebody commits a sin against you (which harms you in some way), you should forgive that person. If so, then GOD will forgive your sins.

Some clarity here (from my understanding):

By definition, any sin is a transgression against GOD's law. Therefore, only GOD can forgive any sin. You cannot forgive anybody's sin, even if the sinful act harms you directly.

With that being said… you can forgive somebody of harm they committed against you.

GOD wants us all to love each other, so a person commits sin when deliberately hurting you (physically, emotionally, financially, etc). You can forgive the person for hurting you and can even ask GOD to forgive the person. However, only GOD can choose whether to forgive that person of the sin they committed (that hurt you in some way).

This verse is stating that GOD forgives those who forgive others. Therefore, in this example, while you forgive the person who hurt you (committed sin), that forgiveness does not mean GOD forgives their sin (of hurting you).

Since you forgave the person for hurting you, even though GOD may not forgive their sin, HE will forgive sins that you have committed. If you had hurt somebody else at some other time, GOD can forgive your sin against them… even though that person whom you hurt may not forgive you of hurting them.

Make sense? If not, as with all scripture, pray to GOD for more wisdom.

Matthew 6:19-21

"Do not accumulate for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But accumulate for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

It's easy to get caught up in this 'material' world, where success is often measured by how much wealth a person has accumulated. The pursuit of worldly riches will cause many to fall away from faith in our loving FATHER.

Jesus warns us that, if we remain too concerned with being rich or always feeling the need to buy the latest and greatest material items, we risk losing it all. Our money and physical possessions can be taken away from us at any time.

However, if you focus your concerns on living the same kind of life that Jesus lived, you can build heavenly wealth instead. Any rewards you collect for Heaven cannot ever be taken away, as those treasures are yours forever!

The basic message here is that wherever you commit your time and passion, that shows GOD your true desires… whether they are for gaining riches in this world or faithfully serving GOD and promoting his Kingdom (which accumulates eternal treasures).

Matthew 6:24

"No one can serve two masters, for 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 GOD and money."

This verse is directly related to a person's true desires. Those who are most concerned about worldly riches will consider material wealth as more important than faith in GOD.

That also means the people who put faith in GOD as highest priority, will show they prefer to serve HIM instead of material wealth.

While this verse references serving GOD or money, you must understand that **nothing** should be more important than serving and praising GOD.

Matthew 7:1-2
"Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For by the standard you judge you will be judged, and the measure you use will be the measure you receive."

This verse seems obvious, but don't deceive yourself. It's very easy to judge others, even if you don't consciously realize it. It could be mild in nature, when we automatically view a person negatively based solely on how they look, their job, or maybe where they live.

Of course, it can be more deliberate. Any form of prejudice, which literally means 'pre-judging', is against GOD's law. Whether it be judging others based on their race, ethnicity, gender, age or anything … this verse warns us that we will be judged by GOD just as harshly too.

While things such as race or gender cannot be controlled by a person, what about judging others who commit sins (which they should be able to control)?

Answer: while it's expected to call them out for their sins, we must resist the desire to judge them too. We cannot understand the person's history or spiritual state.

Instead of judging the sinful person, we should pray for them (and pray with them, if able).

Receiving Jesus Christ will show you that, when we trust and love GOD with all our heart, we will be able to look beyond judging others in any way … so that we can feel love for them instead of being negatively influenced into making harsh judgment against them.

The first takeaway here – when we judge others, it's a matter of the heart. We may not necessarily say it out loud, although that could be worse because we influence others to judge likewise, but when we allow our perceived thoughts to influence how we act towards other people, that is making an unfair judgment.

The second takeaway here – be fully advised that GOD knows your heart perfectly… and whatever level of judgment you use against others will be the same level of judgment that HE will use against you too.

Other verses that focus on judging others for their sin include Jesus scolding a crowd who wanted to stone a woman to death, for committing adultery … and a warning that we should not judge others for their sin, while we have our own sins too:

John 8:7
When they kept on questioning him, He straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."

Matthew 7:3
"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?"

The lesson to be learned is that, while you should call out sin when you see it, you had better not use your personal judgment against anybody, as that is GOD's job. Any unforgiven judgment you practice against others can and will be used against you (on Judgment Day).

Matthew 7:7-8

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."

This verse may be misunderstood by readers, sometimes to the point of then assuming the Bible is incorrect (which is incorrect thinking itself).

What Jesus means here is that everyone who asks for something (in absolute faith), within the will of GOD, receives what is being asked for. Our FATHER will ensure the absolute believer who seeks out his guidance will find it. Jesus is ready to answer our call, but we need to reach out to Him first (knock on the door).

For example, I'm asking GOD for the wisdom necessary to write this letter with absolute accuracy (no errors in the message). Because I absolutely believe with all my heart that GOD listens … and I'm sure this request is within GOD's will … it shall happen.

This verse does not mean that everyone will automatically get whatever they ask for. If you don't have absolute faith when asking, don't expect to receive it. If you ask for something out of selfish motive only, don't expect to receive it. For example, if you seek to find the winning lottery numbers, don't hold your breath for it to happen (unless it's within GOD's will).

How do you ask GOD for anything? You pray.

Matthew 6:9-13

"So pray this way: Our FATHER in Heaven, may your NAME be honored, may your Kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we ourselves have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Jesus taught us what is referred to as 'The LORD's Prayer'.

Prayer is a very important part of the believer's life. Prayer is how we speak to GOD directly. It doesn't have to be a well-constructed prayer said aloud, but it can be a silent, short and simple prayer (within our mind).

A truly faithful person desires to pray, giving thanks and praise to GOD, acknowledging our needs, and boldly asking for what we want (within GOD's will).

Jesus tells us how to pray and the only Son of GOD prayed very regularly himself, dedicating quiet time to talk to our FATHER.

As with all aspects of life, you should see how Jesus lived as a perfect example.

Matthew 7:12
"In everything, treat others as you would want them to treat you, for this fulfills the law and the prophets."

This is known by many as 'the golden rule', even by those who've never studied the Bible. Your mother may have told you this when you were still a child.

Regardless, these words were spoken by Jesus Christ. It makes sense to anybody, so there is no misunderstanding here.

Simply put, always treat others with the same love and respect that you hope others would treat you with as well. You fully understand how you like to be treated by other people, so you fully understand how they would also like to be treated.

This includes not only words or actions in direct communication with the other person, but also when speaking of them with anybody else.

Matthew 19:4-6
"Haven't you read," He replied, "that at the beginning the CREATOR 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what GOD has joined together, let no one separate."

This verse emphasizes the importance of proper marriage and the fact that GOD created the covenant of marriage from the beginning of mankind (see also Ephesians 5:21-33).

A natural born male marries a natural born female. It doesn't mean that everybody must get married, but it does mean that those of us who do get married must understand the commitment we are making before GOD. Once married before GOD, we are not to separate that bond, which is both physical and spiritual (as intimate as we can possibly be).

Any other human-based variations of marriage are outside of GOD's moral law.

Matthew 5:27-28
"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

For those of us who do commit to marriage, we must remain faithful to our partner, which in turn shows faithfulness to our CREATOR.

We should not become physically intimate with any other person while married. But Jesus is informing us that adultery is a matter of the heart too. Don't cheat on your spouse in your heart.

It should be noted the word ‘lust’ indicates very strong physical desire towards somebody other than our spouse, but it’s likely that we shouldn’t have a stronger emotional connection with anybody else either … as it will break our sealed marital bond. Basically, we should not cheat our spouse of any truth. Nothing should be done in secret or with deception in our heart.

Matthew 25:40
“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for Me.’”

This is a direct call to help the poor and needy of this world (Including foreigners). All of GOD’s children are spiritual brothers and sisters. When you help any of them, these acts will show your love for Jesus. When you neglect them, you are neglecting Jesus. **Also remember**: the miracle of human life begins with an embryo in the womb. Aborting GOD’s miracle of early life is killing the very least of our brothers and sisters.

Matthew 22:36-40
“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” Jesus said to him, “'Love the LORD your GOD with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

This verse sums everything up in two basic statements. Two overall requirements to ensure we follow GOD’s expectations. If we believe in Jesus, which is a requirement for Eternal Life, then we’ll believe in these two commandments.

First and foremost, love GOD in every way. GOD created you, and has shown absolute LOVE towards you, so you should want to love GOD just as much. Without GOD, we are nothing. With GOD, we are everything. GOD wants us to have an Eternal Life with HIM, in his awesome Kingdom. No matter whatever else we love here on earth, it would not be possible without GOD’s love for us first. So, love GOD with all your heart, soul, and mind!

Secondly, since GOD loves all of us, we must also love each other. That is GOD’s will for us. Just a reminder that our ‘neighbors’ are everybody else in this world, both believers and unbelievers. Those who like us, as well as those who don’t like us.

Matthew 16:24
Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.”

Mark 8:34
Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me.”

Luke 9:23
Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me.”

John 12:25-26

"Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for Eternal Life. Whoever serves Me must follow Me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My FATHER will honor the one who serves Me."

Crucifixion - Execution of a person by nailing or binding them to a cross.

Even though He was a totally innocent man: Jesus was betrayed, falsely accused, and convicted in a fraudulent manner... and sentenced to death (Mark 14:43-64). The method of death was a brutal crucifixion. This type of execution was reserved for the worst of the worst criminals. It was the most inhumane type of execution during the rule of the Roman empire... and probably the worst type of execution ever!

Jesus was flogged, beaten, mocked and spit upon; before being nailed to a cross and hung up to die a slow death in front of a huge crowd while the Roman soldiers laughed at Him. After hours of excruciating pain, Jesus spoke out to GOD... and finally died (John 19:1-35).

On the third day of being in the grave, Jesus was raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The Bible documents that Jesus then walked the earth for another forty days (Acts 1:2-3), and then the body of Jesus was taken up to Heaven (Luke 24:51, Acts 1:8-9).

During this process, Jesus was forced to carry his own cross to the place of his execution. It was a heavy cross that had to be carried for a long distance, after He had already been whipped and beaten to a bloody mess.

The verses above explain that, if we also want Eternal Life, we must deny ourselves and take up our own cross. This message is so important, that it's found in all four Gospels.

It means we must give up the immoral pleasures of this world and suffer for Jesus, remembering that He suffered for us. While being wealthy is not sinful in itself, we must give up our selfish desire for worldly riches and comforts, sacrificing for Jesus instead.

If we believe in Jesus, then we want to follow his path of Eternal Life too. That means a life of absolute faith, sacrifice… and yes, even suffering. That is why Jesus says "anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for Eternal Life".

Matthew 7:13-14

"Enter through the narrow gate, because the gate is wide and the way is spacious that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. But the gate is narrow and the way is difficult that leads to Life, and there are few who find it."

Matthew 7:21

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven – only the one who does the will of my FATHER in Heaven."

As mentioned in verses above, the life of a true Christian can be a challenging road; difficult to maintain over long periods of time. Only with absolute faith can one continue the journey.

These verses should absolutely serve as a warning to you. It warns those who take the easy paths in life will suffer 'destruction'… whereas those who take the difficult path will find 'life'.

The most alarming part of the verse is that Jesus explicitly tells us that **many** will enter the wide gate of destruction and only a **few** will enter the narrow gate of life.

Basically, most people are living on the path of eternal destruction… and only a few of us are living on the path of Eternal Life!

Please note the second verse above (Matthew 7:21). Many people claim to be Christian, and say they believe in GOD… but many of those people are also deceived. Many who claim to be Christians and think they are 'good people' might be doomed. See also Luke 13:23-25.

Listen to what Jesus tells us here about who will enter Eternal Life in Heaven:

"Only the one who does the will of my FATHER in Heaven".

What is the will of his FATHER, who is GOD? We are already told in John 3:16 →

"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."

Believing in Jesus Christ is the only path to inheriting Eternal Life in GOD's Kingdom of Heaven.

John 20:31
But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of GOD, and that by believing you may have life in his Name.

{2.8 The Parables}

Parable - A simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson, as told by Jesus.

One of the very effective techniques used by Jesus to make sure his teachings are relatable includes the usage of parables. These short stories can be very powerful in making a point.

Here are a few of the many parables found in the Gospel books of Jesus.

Please note the content below is for reference only, as you need to read the actual scripture for full context (as well as other parables not mentioned here). Also note these parables were told 2000 years ago, so the scripture may seem a little dated (but the message remains the same).

Parable of the Sower – Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
This story shows how the seed, representing the Word of GOD, does not change.

The seed is dependent on the ground where it's planted. The ground is representative of a person's heart. The ability for this seed to grow is dependent on the person →

If the heart of a person is too hardened and immediately rejects the Word: that person will not allow the seed to grow. That ground has no soil (their heart is evil).

If the heart of a person has some soil, but is on rocky ground: that person does listen to the Word with acceptance, but will fall away when life gets tough. That seed never takes root.

If the heart of a person has soil, but the seed is sown among thorns: that person does listen to the Word with acceptance; but the riches, temptations, and worries of this worldly life are like the thorns and weeds that choke it out (the seed will fail to grow much).

However, if the heart of a person has good soil: that person listens to the Word with cheerful acceptance and lives according to it... and that seed of faith will grow to a great size and produce much fruit!

Parable of the Good Samaritan – Luke 10:25-37
This story shows us a good example of being kind and compassionate to others, even foreigners and strangers.

A person of one ethnicity was beaten and robbed by a bunch of men, and they left him half-dead on the side of the road. A couple other people of the same ethnicity, including a religious man, were soon walking along the same road… but failed to help whatsoever. They just kept walking past the bleeding man.

Then, a man of foreign ethnicity (a Samaritan) walked along the same road. He saw the injured man and immediately felt compassion for him. So, the Samaritan stopped and helped the man and bandaged his wounds. The Samaritan, who was a foreigner to the beaten man, changed his own plans so he could take the man to the local inn… and even paid for the man to stay a couple nights (while his wounds healed). He tended to the hurt man and ensured the inn keeper was fully onboard with it too.

Jesus tells us that we are to do the same: help others wherever possible, even foreigners.

Parable of the Talents – Matthew 25:14-30
This story shows us the importance of using our natural abilities in the service of GOD and his Kingdom.

You are fully aware that each person has talents in different areas. Some people are musically gifted, others are athletic, some people are great writers, speakers, leaders, etc.

It's very important to realize that all our natural abilities (talents) are actually gifts from GOD. With that being said, while we can certainly use those gifts for our own needs, such as finding a fulfilling career, the primary purpose of using those talents is to glorify GOD and promote his Kingdom.

When we use our talents to promote GOD's Word, it's like the ones in this parable who invested their talents… and received much more in return, similar to monetary investments.

However, if we choose to ignore using our gifted talents when it comes to GOD's plans, we are burying them like the person in this parable who is referred to as the evil and lazy one.

Of course, I can only imagine what GOD says about those who use their talents to promote their own selfish, evil desires.

We all need to listen and understand this parable.

Parable of the Wise Man and Foolish Man – Matthew 7:24-27
This story shows us the importance of building a solid, faithful foundation in our lives.

Jesus says that those of us who read the Bible and live by it will be like one who builds a house on hard rock ground. When the rains and wind come, the house will remain standing strong.

Jesus also says that those of us who don't read and apply the Bible will be like the one who builds a house on sand. When the rains and wind come, the house will get flooded and collapse.

In order to remain strong in your faith, you must build your life around the foundation of the Gospel that Jesus teaches.

Parable of the Unforgiving Servant – Matthew 18:21-35
This story shows us the importance of forgiving others, especially because GOD forgives us. It reminds us of the fact that GOD will forgive our sins, but we must also forgive others for any sins they may commit against us.

In this story, a king has compassion for one of his servants who owes him thousands of dollars… and completely forgives the debt owed. The king released this servant from owing him anything.

The story continues with the same servant then contacting another servant of the king, who happened to owe the forgiven servant a few dollars… and demanding his payment. Basically, even though the first servant was forgiven of a huge debt owed to the king, like the many sins we have committed, he refused to forgive the second servant of a much smaller debt owed.

It would be like expecting GOD to forgive us for our many sins, but we fail to forgive another person of their one sin (that harmed us directly).

The outcome of this story: the king ended up throwing the first servant in prison to be tortured until he repaid his (previously forgiven) debt to the king… because the first servant refused to forgive the smaller debt owed to him (by the second servant).

{2.9 The Holy Trinity}

John 14:26
"But the Advocate, 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 20:21-22
Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the FATHER has sent me, I am sending you." And with that He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

In addition to receiving Jesus Christ as your Savior, you must also receive the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit should be the driving force in our daily, earthly lives. This Spirit resides in the heart of all true believers and becomes our conscience, who influences us to do GOD's will and convicts us when we break GOD's law.

While not directly referenced as such in the Bible, you may have heard the term 'Holy Trinity'. They are also referred to as the 'Triune GOD': The FATHER, the Son, the Holy Spirit.

The three Spirits of this Holy Trinity have been around forever (Genesis 1:1).

The FATHER, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were not created. Everything else and everybody else in the universe was created at some point (even though we can live forever after creation).

The three Spirits of the Holy Trinity are everywhere (at the same time). All other physical and spiritual beings can only be in a single place at any given time. This allows the Holy Trinity to not depend on space or time, as we know it. The FATHER, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the only ones who can be in Heaven and on earth (at the same time); they can be in our past, present, and future (at the same time).

While they are three separate entities: The FATHER, the Son, and the Holy Spirit completely agree with each other on every belief. You will never find any two humans who agree on everything 100% of the time (not even identical twins), but the Holy Trinity does agree perfectly with each other, which is the absolute truth that is the Bible.

It should be recognized that, because of these known truths, the three spirits of the Holy Trinity are far superior to any created being. These three individual spirits are the united highest power SPIRIT and rule over everything together. It's true the FATHER is supreme to all, as this is fully acknowledged throughout scripture, especially by the Son (see John 14:23-28).

Colossians 1:15-16
The Son is the image of the invisible GOD, the firstborn over all creation. For in Him all things were created: things in Heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through HIM and for HIM.

John 6:46-47
"No one has seen the FATHER except the One who is from GOD; only He has seen the FATHER. Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has Eternal Life."

Everything was created **by GOD, through GOD** and **for GOD**. Jesus Christ is the Son, who is the physical image of the one and only GOD. He (that is GOD, in the image of Jesus) is the authoritative One who bridges the invisible realm with the physical world. See John 12:44-45.

Scripture shows that we can trust any of the three spirits in the Holy Trinity as being fully GOD. They all have absolute authority when it comes to being the Word of GOD.

Genesis 1:26
Then **GOD said**, "Let **us** make mankind in **our** image...

John 1:1-3
In the beginning was the Word, and **the Word was with GOD, and the Word was GOD**. He was with GOD in the beginning. Through HIM all things were made; without HIM nothing was made that has been made.

John 1:14
The **Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us**. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the FATHER, full of grace and truth.

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

While highly controversial to some, this means the Holy Trinity is a reference to 'GOD'.

GOD the Father.
GOD the Son.
GOD the Holy Spirit.

The Father is GOD.
The Son is GOD.
The Holy Spirit is GOD.

GOD is fully authoritative in all matters; all of GOD:
The FATHER is supreme ruler, initiator of creation and redemption.
The Son came to earth as a man, to bring redemption to mankind.
The Holy Spirit is our spiritual guide, to lead mankind to the truth.
**It should be noted: the Son will come again, to judge mankind.*

John 16:13
"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come."

The FATHER, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all one GOD (not three ‘gods’).

Three independent Spirits … but also one, united spiritual force.

It’s a difficult concept to understand, but it does not change anything when referring to ‘GOD’.

Similar to the different parts of a human body: each part serves a role in the body’s functionality, but it is one single physical body. The head is responsible for directing the other body parts to perform their role. Each body part is needed for the whole body to function. The body cannot function properly with just a head, or just arms and legs. It needs all parts to function as a single physical body.

The FATHER, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the three Spirits that are a single spiritual body.

Since understanding all truths of GOD is beyond human capabilities, this is the closest other analogy that I can come up with; a very simple human example**:**

Think of a worldly hierarchical government structure. The country’s top leader is the President. The Vice President is the second-in-command person. The Chief of Staff is the third person (responsible for managing all other staff). While they are three independent persons, they all share the same mission of running the country’s government… they operate under a single ‘Administration’.

Another similar example could be a private corporation. While most corporate structures have a single leader (the CEO), the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Chief Operations Officer (COO) are other high-level executives that have authority over the company and its employees too. They set policy and make the rules; each having their own specific roles… and collectively referred to as ‘Management’.

The worldly President or CEO has full overriding authority over their entire organization, like the FATHER. The other members of executive leadership also have authority over the same organization (like the Son and Holy Spirit).

There is one major difference between a worldly administration or management team, when compared to GOD:

While the worldly organizations may have three top level persons, all responsible for governing their organization, those three persons each have their own beliefs and opinions on how best to manage it. They agree on the organization’s high-level mission, but they will never agree with each other on everything, every time. In fact, they may have many areas of differing opinions (which can even be counterproductive to the best interests of the organization).

Not so with GOD. The Holy Trinity represents three different Spirits, but shares one mind. The FATHER, the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit do not have any opinions on anything. They are all in 100% agreement with each other, all the time… and they only know truth. When all you know is truth, you cannot have any opinion (not based solely on truth).

That means GOD doesn’t just know the truth… but GOD is the truth. A single ‘body’ of truth.

1 John 5:6-8
This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. **For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.**

Therefore, GOD (who is three persons) is referred to as 'HE' or 'HIM'; one spiritual body, one spiritual mind. When any Spirit of GOD speaks, HE is speaking for all three Spirits.

Person: Individual personality
World: three persons, three physical bodies, three spiritual minds
GOD: three Persons, one spiritual body, one spiritual mind

GOD is the Holy Trinity.
GOD is the Spiritual Body of Love.
GOD is the Spiritual Body of Truth.

John 10:29-30
"My FATHER, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my FATHER's hand. **I and the FATHER are one**."

Exodus 3:13-14
Moses said to GOD, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The GOD of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" **GOD said to Moses, "I AM who I AM**. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: '**I AM** has sent me to you.'"

John 8:58
"Very truly I tell you," **Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I Am!"**

The Son is Jesus Christ, who is fully GOD and was fully man too. Jesus is the only person who has a full experience of being GOD and a full experience of being a man.

Because the Son has been fully GOD and fully man, and we are commanded to follow Him in spirit, the 'single body' reference is used here as well: Jesus Christ is the head and all believers in Christ make up the spiritual body.

Because all true believers are the body of Christ, and Christ is the head of that body, all true believers share in the same Kingdom as the Spiritual body of GOD (which includes Christ).

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 (NLT)
The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part.

Understanding the concept of one GOD as three distinct spirits is difficult for humans to truly grasp, as even my analogy fails to explain it fully.

No worries though; the Holy Spirit 'will teach you all things', so you must receive the Holy Spirit.

{2.10 Fruit of the Spirit}

Galatians 5:22-23
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.

This verse explains the type of fruit those living in Christ will also produce. If you welcome the Holy Spirit into your daily life, then you will desire to produce good fruit.

These are fruits of the Holy Spirit; the personal attributes of those who believe in Jesus Christ:

Love – A deep feeling of affection, caring, loyalty and devotion. We are commanded to love one another, as Jesus loves each of us. That doesn't mean to just love those who love us back, but also love those who may not care much for us. If we live by the Spirit, we will love the spirit of the other person too.

Love is patient, love is kind, it is not envious. Love does not brag, it is not puffed up. It is not rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily angered or resentful. It is not glad about injustice, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. [1 Corinthians 13:4-7]

Joy – Biblical joy is more than just a happy feeling. It's a lasting emotion that comes from the choice to trust that GOD will fulfill his promises.

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]

Peace – Knowing that the GOD of this universe is with you; trusting in absolute faith. It's not just knowing, but it's also living it out. Christian peace comes also from knowing that Jesus died and overcame this world (for you). Those with spiritual peace can be comforted even in times of trouble.

Do not be anxious about anything. Instead, in every situation, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, tell your requests to GOD. And the Peace of GOD that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. [Philippians 4:6-7]

Jesus said,
"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 14:27]

Patience – The capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset.

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. [Romans 12:12]

Kindness – The quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate.

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, GOD forgave you. [Ephesians 4:32]

Goodness – The quality of being morally good or virtuous.

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. [Romans 12:21]

Faithfulness – The quality of being faithful, loyal; fidelity.

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. [Hebrews 11:1]

Gentleness – The quality of being kind and careful.

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. [Philippians 4:5]

Self-Control – The ability to control oneself, in particular one's words and actions, especially in difficult situations.

For GOD did not give us a spirit of fear but of power and love and self-control. [2 Timothy 1:7]

Only with absolute faith in the power of the FATHER, belief in the sacrifices of Jesus Christ, and guidance of the Holy Spirit, will you be able to overcome the hardships and temptations of this world. Then, you also can bear good fruit (Colossians 3:12).

John 15:8
"This is to my FATHER's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

John 15:16
"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that remains, so that whatever you ask the FATHER in my Name HE will give you."

GOD knows your heart. Your thoughts, words, and actions are the result of what is in your heart. The fruit you bear is the result of what is in your heart. GOD only wants the good fruit, even if it's a little sour. As you don't ever want to eat fruit with any mold on it (not even one small spot), neither does GOD. Any unforgiven sin is like mold growing on the fruit; it doesn't matter if the fruit looks good overall, it is still thrown out. Even the 'smallest' sin makes us rotten too.

{2.11 True Sacrifice}

Hebrews 5:7-9 (NLT)
While Jesus was here on earth, He offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the ONE who could rescue Him from death. And GOD heard his prayers because of his deep reverence for GOD. Even though Jesus was GOD's Son, He learned obedience from the things He suffered. In this way, GOD qualified Him as a perfect High Priest, and He became the source of Eternal Salvation for all those who obey Him.

Jesus Christ is GOD, which means that He lives in Heaven and can be everywhere at the same time. However, in order to fulfill GOD's requirement for the salvation of mankind, Jesus voluntarily gave up those divine powers to become a human like us. In addition to giving up his authority and those superpowers, Jesus accepted the role of a poor man on this earth. Jesus was tempted like all of us, but resisted all evil... and was ultimately tortured and nailed to a cross. This wasn't required of Jesus, but He humbled Himself because He loves you that much. GOD expects that you humble yourself and be ready to suffer for Him too.

Philippians 2:5-8
In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature GOD, did not consider equality with GOD something to be used to his own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death -- even death on a cross!

Philippians 1:29 (NLT)
For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for Him.

Understanding the full story of Jesus Christ will put things in perspective. Knowing who Jesus is and what He sacrificed for you promotes an overwhelming sense of awe and love. I believe the power of this knowledge can transform a person's beliefs in ways that nothing else can. Only then will you be able to carry your own cross, having the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

{2.12 Saved by Grace}

Ephesians 2:8-9
For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of GOD — Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

IMPORTANT NOTE: we are not saved by our faith… as we are saved by GOD's grace alone. Our faith in GOD, through Jesus Christ, is the requirement for GOD's salvation.

GOD's grace is free to all, but we must receive it. Much like the air we breathe; even though the oxygen is free for us to receive anytime, anywhere… if we don't breathe it in, we will die.

Analogy: think of this world as a burning building. You are stuck on a high-level floor of that building. Firefighters are on the ground, ready to save you. They stretch out a life-saving net, and let you know they're ready for you to jump.

You have two choices: jump or remain in the building. Which do you have more faith in: jumping to save your life or believing that you'll get lucky and be spared in the building, even though it continues to burn?

Choosing to jump into the net many feet below requires that you have faith in the abilities of the net. That faith must be strong enough to not just believe, but it requires you to actively jump and trust completely in the net. That will prove your faith, because you're putting your entire life on the line for it.

When you jump into the net below, the building will burn to the ground… but you remain alive and healthy.

Did your faith save you?

Absolutely not. Your faith had to be strong enough to act upon it accordingly, but the net is what saved you.

Likewise, if you have absolute faith that GOD can save you from this burning world, you'll act upon that faith; but it's solely by GOD's amazing grace that you can be saved for Eternal Life.

John 11:25-26
Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Colossians 2:6-7
Therefore, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Do you believe Jesus? Do you receive Jesus?

3) SUBMIT

James 4:7
Submit yourselves therefore to GOD. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

As a continuation of receiving the message of Jesus Christ, the next step that I had to take was submitting myself to it.

By truly accepting Jesus as your Savior and the only hope for salvation (Eternal Life with GOD), a transformation will occur… and then you'll engage this world from a more spiritual viewpoint.

This is an important step to becoming '**born again**' of the spirit.

John 3:3
Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the Kingdom of GOD unless they are born again."

John 3:7
"You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'"

{3.1 Authority of Jesus}

Submit – Accept or yield to a superior force or to the authority or will of another person.

Attaining absolute belief in the absolute truth is a matter of gaining knowledge; solidifying your belief that GOD is very real and that HE delivers his message to us very clearly. Receiving the message (through Jesus Christ) is very important to understand the character of GOD and will increase your knowledge of the truth.

Knowing this truth changes your thinking. Think of those first two steps as a 'change of mind'.

When you submit yourself to Jesus, it's a 'change of heart'… and that's what matters to GOD.

Reminder: you can only be saved for Eternal Life by the absolute grace of GOD, which is granted to those who believe in the Son.

By submitting to the authority of Jesus Christ, you surrender your worldly life for a spiritual life. You will realize the benefits and rewards of faithful service, starting now… and lasting Forever!

Why do we need to submit completely to Jesus?

1) GOD tells us that we must believe in Jesus Christ to be saved for Eternal Life.
2) Jesus sacrificed living a 'worldly' life and tells us that we need to do the same.
3) Living faithfully is impossible without higher power authority to overcome this world.

Even though giving up a life of pursuing worldly comforts may seem difficult, please hang in there. I can assure you that living a life dedicated to Jesus is very fulfilling, even now.

John 6:35
Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. The one who comes to Me will never go hungry, and the one who believes in Me will never be thirsty."

How do you surrender your worldly life and fully submit yourself to Jesus? Simply stated, you need to live the same way that Jesus lived. Deny yourself and take up your own cross... daily.

Of course, none of us will ever reach that level of perfection (in GOD's eyes).

Jesus always put other people first. We inherently want to put ourselves first.

I believe the biggest indicator that we're all born with original sin (passed down from Adam) is the fact that we have a constant desire to please ourselves. We are selfish by nature, so living a life of complete selflessness is not something that's exactly appealing to any of us.

Philippians 2:3-4
Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Think about yourself. You know that your natural desire is to take care of yourself whenever possible, to maximize your comforts and minimize your pain.

That doesn't mean you don't ever sacrifice your own needs for loved ones. Of course, you probably sacrifice for family and friends… but you don't sacrifice for all people, and you don't sacrifice 100% of the time.

Therefore, you don't meet GOD's standard, as shown by Jesus Christ. Far from it.

Don't worry, it's not just you. We're all hopelessly selfish by our sin nature. We'll always desire to take the most comfortable paths in life; basically, the opposite of what Jesus teaches us.

John 15:13 (NLT)
"There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Because we cannot do it ourselves, GOD has given Jesus the absolute authority to rule our lives … so that we can overcome our selfish nature by following his lead.

With that being said, we all know success in this world takes work. To be very successful at anything worth achieving, it takes dedication and hard work.

Believing in Jesus Christ will assure you of eternal rewards… but it takes good works.

{3.2 Absolute Faith Required}

You will now better understand why absolute faith in Jesus Christ is necessary for meeting GOD's expectations.

Increased knowledge of truth in biblical scripture is not enough to be considered a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. Even the devil knows the scriptures, probably better than us.

James 2:19 (NLT)
You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one GOD. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror.

You know that GOD promises an Eternal Life with HIM, but only for those who follow Jesus.

You know that faithfully following Jesus requires sacrifice and suffering on our part too.

You know the Parable of the Sower, where the seed is representative of GOD's Word and the soil is representing a person's heart. Only those with good soil can grow their faith enormously.

If/when you truly believe that your faith in Jesus Christ is a requirement to be saved for Eternal Life in Heaven, only then will you fully commit everything required to do so. Anything short of absolute faith in this truth will lead to probable failure; it's only a matter of time.

So, the next question that you may ask: How can I know that my faith is genuine?

{3.3 Works Defined}

James 2:26
For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Jesus Christ lived a perfect life, so that we could know the kind of loyal faith that GOD wants from all of us. Since we cannot ever achieve perfection of GOD's law, Jesus was tortured and crucified, experiencing a most painful death … to die for our sins … so that we could overcome our extreme lack of perfection (and have an opportunity for Eternal Life).

GOD says this is an acceptable method for us to achieve the perfection of Jesus Christ; follow the Son properly and we can be considered righteous too.

It must be noted that all Old Testament servants of GOD were sinners. Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David were favored by GOD… despite some very bad behaviors. The New Testament apostles were sinners. None of them were credited with righteousness due to their actions, but they were made righteous solely due to their faith!

Jesus Christ paid a big price for us to be saved. Our spirit was redeemed (purchased) by Jesus. Without the blood sacrifice of Jesus, every one of us was doomed for eternal punishment.

1 Corinthians 7:23 (NLT)
GOD paid a high price for you, so don't be enslaved by the world.

Therefore, your spirit is owned by Jesus. Mine too. GOD has granted Jesus the absolute authority to do whatever he wishes with us.

Thank GOD that Jesus desires to save as many of us as possible for Eternal Life with Him!

- While we cannot earn this salvation (it's a gift of GOD's grace), there is still a cost to us too. The cost of true belief is following GOD's plan; submitting to the authority of Jesus Christ on this earth. Jesus is Lord and Savior. This is referred to as '**Lordship Salvation'**.

We must surrender to Jesus as the true King and Ruler of our life. That means faithful service to Him now. That faith is displayed by living as Jesus teaches us. This results in good works.

Our words and actions that we use to promote the Kingdom of GOD (while on this earth) are called our 'works'. When we speak and act as Jesus did, according to the biblical scriptures, then we are performing good works.

Doing good works in the name of Jesus is what proves our faith daily. We are not required to prove our faith, but true faith is proven by good works. Our everyday words and actions will represent the love of Jesus when we are faithfully committed to the same path of righteousness.

NOTE: As a reminder, we all fall short of GOD's perfect laws, so must rely on our faith in the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Even our faith in Jesus doesn't save us, only GOD's grace can. As an extension of that reality, our good works cannot save us either. No matter how good we think we've been in life, we are each but a filthy rag to GOD (Isaiah 64:6). We cannot go to our final judgment day and tell GOD that HE owes us a place in his Kingdom, as HE has all the power to decide if we're deemed worthy (and has authorized Jesus to judge us). HE has promised Eternal Life to those who are faithful to Jesus, so there are no surprises.

With that being said, these works are essential to following GOD's specific plans for our salvation. We exercise faith by following the behaviors modeled by Jesus (our works).

In addition, while our works cannot be used to gain entry to GOD's Kingdom, they can be used to secure heavenly treasures. GOD clarified that each of us will be judged according to our works (Ecclesiastes 12:14). Rewarded for good works; punished for bad works (Romans 2:6).

Our primary motive is serving Jesus Christ, not only focused on accumulating eternal rewards

Ephesians 2:8-10
For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of GOD; it is not from works, so that no one can boast. For we are HIS workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that GOD prepared beforehand so we may do them.

James 2:14-18
What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works? Can this kind of faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm and eat well," but you do not give them what the body needs, what good is it? So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead being by itself. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith without works and I will show you faith by my works.

Romans 2:6-8
HE will reward each one according to his works: Eternal Life to those who by perseverance in good works seek glory and honor and immortality, but wrath and anger to those who live in selfish ambition and do not obey the truth but follow unrighteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:10
For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Matthew 6:20
"But store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."

Just remember that you are not saved **by** good works… but saved **for** good works.

This doesn't mean that you can't have a joy filled life now, but quite the contrary. You can have a very fulfilling life by following Jesus now, but it just requires a change of heart. Instead of always desiring what only you want… you need to shift your desire to what Jesus wants.

Only GOD's will matters, not your will. GOD's will is law. The goal of submitting to GOD's authority, through Jesus Christ, is to align your personal will with GOD's will!

The one biggest obstacle that can stop you here:

Satan the devil.

{3.4 The Origins of Evil}

He started out as an angel named Lucifer. Apparently a very smart, charming, and beautiful angelic being… created by GOD.

But then, Lucifer allowed his own beauty and wisdom to corrupt his heart, which caused the first sin committed against GOD. This powerful angel Lucifer started to think too highly of himself and became prideful.

The result: Lucifer rebelled against GOD. He viewed himself as a god too. His sinful pride made him believe that he should also be worshipped by others.

We cannot know for sure the exact timeline of these events, as we learn the history of the devil from scripture. Some will argue this verse refers to a human, but the obvious reference is Satan.

Ezekiel 28:12-17
"Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: **You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty**. You were in Eden, the garden of GOD; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of GOD; you walked among the fiery stones. **You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until wickedness was found in you**. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of GOD, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. **Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor**. **So I threw you to the earth**; I made a spectacle of you before kings.**"**

Isaiah 14:12-15
How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of GOD; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit.

(King James Version)
How art thou fallen from Heaven, O **Lucifer**, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

Luke 10:18
He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from Heaven.”

Because of his persuasive power, Lucifer was able to convince many fellow angels to follow him in rebellion. [That power of persuasion is used against mankind as well]

Of course, our all-powerful GOD will never stand for this sinful rebellion against HIS Kingdom. Therefore, GOD kicked Lucifer out of Heaven... and threw him down to earth, where he is now called Satan the devil.

All the angels who were worshipping Satan were also thrown down to earth. These angels are now called ‘demons’.

{3.5 Spiritual Nature}

The words 'spirit' and 'soul' are often used interchangeably. From Bible verses, they are independent of each other (but closely related). Only humans have a spirit, made in the image and likeness of GOD (Genesis 1:26). Without enough clarity on this subject, I cannot definitively write my personal opinion as truth.

Hebrews 4:12
For the Word of GOD is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to **dividing soul and spirit**, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NLT)
Now may the GOD of peace make you holy in every way, and may your **whole spirit and soul and body** be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

John 4:24
“GOD is Spirit, and the people who worship HIM must worship in spirit and truth.”

GOD is the FATHER, the Son, and the Holy Spirit… and HE is spiritual.

Angels who are GOD's messengers are spiritual.

Satan, the chief angel of evil, is spiritual. All the demonic angels are spiritual.

While humans certainly have a physical body that interacts with this physical world, we are spiritual too.

That means most interactions you have with other people are spiritual. While physical contact may certainly be involved, much of the communication is between our spirits. This applies to both positive and negative interactions.

When somebody is loving towards you, then your spirit can be positively impacted. Likewise, when somebody exhibits anger or hate towards you, then your spirit can be negatively impacted. Your natural response to the other person is based on your own spiritual state and a reaction to their communication towards you.

The lessons to be learned here:

1) Your spirit can be influenced by other spiritual beings, whether positively or negatively.
2) Your natural response is dependent on their communication towards you.
3) It takes a conscious effort to overcome your natural responses.

Of course, due to our physical nature limiting us, even though our spirit can communicate with other people's spirits, we must use our physical bodies to communicate between spirits.

We communicate with others using our voice, visual expressions (facial, hand gestures) or even physical contact (a kiss on the cheek, a slap across the face).

Being bound to our physical body, our spirit cannot communicate directly with other people's spirits (you obviously know that we cannot read each other's minds).

However, the heavenly spirits are not bound by physical flesh and can absolutely communicate directly to human spirits.

John 6:63
"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life."

The evil spirits can likewise communicate directly to human spirits… and most certainly do so. It's very important to come to that realization, so that you can know which spirits are trying to communicate with your own spirit (on any given day).

1 John 4:2-3
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.

Evil is the root cause of so much suffering in this world. Jesus suffered for doing good.

1 John 4:4
You, dear children, are from GOD and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Your spirit is much stronger than your physical body. You just need to understand the realities of the spirit world, so you can be prepared. Remember also that evil will always try to deceive you from these truths, as the devil is perfectly fine if you don't believe in his existence.

{3.6 Spiritual Warfare}

2 Corinthians 10:3-5
For though we live as human beings, we do not wage war according to human standards, for the weapons of our warfare are not human weapons, but are made powerful by GOD for tearing down strongholds. We tear down arguments and every arrogant obstacle that is raised up against the knowledge of GOD, and we take every thought captive to make it obey Christ.

1 John 3:8
The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of GOD appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Luke 10:19
"I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you."

#REALWAR: There's no way for us to truly know the spiritual mechanisms used by evil spirits… but we must be able to visualize this enemy, so that we can battle against it. Spiritual warfare is a real thing; those who stay blind to it will be on the losing side. The imagery used in these sections is based on biblical text (of an invisible opponent).

This is where you must keep an open mind to understand the realities of spiritual warfare.

The spirit world is very real. Due to the longevity of that realm and the fact that our physical creation is a result of it… spirits are actually more real than the physical world. It's been said that "we are not human beings having a spiritual experience, but we are spiritual beings having a human experience". I agree with that statement.

You **have** a body… but you **are** a spirit.

Doesn't it make sense that spirits can communicate 'spiritually' even more easily than we can in the physical world? Spirits are not bound or limited by the physical creation, so they have higher level capabilities in general.

Based on that understanding, you'd better believe that spirits existing outside of our physical world are most certainly communicating with our human spirits (constantly). This includes both the heavenly spirits and evil spirits.

NOTE: A reminder that GOD is 'omnipresent' because HE is present everywhere at the same time. No other spiritual beings share that characteristic. One thing that all angels and Satan have in common with humans: we can only be present in one place at a time. Angels who reside in Heaven are not here on earth. Satan and his demons (who were thrown out of Heaven) are here on earth, residing with us humans. Our human spirits are present on earth while alive in the physical body, but depart this earth upon death of the physical body… so those departed spirits cannot communicate directly with those of us still alive on earth. I believe it is possible for GOD to send angelic spirits to earth as messengers, but they return to Heaven after completing their mission. It should be noted that Christ Jesus has experienced life as both GOD and human.

Even though Satan rules this world, it might be possible for him to go between Heaven and earth; but he is only present in one place at a time (probably limited accessibility to Heaven). With that being said, there will most certainly be a future time when the devil will be totally rejected and locked out of both Heaven and earth… to spend eternity in hell.

Job 1:6-7
One day the angels came to present themselves before THE LORD, and Satan also came with them. THE LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered THE LORD, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it."

Are you wondering why all these spirits want to communicate with all of mankind?

Answer: The heavenly spirits and evil spirits are enemies with each other. These two sides are engaged in a spiritual war. They are fighting that war here (on this earth). The battle of good versus evil. Both sides want to win as many new spirits as possible.

Which other spirits are the targets for them to win over to their side?

You … and me … and everybody else.

Ephesians 6:12
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.

You already know the story of Lucifer, a powerful angel who rebelled against GOD… and used his manipulative abilities to influence many other angels to join him in that rebellion. You know that GOD, who is CREATOR of everything, proceeded to eject Lucifer and all the rebellious angels from his Kingdom of Heaven… and threw them down to the earth.

Anybody who thinks these evil rebels would just give up and fall away from existence is dead wrong.

Satan and these demons (who can just be referred to as the 'evil spirits') continue their rebellion on earth. After tricking Adam and Eve into partaking from the tree that GOD commanded not to eat from, these evil spirits have one mission in this world: steal as many of us humans from GOD as possible. They are relentlessly pursuing all of us every single day.

Satan the devil is full of pride and arrogance, but also realizes that he cannot defeat GOD directly; our FATHER can destroy Satan easily. The devil knows the best method of attacking GOD is by destroying humans … you and me and everybody else, who GOD absolutely loves.

Revelation 12:7-9

Then war broke out in Heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But the dragon was not strong enough to prevail, so there was no longer any place left in Heaven for him and his angels. So that huge dragon- the ancient serpent, the one called the devil and satan, who deceives the whole world- was thrown down to the earth, and his angels along with him.

Michael is a very powerful angel in Heaven, known as an 'Archangel'; a spiritual, heavenly warrior who fights on the side of good. The dragon is Satan the devil… aka the serpent

Satan was once a very powerful angel in GOD's Kingdom. Satan was created long ago, before the dawn of mankind. Satan is very smart and wise to the ways of the world. As with all angels who live forever, Satan doesn't get old, but stays strong. Satan is the master of all evil.

Satan is very persuasive and was able to convince many of GOD's angels to worship him instead. This fallen angel was ejected from Heaven and formed a spiritual army on this earth.

Make no mistake about it: Satan hates you. With hate towards all of us, and with all the abilities mentioned above, we are no match for Satan. Unfortunately, Satan can easily defeat every one of us. He has many, many weapons that he uses against each of us and can trick us into believing his lies.

Satan leads his army of demons, who are at war with GOD and on a mission of destroying us. They destroy human spirits by causing us to sin against GOD and reject the absolute truth. These evil spirits influence us with their lies and persuasive techniques.

The evil spirits are very effective at getting us to destroy ourselves and each other. While many of us might consider ourselves as strong people, that is another lie; we are all very weak in the flesh.

While GOD has provided us with a very strong spirit, it cannot be effective if we are spiritually blinded to the truth.

How can you fight effectively against these dark forces of evil?

There is only one answer: You must submit your spirit to serve GOD and trust in Jesus, with absolute faith.

If you don't surrender yourself to become a slave of Jesus, then you will succumb to Satan's power and become a slave to sin instead.

{3.7 The Good News}

Hebrews 12:2 (NLT)
We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting Him, He endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now He is seated in the place of honor beside GOD's throne.

2 Peter 3:13 (NLT)
But we are looking forward to the new Heavens and new Earth HE has promised, a world filled with GOD's righteousness.

Before stopping here with the belief that you are not such a bad person and there is no way you could ever consider yourself as a slave to sin, this is a firm reminder:

Your own sins are not judged against other people of this world, as you are judged against the perfection of Jesus Christ. You might think that you're not as bad as many others you see in this world, but if you don't surrender your life to Jesus, you will live as a slave to selfish sin.

John 8:34
Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."

You can absolutely defeat Satan and his demonic forces. Jesus Christ already defeated all evil spirits when he lived a perfect life and died a perfect death. With the death of Jesus as a sacrificial lamb who willingly endured the punishment for all our sins, Satan was defeated.

Upon his crucifixion and resurrection from the dead, Jesus obtained full authority over earth again (which was lost to Satan, when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden). Even though Satan is allowed to continue his stay in this world, his time is limited.

John 12:31 (NLT)
The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out.

As the resurrection of Jesus has proven, death can be overcome (Acts 2:22-24). As GOD has promised, Satan cannot overpower believers in Christ.

Romans 16:20 (NLT)
The GOD of Peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ provides a valid path for you to achieve a life considered righteous (in GOD's eyes). Believing and receiving the Holy Spirit into your heart provides a very powerful spiritual force, most certainly capable of defeating Satan.

Our FATHER promises: If you remain faithful to the righteous path of Jesus Christ in this life, you can absolutely look forward to living forever in GOD's perfect Kingdom of Heaven!

{3.8 Take a Stand}

Ephesians 6:11
Put on the full armor of GOD, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

In this war of good against evil, we are not spectators. We're not watching this war from afar.

We are participants. Each one of us is actively engaged in this spiritual war. Whether you like it or not, your spirit is living on the battlefield.

Reminder: you can already be assured of which side wins this war; it's your choice if you want to participate on the winning side.

GOD wins. Good wins.

The Challenge: as Jesus told us about entering through the narrow gate (Matthew 7:13-14), deciding to become a participant on the winning side can be difficult. It's a conscious effort to remain faithful to this side daily.

What happens to those who don't pick either side? Maybe they try to stay neutral in this war?

Well, I guess that's the bad news: those who either don't realize they are in this war or choose not to pick any side in the fight will automatically become part of the evil losing side.

Revelation 20:10
And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet are too, and they will be tormented there day and night forever and ever.

Revelation 20:15
Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

The complete Bible is not only GOD's message to his people, it's the general story of mankind on this earth and our spiritual relationship with GOD's Kingdom (from beginning to end). The Bible tells us that Satan rejected GOD in Heaven, was thrown down to earth and launched a war against GOD. We know the devil tricked the first man and woman to sin against GOD, and thereby took rulership of this earth. Ever since then, the devil has been the leader of a vast army of demon soldiers.

These evil spirits have been warring with GOD by tormenting all generations of people since the beginning of this world, destroying the chances of Eternal Life for as many as possible. We know the devil will not cease in this fight for human spirits until the end of this age.

The Bible clearly tells us the devil was already defeated the first time, when Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected from death. The devil will be completely defeated in the end times of this world, then get thrown down even lower than earth … into the depths of hell.

Not only will the devil experience the consequences of losing an epic war with GOD, but all his demon soldiers will follow in the same footsteps (into the depths of hell).

The important part for you to realize is that human spirits who don't truly believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior will also suffer the same fate and get thrown into the depths of hell … forever!

{3.9 Know thy Enemy}

Psalm 10:7-10
His mouth is full of lies and threats; trouble and evil are under his tongue. He lies in wait near the villages; from ambush he murders the innocent. His eyes watch in secret for his victims; like a lion in cover he lies in wait. He lies in wait to catch the helpless; he catches the helpless and drags them off in his net. His victims are crushed, they collapse; they fall under his strength.

Ephesians 6:13-15
Therefore put on the full armor 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. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace.

How does Satan the devil attack us? How do the demons serve their master? How do they convince us to join their side in this spiritual war?

We know there is one devil, who can only be in one place at any given time. We know demons are evil angel spirits, who can only be in one place at any given time.

Therefore, the obvious understanding is there must be a hierarchical, organized plan of attack. Just like human military machines, there must be a strategic, focused war effort.

We know that Satan is the chief general of the evil spirit army. Due to the logistics, we should expect that Satan relies heavily on the demons to attack mankind. The devil will directly attack the 'high profile' targets, most notably the human spirits who can bring on the most damage to mankind in general.

The two highest profile human targets that Satan is known to have directly attacked, based on biblical scripture:

Adam – the first man. By tempting Adam to sin (using Eve), Satan caused the catastrophic downfall of all mankind (Genesis 3:1-7).

Jesus – the Son of GOD. By tempting Jesus to sin, Satan could have aborted the complete restoration of all mankind (Matthew 4:1-11).

We already know the devil was successful in defeating Adam in the Garden of Eden … and all mankind now suffers the consequences of it.

We also know that Satan failed to defeat Jesus in the wilderness … and all mankind can now benefit from the victory of Jesus.

Following the lead of General Satan, the demons understand the war mission very well. They know the end goal is to force as many people to reject GOD as possible. Since GOD has promised Eternal Life to those of us who believe in Jesus Christ, the demons target each of us to deny Jesus as our Savior.

Knowing the enemy numbers is important in any war. The best chance to win on the battlefield starts by knowing how many enemy soldiers are coming at you.

There is only one devil, and this world is very big. It doesn't seem the devil himself can directly influence too many people worldwide (simultaneously). The real concern that's not talked about much is how many demons exist here on earth.

It seems that most worldly Christians severely underestimate the number of demons or the influence they have in this world.

Based on the Bible, we know that demons are fallen angels of GOD. Without getting into the entire context here, the Book of Revelation indicates that Satan took one third of the angels with him, when ejected from Heaven (to earth).

Therefore, we need to assume that one third of GOD's angels are fallen and now call this world their home, along with us living humans.

By doing the math, we should review what the Bible tells us about the total number of angels, then divide by three to determine the number of demons that roam on this earth with us.

There are numerous references in both Old and New Testaments about angels. As expected, no verse will provide an exact number and different Bible translations may use varying words to describe the number, but they indicate very high numbers. There may be so many angels that biblical authors just use big numbers, as understood at the time (Psalm 68:17).

In addition, many references to angels are only mentioning angels relevant to the context of that passage, not necessarily referring to all angels (Deuteronomy 33:2, Hebrews 12:22).

Whatever the case, it's probably a good estimate to believe there are over one billion angels in total, which would mean that one third of them (who are now demons) would total in the hundreds of millions. It's important to not ever underestimate the enemy numbers.

We can't know for sure, but at least it explains the reason there is so much evil in this world. There are enough demons in this world to torment all of us. We have billions of people in this world, and we've all experienced the negative influence of demons, whether we realize it or not.

Revelation 5:11
Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, **numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand**. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.

(English Standard Version)
Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, **numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands**,

*_Myriad_ - a countless or extremely great number.

Revelation 12:4
Now the dragon's tail swept away **a third of the stars** in heaven and hurled them to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born.

In addition to establishing the enemy's numbers, understanding the weapons they will use against you is also very important. Knowing where they might come from and when they are likely to attack can give you a better chance at fending off the attack.

Satan's army of demons will attack from a spiritual perspective. Contrary to fictional movies that you may have seen, demonic forces are very limited in their power over the physical world. They cannot directly exert any physical force over a person. They cannot move physical objects around the room. They are very invisible to humans.

However, they can use that invisibility to their advantage. If demons were able to exert force in the physical realm, we would know they were there. Because we can't see them or any of their behaviors, we may not even believe they exist. And that is how they can beat us.

Satan and his demons attack us by using their spiritual influence. That may not sound too bad, but they can have very powerful influence on us … especially if we're unaware.

Think of a virus. Without the use of powerful microscopes, it's invisible to us. One virus may not cause much damage to us, but a body that is totally infected with viruses can experience devastating effects, even to the point of death.

Demons are similar. Our world is totally infected with demons … and the devastating effects can be seen, as evil reaches every place on earth where humans exist.

If we could shine a light and see these demons, it's my belief that we'd all be horrified at how many of them we would see living among us. Just like viruses, if we could see demons, we would absolutely avoid them at all costs.

While keeping your hands clean will help prevent viral infection, that obviously won't work for keeping demons away. What prevents you from becoming a helpless victim to demons?

Answer: Keeping your heart clean. Welcoming the influence of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The devil used his wisdom and strong influence against heavenly angels to manipulate them to follow his evil ways. They were cast out of Heaven and the devil then trained these demon angels how to use that same type of manipulative influence to win human spirits over to their side too. The demons serve their master by stealing as many human spirits as possible, by leading us to sin against GOD.

We cannot know exactly how the devil was able to convince so many angels to reject GOD and follow him instead, as they had no reason to doubt GOD's truth (they saw GOD in Heaven).

Even so, we can understand how easily it can be for us to follow our own selfish desires and fall prey to Satan's tricks, even if it goes against GOD's wishes. We are each tempted from within by various things of the world.

James 1:13-14
Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by GOD," for GOD cannot be tempted by evil, and HE HIMSELF tempts no one. But each one is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desires.

The devil is known as 'slanderer' or 'accuser'. The devil will accuse you of being an enemy of GOD, because of your sins (Revelation 12:10). GOD knows this trick of the devil, who attempts to deny us Eternal Life, but don't give the devil legitimate reasons to accuse you before GOD!

The devil has taught his demon followers that each of us can be attacked by using the weakness of our flesh and our own spiritual vulnerabilities against us.

How can we overcome these evil spirits who desire to attack and destroy us?

Jesus went to the cross and defeated Satan (when resurrected from death). The Holy Spirit has been given to us, who is more powerful than Satan. You can absolutely fend off any evil spirit, as long as you have the Holy Spirit in your heart.

{3.10 The Natural Heart}

Jeremiah 17:9
The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

Proverbs 3:5-6
Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to HIM, and HE will make your paths straight.

When speaking biblically, the heart is considered the seat of life within each of us. It combines the person's mind, soul, spirit, and the emotional nature of our inner being. Our thoughts, words and actions are driven from our heart within.

Even in Old Testament times (when this verse by the Prophet Jeremiah was written), you need to understand that your natural heart will deceive you. You must cleanse your heart by washing it with GOD's love … and maintaining absolute faith in HIM.

What does that mean? As written in the Proverbs verse shown above – you must submit yourself to GOD always.

Your absolute faith in Jesus Christ must overcome the ways of this world. The guidance of the Holy Spirit must be given higher priority than your selfish thoughts and desires.

1 John 3:20
If our hearts condemn us, we know that GOD is greater than our hearts, and HE knows everything.

How can you accomplish such a daunting task? If you try to do these things completely on your own, you'll realize that human willpower is not enough to overcome the world and your own selfishness. This world will constantly influence people against GOD, since Satan is ruler of this world. Resisting that force every day requires higher level intervention.

So, you must pray for GOD's wisdom (with absolute belief in your heart). GOD knows the true motives of all and knows your heart even better than you know your own heart.

Proverbs 16:2 (NLT)
People may be pure in their own eyes, but the LORD examines their motives.

Romans 8:27
And HE who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for GOD's people in accordance with the will of GOD.

If you surrender yourself completely here, the Holy Spirit will take permanent residence in your heart, and only then can you overcome the natural state of your deceptive heart.

If you are born again of the spirit, your own spirit comes under the protection of Jesus Christ, who is our Savior.

1 John 5:18
We know that anyone born of GOD does not continue to sin; the One who was born of GOD keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them.

{3.11 The Vulnerable Heart}

The battle for your spirit is really a battle for your heart. As already discussed, you are a spiritual being, and therefore you are subject to influences from other spirits.

The Holy Spirit is from GOD and loves your spirit. If you submit to serving GOD, by believing in Jesus Christ, then your heart will be a welcoming home for the Holy Spirit. Your heart will be strong with absolute faith and will have the power to defeat the evil spirits against you.

Demons are with Satan, and they hate your spirit. If you don't submit to serving GOD, by believing in Jesus Christ, then your heart will be empty of the Holy Spirit and the power of demonic spirits can take residence in your heart.

This vulnerability must be understood. If we don't make the effort to allow the Holy Spirit to lead our heart (and instead allow this world to lead us), then we'll fall victim to the influences of evil.

In addition to the inherent vulnerability of our heart, there are two other very important facts to also remember about the enemy:

1 Peter 5:8
Be sober and alert. Your enemy the devil, like a roaring lion, is on the prowl looking for someone to devour.

Matthew 12:43
"When an unclean spirit goes out of a person, it passes through waterless places looking for rest but does not find it."

1) Satan is a vicious predator, constantly searching for human spirits as prey. He seeks out vulnerable victims and destroys them.

   The demons are constantly looking for victims in this world too. They don't like wandering the earth, but need a place to call their personal home… specifically in a person's heart.

2) Angels were created before mankind. Demons are fallen angels. They don't have a physical body that dies, so they can outlive mankind on earth. Therefore, we must assume that, whenever a demon is forced out of a person, the demon must find a new victim with a vulnerable heart. The same demons that plagued mankind from the times of Adam and Eve are probably still here, victimizing people worldwide.

   That means the demons have gained much experience over the history of mankind and are wise to the tricks that can be used against us.

Demons attack us in the same way that Satan does:

It starts as a little voice that puts a sinful idea in your head. That's a demon knocking on the door of your heart. It's always a lie, but it's subtle enough that you don't immediately recognize it as such. You think on it briefly, but then your conscience pushes back, and reminds you the thought is against GOD's law.

The demon continues with the lie, trying to convince you of reasons to not be concerned about any wrongdoing and rationalizing the sin as something that is not really against GOD's law. The demon uses the same trickery that Satan used against Eve (in the garden); convincing you that it's ok to commit this little sin… this time.

That small demon voice inside your head will start to become louder, as it knows your carnal sinful nature, and your specific vulnerabilities.

While we're all different in many ways, we're also the same in many ways. The demon knows what you naturally desire and attacks it directly, using that voice inside your head.

How do the demons know what you specifically desire?

Satan and his demons cannot read our mind (only GOD can do that), but they know our heart can be vulnerable to their lies. Therefore, the demons are watching all of us very closely, and since our words and actions are a direct result of what's in our heart, they can easily understand what we desire too. Remember that demons can also watch what you do privately ... when you think nobody can see you.

Demons use that knowledge of your secret desires against you. If you don't follow the Holy Spirit (and reject the demon lies), you will eventually fall victim to that voice within yourself.

While you may resist that little demon voice in your head more strongly the very first time, the demon knows that as soon as you give in the first time, when it's only a knock on the door of your heart, it will become easier to convince you the next times... until you've totally pushed away the voice of reason (the Holy Spirit).

As soon as you've pushed out the Holy Spirit, your heart is empty ... and the demon takes full residence in your heart.

Mark 7:21-23
"For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person."

Satan and his demon army know very well the key to taking our spirits down with them is by taking residence in our hearts and consuming our minds with evil thoughts.

{3.12 Evil Devices}

1 Corinthians 6:9-10
Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of GOD? Do not be deceived! The sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, passive homosexual partners, practicing homosexuals, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, the verbally abusive, and swindlers will not inherit the Kingdom of GOD.

Galatians 5:19-21 (NLT)
When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of GOD.

What are some of the weapons used by Satan and his demons? There are many. The Bible specifically warns us of the most common types of desires that we can fall prey to, but basically anything that causes us to reject the teachings of Jesus Christ will qualify as something that can (and will) be used against us.

The devil still uses the same tricks that were used against Adam and Eve. Lots of targeted deception.

Be warned: Satan tries to get Christians to believe in a fake Gospel. Those times we want to believe that GOD couldn't really mean something that is clearly stated in the Bible, be careful of Satan's deception.

The demons watch you closely, discover your personal vulnerabilities, then attack you relentlessly. If you remain unaware, they will continue these attacks until your dying day.

So, you need to be aware: demons cannot possess the heart of a true Christian.

After Jesus defeated evil at the cross, it seems very unlikely to become fully possessed by a demon in today's age (not enough clarity in that specific area). However, we the people can still possess demons in our heart… and I do have much clarity in that area (firsthand knowledge). Once a demon takes residence in our heart, we must submit to authority of Jesus to drive it out.

Note: Mental illness is a real thing too. While we must acknowledge that true mental illness should be recognized and treated appropriately, we must not ignore evil spirits that will corrupt a person's heart (and could be masked as 'mental health' issues).

Common types of demonic weapons are described below. I'll need to get personal here, so you can understand some of the demons that have plagued me specifically ... and how they have been purged from my life now.

1 Corinthians 10:21
You cannot drink the cup of the LORD and the cup of demons. You cannot take part in the table of the LORD and the table of demons.

demon of addiction – I'm a recovering alcoholic. Started drinking beer while still in high school (bad decision). In my case, a demon voice in my head was using a very effective method of evil influence: the power of peer pressure; using the negative influence of others, who are part of the same environment/culture. The desire to be 'respected' by my classmates was used against me by that little demon voice (in my head) saying it was better for my social well-being to partake in the illegal activity of underage drinking. Of course, my internal conscience was a reminder this was not the right thing to do.

That is the internal battle of right versus wrong. In my case here, the wrong voice was allowed to overpower the right voice. I couldn't resist the temptation.

My first experiences with alcohol were very powerful. My drinking wasn't too far along before it seemed to fill a void in my personal life. Little did I know at the time, but that void was spiritual in nature, due to my lack of real faith. Getting drunk masked my core problem very well.

That's how evil worked here. Drunkenness is sinful, but I was tricked into believing it was fine (for me). If we give into that first temptation, we'll be rewarded (by evil). That of course makes the next temptation even harder to resist.

This pattern continued and got progressively worse. I started to experience negative results from my behavior, but the rewards seemed to outweigh the negatives ... at first.

Most worldly cultures understand the long-term consequences of alcoholism, which is a rampant problem in our society. The devil knows addiction is a very effective tool against those who aren't saved yet. One of the biggest symptoms of the one who suffers from it is self-denial of truth. That is where our own corrupted heart can deceive us.

I was no different. Over many years, I sank deeper into demonic oppression and my alcoholism became worse, affecting every area of my life negatively. Jails, hospitals, fights with family and friends (and even strangers), failed grades, bad job performance, etc.

I had become an absolute slave to this demon of addiction. Just like the Old Testament Book of Exodus tells us the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years before fully escaping their slavery (and finally reaching the Promised Land), I suffered for decades in my own slavery before being freed from this horrible demon.

During my time of addiction, I was hopelessly unable to free myself from the chains of spiritual slavery. Freedom didn't happen until immediately following a car crash and my third DUI.

[ONLY BY THE GRACE OF GOD did I survive drunken car crashes and, more importantly, nobody else was hurt or killed]

After this last drunken incident, I finally got down on my knees and asked GOD for help.
It was truly a matter of life and death. The risk of loss included everything: my family, career, financial stability, health… and my spirit.

The demon was winning and working hard to destroy me (and my family). Satan ruled me.

I needed Jesus Christ to save my spirit!

John 10:9-10
"I am the gate; whoever enters through Me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that I could never have resolved this problem on my own. It was my personal Mount Everest and there was no way that I could climb it.

Even though I didn't have much faith (yet), GOD saved me that day … and moved that mountain of addiction. Likewise, our awesome GOD can move your mountains too. You must first have at least a little faith though.

Matthew 17:20
He told them, "It was because of your little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; nothing will be impossible for you."

Even though this addiction demon was removed from my heart, it didn't mean there was an easy road to full recovery from there. I was still facing the consequences of my actions. Legal problems, broken relationships, financial burdens, health issues, etc. These things didn't just disappear, they were still my reality.

With that being said, I was free from that slavery of addiction! It was like my mind was opened to a new life, very spiritual in nature. The chains of that addiction were broken, and I was not spiritually blinded; therefore, able to take on the new challenges. I haven't had a drink since that day and have only strengthened my faith since then.

From a recovering alcoholic to others who are still suffering from this addiction – you can overcome this horrible demon too.

If you are a slave to the drink, please participate in Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and fellowship… but do so with faith as your primary driver. Always keep GOD first and submit yourself to the power of Jesus Christ (who defeats all demons).

[The twelve steps of A.A. recovery should be followed in absolute faith. If you review each step carefully, you'll see they reference the divine power of GOD and how faith in his Higher Power can free the addict from spiritual bondage. All twelve A.A. steps should be faith driven**]**

1 Thessalonians 5:6-8
So then we must not sleep as the rest, **but must stay alert and sober**. For those who sleep, sleep at night and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But since we are of the day, **we must stay sober** by putting on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet our hope for salvation.

Ephesians 5:18
Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. **Instead, be filled with the Spirit**…

There are many other types of drugs and addictive mind-altering substances. You're probably aware of the current epidemic of opioid addiction. With similar consequences as alcoholics, those addicted to drugs can find fellowship within the Narcotics Anonymous organization.

Other addictions: gambling, pornography, food, shopping, social media, gaming, exercise, even an occupation. People can become addicted to anything that can seemingly fill a spiritual void in their life.

The evil enemy watches closely to understand which of these mechanisms might cause each of us to become a slave to something other than Jesus Christ.

The same fix applies to all addictions: **Submitting yourself completely to Jesus Christ**.

Note: Physical addictions can be tricky, in that our own flesh contributes too. More details are explained in step #6.

demon of pride – I was personally plagued by this demon too (for many years). My prideful thinking started occurring around the same time as my addiction … which causes me to believe that Satan and his demons start attacking many of us in our teenage years. That probably explains much of why the teenage years can be a very challenging time for many.

Pride is when we desire to selfishly exalt ourselves. Pride wants us to believe that we are strong enough or self-sufficient, so we don't need to rely on anybody else. Pride is when we remove GOD from our decision making and follow our own set of beliefs. We desire to feel powerful in some way and that causes us to think, speak and behave as though we are exactly what we desire to be. Pride influences others to follow the same beliefs, without regard to absolute truth.

Pride is similar to arrogance or narcissism, although it can be more deceiving. Whereas an arrogant person will exaggerate their abilities (and actually believe it), the prideful person is very insecure about themselves. They desire to be something, but have a deep-seated belief they are not worthy of that quality.

Pride, arrogance, and narcissism are examples of spiritual corruption, and wrong in the eyes of GOD. Our prideful thinking will cause selfish behaviors and harm others, in order to satisfy our own insecurities. Most importantly, prideful or arrogant thinking is removing GOD as our source of strength and instead claiming it for ourselves.

GOD hates that.

Proverbs 8:13
To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.

We know the first one to show prideful behavior was Lucifer, who desired to be greater than all, including GOD. Anytime we have pride in our corrupted heart, we are following Satan's path.

We know the devil was ejected from Heaven and will spend eternity in hell … and based on scripture, we can assume the same for anybody who continually follows prideful beliefs too.

Therefore, the demons are watching us closely and know this can be a very effective weapon to use against those of us with these insecure vulnerabilities. They attack us frequently, becoming that little voice in our head telling us to react to daily situations based on our prideful beliefs.

Beware of your ways. **Do not follow the belief systems of this world!**

The world will tell you to not allow others to disrespect you in any way, but Jesus shows us the opposite. Even though Jesus was the powerful Son of GOD, he accepted disrespect from others and even prayed for them (Luke 6:28). Jesus walked this earth as a perfect example of being meek. You must be pure like a child to be considered great in Heaven (Matthew 18:1-4).

GOD created us to be spiritually powerful, but we must be humbled by it. When we are meek in nature, we're secure in our belief that we have spiritual strength … and we know the source of that strength is a gift from GOD. Therefore, instead of desiring to be powerful in the eyes of mankind, we desire to serve and praise GOD. We should always show humility in front of others (the opposite of pride) and give all the glory to HIM. GOD loves that!

After a final, ridiculous event where my pride caused emotional harm to my wife, I humbled myself and asked Jesus to remove that demon from my heart … and He did.

It should be noted that my personal pride demon didn't go away silently, but my faith in the power of Jesus was enough to purge it over a short enough period of time.

Proverbs 11:2
When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

Proverbs 16:5
The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.

Proverbs 29:23 (NLT)
Pride ends in humiliation, while humility brings honor.

James 4:6
But HE gives greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD opposes the proud, but HE gives grace to the humble."

Matthew 23:12
"For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

demon of anger – I had allowed a third type of demon to heavily influence my heart for many years. Closely related to that pride demon (and exaggerated by the addiction demon), my anger got the best of me on a regular basis.

I was easily provoked to anger, usually due to some selfish reason. Anger is typically the resulting emotion when somebody thinks they have been wronged in some way, or maybe somebody else they care about has been wronged.

Anger is a natural emotion, with spiritual qualities. Even GOD gets angry. Jesus, who lived a perfectly sinless life, displayed anger in biblically recorded events:

John 2:15-17 (NLT)
Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. Then, going over to the people who sold doves, He told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my FATHER's house into a marketplace!" Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for GOD's house will consume Me."

Mark 10:14
When Jesus saw what was happening, He was angry with his disciples. He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of GOD belongs to those who are like these children."

The difference between divine anger and my anger is the motives of the heart. What is driving that anger? In my case, it was mostly due to selfish, worldly reasons. Maybe somebody cut me off in traffic or cursed at me, so I would feel personally wronged (and react angrily).

Jesus showed anger when the religious leaders of the day were using GOD's temple as a marketplace, which might prevent others from coming to worship GOD there. He also got angry when his own disciples tried to prevent little children from experiencing the love of Jesus.

Even though we will sometimes get angry at others (for whatever reason), how we react to that anger is what matters most. We should not allow angry emotions to cause us to sin or go against the teachings of Jesus.

Ephesians 4:26
Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on the cause of your anger.

Bottom line, GOD doesn't like it when we are 'hot-headed' angry people. When our selfish heart causes us to harm others in some way or reject the teachings of Jesus, it drives us away from GOD. The demons know this too and will attack us by becoming that angry voice in our head that screams at us to react in anger, in every little thing.

After much prayer, Jesus removed this anger from my heart.

James 1:19-20
My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that GOD desires.

Please note that demons of my past were ejected from my heart by Jesus Christ, who is granted this authority by GOD. With that being said, it doesn't mean these same demons don't attempt to muscle their way back in. They still desire control over your thoughts, but they are much more limited in their influential power.

When you allow demons into your heart, they are always there (within you). After they get ejected from your heart (by you submitting to the authority of Jesus), they will knock on the door again (that little voice in your head), but you have much more power to block them from entering your heart again. They might still win some battles in your daily struggles because years of incorrect thinking are not easily removed (and demons know this). The more you forcibly resist those demon voices, the weaker they become. More details in step #5 of this letter.

With absolute faith in Jesus Christ (your Savior), you will overcome those demonic powers that controlled your thinking for a long time. Those voices in your head that bring on emotional pain and cause you to sin will become much less impactful in your daily life … until they are but a small whisper that can be easily resisted.

As much as I dislike sharing my own vulnerabilities, I felt the need to get very personal here. Explaining the weaknesses that caused me to become spiritually bankrupt for many years might be able to help somebody else in a similar situation.

If I can be saved from Satan and his demons, you can too!

{3.13 Other Bad Fruit}

Matthew 3:10
"Even now the ax is laid at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

Matthew 7:17 (NLT)
"A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit."

You need to understand that, while we may be similar, everybody reacts to evil temptations differently. The devil knows there is no single method that works against all people. Here are other common satanic weapons to be aware of:

demon of greed – This one could also be called the demon of money.

Wealth delivers luxury, power, and status. You've probably heard the term 'material world' before. The demons know that too.

Greed is taking as much money (or physical possessions) for ourselves, to the point of neglecting others' needs. Greed is the love of money, which exceeds love for GOD and others.

Due to our sinful nature, we probably all fall victim to selfish greed at times… but people who consistently give into the temptations of greed (and allow it to consume their thoughts) will welcome this demon to reside in their heart. Jesus has absolutely warned us about this sin.

Ecclesiastes 5:10
Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless.

1 Timothy 6:10
For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

demon of immorality – GOD created sexual desires to be shared between a married man and woman. However, Satan knows that a selfish, corrupted heart can cause a person to stray from GOD's intentions here.

Any sexual acts outside the boundaries of a married man and his wife are against GOD's intentions … and therefore sin. If a person allows strong, lustful desires to consume their thoughts and/or acts on those lustful desires (outside of marriage), it is sin.

If the person continues in such deviant behaviors consistently, the voice of reason will be forced out of the person's heart… and a demon of immorality will take residence instead.

Romans 1:24
Therefore GOD gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

1 Corinthians 6:13
You say, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and GOD will destroy them both.” The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the LORD, and the LORD for the body.

1 Corinthians 7:2
But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband.

demon of vengeance – This demon is that voice of resentment which creates a strong desire to avenge what a person believes to be a wrongdoing. While typical anger can be quick and furious, the vengeful person carries anger to the point of hatred and harbors a desire to inflict harm on others. The unresolved anger becomes evil wrath, which leads to self-destruction and other sins.

When you are truly wronged by evil and this vengeance demon is influencing you towards revenge against the wrongdoing person, just remember that Jesus showed mercy towards the worst of sinners in his day, including those who tortured and nailed him to a cross. In fact, He even prefers mercy over sacrificing.

Romans 12:19
Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for GOD’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the LORD.

Matthew 9:13
“But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Be merciful. Showing mercy does not give up your desire for justice, but allows the justice to be handled by GOD instead.

demon of envy – The emotion of jealousy is when a person desires to possess something that another person has. It could be a physical item or trait. It could be something non-tangible, such as another person’s skills or accomplishments.

While we all may occasionally feel a little bit of jealousy, it’s very important to reject that demon voice when it tries to enter your heart. If you allow the jealousy to grow and remain in your thoughts, you become vulnerable to envy (hostile, long-standing jealousy). This demon will attack fiercely (in your thoughts), if given an opportunity.

James 3:16
For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

Proverbs 14:30
A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.

demon of idolatry – This is officially defined as worship of an idol. Many people confuse the meaning here and assume that, as long as they don't bow down to some statue or false god, they don't practice idolatry. Satan is totally fine if we believe that.

In reality, the sin of idolatry is committed whenever somebody places greater importance on anything besides GOD.

We are expected to place our commitment to GOD above all else. This is rightfully so, since GOD created us and is responsible for all blessings we have in this life (and beyond).

There is nothing wrong with having passions for worldly things; GOD wants us to enjoy life on this earth. But, when the passion for something causes us to neglect our expectation to serve and praise GOD, or worse, if it causes us to commit other sins… then it becomes idolatry.

1 Corinthians 10:14
Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.

We must always be aware of our passions in life. If anything causes you to stray away from your commitment to GOD (or causes any sinful act), you must firmly resist it. If you cannot resist this demon and continue to place something with higher importance than GOD, you must cut it off completely, with prayer and full submission to Jesus (see Matthew 5:29-30).

GOD has given our heart to worship HIM, but the devil will redirect that desire for worship to something else… anything else that is not GOD. It seems that anything can be an idol. Things used by a demon of idolatry could be money, substances, relationships, politics, social media, celebrities, worldly fame, sports teams, firearms, a person's occupation, etc.

Jonah 2:8
Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from GOD's love for them.

Psalm 100:3
Know that the LORD is GOD. It is HE who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

demon of prejudice - Another great tool for Satan. Did Jesus ever condemn anybody for the color of their skin (or any other physical characteristic)? By extension, does GOD condemn anybody for their skin color?

Of course not! So, what gives any of us humans the right to do so?

Not the color of anybody's skin (or any physical characteristic), but Jesus does condemn people who have hatred or any form of prejudice in their heart!

Galatians 3:28
There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female -- for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

John 7:24
“Do not judge according to external appearance, but judge with proper judgment.”

Jesus has definitively warned us: practicing prejudice or discrimination against others based on appearance, ethnicity, gender, wealth status, occupation, whatever… will bring the same kind of judgment against us.

Matthew 7:2 (NLT)
“For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.”

demon of self-hate – This is that voice in our head that causes self-doubt and wants us to hate ourselves. While we cannot argue medical causes for depression or anxiety, there are most certainly demonic influences that cause people to doubt themselves, live in dreadful fear, or have suicidal thoughts. If these evil voices are not purged from a person’s heart, they will lead to a life of misery. In these cases, the person becomes their own worst enemy and this demon thrives in that; because hating yourself is hating what GOD made (and hating what GOD loves).

The solution is the same: purge the demon with the love and power of GOD, through his Son Jesus Christ. GOD loves you. Jesus loves you. You should therefore love yourself. Changing your viewpoint to one of spiritual love and remaining fully content in being loved by GOD should be your highest priority treatment method.

Psalm 34:18
The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Isaiah 55:8-9
“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,**”** declares the LORD. **“**As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.**”**

Hebrews 13:5
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 4:15-16
For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin. Let us then approach GOD’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

demon of faith – When somebody claims to be a faithful person, but corrupts the true Word of GOD, they are committing the same sin as Satan (in the Garden of Eden). Leading others astray in the name of GOD is totally unacceptable.

Those who intentionally warp GOD's Word to fit a personal agenda had better stop it immediately. It's better to be an unbeliever than to purposely lead others in false religion.

Of course, even those who desire to lead others to true faith should be aware of this demon. Sometimes too much passion for GOD's Word can cause a person to teach incorrect beliefs to others. Any unintentional false teachings should be realized and corrected immediately.

Deuteronomy 18:20
"But a prophet who presumes to speak in my NAME anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death."

James 1:26
Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.

Titus 1:10
For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group.

Beware of the more subtle 'bad fruits' too: bitterness, gossip, lying, manipulation, disrespect, unforgiveness, etc. Anything that goes against the fruits of the Spirit and/or causes a deceptive or malicious heart should be purged, by keeping Jesus Christ in your heart:

John 15:4-6
"Remain in Me, as I also 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 you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing."

{3.14 The Evil Truth}

Satan and his demons are real. The most important step in defeating them is understanding they exist. I think most people vastly underestimate the number or influence of demons.

Don't be blind to evil spirits. Understand spiritual warfare and know that Satan and his demon army are committed to destroying you and denying you the Eternal Life with GOD.

Isaiah 54:17 (NKJV)
"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is from ME," Says the LORD.

Recognize the common tactics of Satan and his demons: the internal voice that disguises your own thoughts will either pretend to be your friend (the power of persuasion), then stab you in the back **or** become an enemy of your own mind, causing you to destroy yourself in despair.

Don’t believe the type of dramatic exorcisms seen in movies, but do believe in the power of prayer. You must endure in the faith, and consistently allow Jesus to stay alive in your heart.

But, don’t just take my word for it. Listen to the words of Jesus Christ. Your absolute faith is enough to believe that demons do attack your spirit, and that Jesus is the only one who can drive them out from your heart … when you completely submit to Him.

Matthew 8:16
When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to Him, and He drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick.

Mark 1:34
And Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but He would not let the demons speak because they knew who He was.

Luke 4:41
Demons also came out of many, crying out, "You are the Son of GOD!" But He rebuked them, and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that He was the Christ.

Luke 8:29
For Jesus had started commanding the evil spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times, so he would be bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard. But he would break the restraints and be driven by the demon into deserted places.

Mark 16:9
When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had driven seven demons.

Matthew 12:28
“But if it is by the Spirit of GOD that I drive out demons, then the Kingdom of GOD has come upon you.”

Luke 11:20
“But if I drive out demons by the finger of GOD, then the Kingdom of GOD has come upon you.”

{3.15 The Call}

When you have completely submitted yourself to GOD the FATHER, GOD the Son, and GOD the Holy Spirit, then purging any demons from your heart will happen. By allowing the Holy Spirit to remain in your heart, you can know that you are saved for Eternal Life.

With that being said… don't confuse the statement “there is nothing you can do to get saved” (which is true) with the statement “you don't have to do anything to be saved” (which is false).

From this point, you can proceed with your calling to serve and praise GOD!

Romans 8:9-10
You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of GOD lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.

Philippians 3:13-14
Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have attained this. Instead I am single-minded: Forgetting the things that are behind and reaching out for the things that are ahead, with this goal in mind, I strive toward the prize of the upward call of GOD in Christ Jesus.

Submitting yourself to GOD is walking like Jesus Christ. Everything you think, say, or do should correspond to the teachings of Jesus (who served the FATHER in everything).

No matter where you are or what you are doing, you need to believe that Jesus is always right there with you. For example, if driving in your car, know that Jesus is in the backseat… and He can see everything that you say or do.

Full submission means absolutely trusting GOD with everything in your life. It requires putting your full faith into Jesus Christ, as commanded by GOD.

Analogy: What is the difference between simply believing somebody and complete submission to that person? That question can be answered by visualizing the following scenario:

A man stretches a very thin tightrope across two cliffs, spanning a quarter mile, overseeing the ground 500 feet below (the height of a 50-story building). The man tells you that he is willing to walk across that tightrope with no restraints (completely free will, and subject to free falling). In addition, the man will be walking across while pushing a wheelbarrow.

You gather with the crowd (on firm ground) to watch the man walk across. Sure enough, the man starts his journey from one of the cliffs. It's a long walk, but the man walks it carefully, and with such grace. The wheelbarrow is firmly grasped, and you can see the man will not let go of the wheelbarrow.

He makes it across and lands safely on the other side, gently placing the wheelbarrow on solid ground. You are amazed by the man's accomplishment. The crowd has grown bigger and cheers him on.

So, the man proceeds to tell everybody in the crowd that he plans to walk the same wheelbarrow back to the other cliff, across the tightrope again. He asks how many in the crowd believe that he could succeed again. Of course, after watching the man's first trip across, many in the crowd felt confident in the man and believed that he could make it across the tightrope again, while pushing the wheelbarrow.

Once again, the man questions the crowd, “who truly believes that I can make it across to the other side?”. Again, among their cheers, all the people say they truly believe the man can make it across the entire length of the tightrope (while pushing the wheelbarrow).

Finally, before starting the same journey back across, the man asks the crowd a final question, “since you are so confident in me, who will get inside the wheelbarrow… while we make the journey across the tightrope?”.

How many of those believers do you think would volunteer to get in the wheelbarrow and submit themselves, completely trusting in the man to get them across safely?

Would you get in that wheelbarrow?

Submitting yourself completely to Jesus requires more than just believing that He is the Son of GOD, and it requires more than just knowing bible verses. You need to completely trust your entire life with Jesus, which means resisting the sins of this world. Without sacrificing the things of this world for Christ, you will not be able to truly overcome Satan.

Whoever fully surrenders their worldly life and has absolute faith in the only Son of GOD does not just believe that He existed and died for your sins… but **believes in Him**!

John 3:16 – 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.

1 John 5:13
I write these things to you who believe in the Name of the Son of GOD so that you may know that you have Eternal Life.

4) REPENT

Matthew 3:2
“Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.”

After fully submitting yourself to Jesus Christ, you can be confident that He will drive out any demons who have taken residence in your heart. You are saved! With the added guidance of the Holy Spirit in your life, you can be assured that when a demon comes knocking again, you will have strength to resist the lies and temptations.

You are saved from any evil spirit ruling your life. You don’t need to wait until you die to experience the love and blessings from our loving FATHER. You can start to enjoy freedom from the bondage of continual sin, as soon as today.

To **SUBMIT** is to **SURRENDER** your worldly life **and SERVE** Jesus Christ instead.

You will start to experience the faith, hope, and love that is part of celebrating Eternal Life!

2 Corinthians 13:5
Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you — unless, of course, you fail the test?

I had remained in sinful behavior for a long time. Depending on how far along you were as a slave to your sins, these next steps might take longer than you'd expect. The longer you remain in bondage to this sinful world, the more time may be required to fully 'come to Jesus'.

♥ Salvation is confessing your sins to GOD and others (1 John 1:9, Acts 19:18, James 5:16).

1 Corinthians 13:12-13
For now we see only a 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. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

{4.1 What is Repentance?}

FULL Repentance – a change of behavior, caused by a change of heart. This includes turning away from sin and turning to GOD for forgiveness; motivated by love and a sincere desire to obey GOD. For me, complete repentance was a natural result of being truly saved. Even though a change of mind and heart was required to be saved, a change of behaviors requires works.

It's a common (but critical) mistake to misunderstand the true meaning. The worldly definition for 'repent' states *to feel or express sincere regret or remorse about one's wrongdoing or sin*. While that is certainly a part of one's repentance, it does not explain the part that really matters the most: turning away from those sinful actions.

GOD is a loving FATHER who will forgive our sins… if we ask for that forgiveness. When we feel regretful about actions that we've taken in our past, we can be forgiven. True regret combined with absolute faith will result in a change to our behaviors that caused us to commit the sin in the first place.

Simply stated, **full repentance** is not only admitting your sins and asking forgiveness from GOD for those sins, but also changing your thought patterns, words and actions… to prevent future occurrences of the same sins (see Acts 26:20).

Basic repentance is the initial 'change of mind'; turning to GOD… changing your perspective from being self-centered to Jesus-centered (submitting to Jesus as more important than you).

Hebrews 11:6 (NLT)
And it is impossible to please GOD without faith. Anyone who wants to come to HIM must believe that GOD exists and that HE rewards those who sincerely seek HIM.

The first three steps explained in this letter refer to understanding the character of our FATHER, trusting completely in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us in resisting the internal thoughts and temptations that evil spirits will influence us with. As you've learned, these truths will set us free from the worldly rulership of the devil.

The first three steps are a very important requirement for being saved for Eternal Life with GOD, but this fourth step requires you to put those beliefs into action (which is discipleship).

John 8:31 (NLT)
Jesus said to the people who believed in Him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings."

Luke 24:45-47
Then He opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it stands written that the Christ would suffer and would rise from the dead on the third day, and **repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his Name to all nations**, beginning from Jerusalem."

One of the best indications that you are saved as a member of GOD's family is having a strong desire to 'do the right thing', always eager for GOD's approval. Since repentance is changing old, sinful behaviors, the desire for righteousness is required so you will have the strength to overcome your past.

Titus 2:12-14
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 appearing of the glory 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.

Of course, true repentance does come with a price… and many times it's a discomforting price.

As you know, a 'habit' is defined as a regular tendency or practice. Good habits are obviously encouraged, but many times difficult to maintain. Bad habits are ones that are not good for your flesh and/or spirit, but are usually difficult to stop.

Good habits are the narrow gate, while bad habits are the wide gate (Matthew 7:13-14).

For most of us, repentance involves a change of direction from the past. Taking the more difficult, uphill road instead of the easy, downhill road.

Therefore, you'll need absolute faith, with full submission to Jesus Christ… to stay on the road of Eternal Life… with an abundance of heavenly treasures.

{4.2 Why Repent?}

2 Chronicles 7:14
"If my people, who are called by my NAME, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Proverbs 6:16-19
There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to HIM: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.

Romans 8:28
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.

If you remember from step #1, it's mentioned that GOD doesn't require us to do anything that we're not capable of; all we need to do is believe GOD and love HIM.

That is a true statement. The truth is that you are capable of full repentance and doing so is showing GOD that you truly believe and love HIM (remember faith is useless without works).

So, let's answer the question: why repent?

The simple answer is because GOD requires it. As mentioned, the most common element of sins is a person's selfishness. Most of our sins are due to selfish desires. The desire to please ourselves before others is the original sin inherited by all of us (after the fall of Adam & Eve).

Jesus shows us the opposite. Caring for the needs of others, always showing love and compassion, etc.

Our sins are counterproductive to meeting GOD's most fundamental requirement of loving others, as stated by Jesus Christ. Remaining in sin (not repenting from it) will cause us to consistently fall away from GOD. The true believers in Jesus Christ desire to remain in close relationship with Him, so cannot live in sin. Therefore, repentance is an obligation for true believers in Christ. We must align our desires with Jesus… and 'hate what the LORD hates'.

John 13:35
"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Acts 2:38
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."

Acts 11:18
When they heard this, they ceased their objections and praised GOD, saying, "So then, GOD has granted the repentance that leads to life even to the Gentiles."

GOD understands the challenges you face when removing old sinful behaviors. HE is patient with you through the process. Jesus is your biggest cheerleader, who roots for you to succeed.

Stay focused and keep your eyes on the prize: Eternal Life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Romans 2:4-5
Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that GOD's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of GOD's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

Acts 20:20-21
You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they **must turn to GOD in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus**.

Acts 3:19 (NLT)
Now repent of your sins and turn to GOD, so that your sins may be wiped away.

Think about it: Contrary to what the demon voices in your head will say, you know that your sinful behaviors are not truly making you happy in this world (correct?). Your sins may provide temporary pleasures or relief, but absolute peace and joy still escapes you.

Repenting of those sins will bring you closer to GOD (through faith in Jesus Christ). You can experience peace and joy that goes beyond anything this world can offer.

Not only does the Bible tell us this, but I can testify as a living proof of it.

Romans 14:17-18
For the Kingdom of GOD is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to GOD and receives human approval.

Reminder: John 3:16 is GOD's promise to give Eternal Life to all those who believe in his Son, Jesus Christ. True repentance is a result of your belief, not a requirement for your belief.

Question: What will happen to those who don't have a sincere desire for repentance?

Answer: those who don't ever repent of their sins risk not being granted Eternal Life!

Matthew 21:31-32 (NLT)
"Which of the two obeyed his father?" They replied, "The first." Then Jesus explained his meaning: "I tell you the truth, corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom of GOD before you do. For John the Baptist came and showed you the right way to live, but you didn't believe him, while tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, **you refused to believe him and repent of your sins**."

Ezekiel 33:12
"Therefore, Son of Man, say to your people, 'If someone who is righteous disobeys, that person's former righteousness will count for nothing. And if someone who is wicked repents, that person's former wickedness will not bring condemnation. **The righteous person who sins will not be allowed to live even though they were formerly righteous**.'"

Look, I'm not here to tell you that everybody who doesn't repent from all their sins will automatically go to hell after their earthly death. I will not claim to know that as fact, nor is it my job to judge anybody. That is only for Jesus Christ to decide (under the authority of GOD).

With that being said, we must understand GOD's Word for further clarity. Since we believe in Jesus Christ, we need to know what Jesus says about those who don't repent of their sins. Learning about your eternal fate (as told by our CREATOR) is absolutely the most important knowledge that you must understand today.

Bottom line here -- Those of us who continue living in sin with no regard to what Jesus tells us are potentially forfeiting our chance of ever being allowed into the Kingdom of Heaven. Not making every honest effort to repent from wickedness, which is any continued sin against GOD, is a very risky decision… right?!

Luke 13:1-5 (NLT)
About this time Jesus was informed that Pilate had murdered some people from Galilee as they were offering sacrifices at the Temple. **"**Do you think those Galileans were worse sinners than all the other people from Galilee?**"** Jesus asked. **"**Is that why they suffered? Not at all! **And you will perish, too, unless you repent of your sins and turn to GOD**. And what about the eighteen people who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them? Were they the worst sinners in Jerusalem? No, and **I tell you again that unless you repent, you will perish, too**.**"**

Hebrews 10:26-29
If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of GOD.

Don't be deceived here either. Don't believe that purposeful avoidance of GOD's Word will bring you automatic salvation (based on ignorance of truth). This verse from the Book of Hebrews implies the 'knowledge of the truth' is the first coming of Jesus Christ, when He brought the truth to this world. In other words, the verse tells us that anybody who is alive today and has rejected the teachings of Jesus will be judged accordingly at the second coming of Jesus; it doesn't even matter if they chose to ignore the Bible, they will be thrown into the 'raging fire' (also called hell).

Ecclesiastes 12:14 (KJB)
For GOD shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Isaiah 13:9 (NLT)
For see, the day of the LORD is coming— the terrible day of his fury and fierce anger. The land will be made desolate, and all the sinners destroyed with it.

Luke 15:7
"I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in Heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

Do you know for certain where **you** will spend eternity?

NOTE: Don't hate me for trying to bring you to this knowledge too. I'm only here to point you to biblical scriptures, specifically related to your eternal fate. Just like ignorance of our earthly laws is no excuse for breaking those laws, your ignorance of Jesus is no excuse for breaking GOD's requirements either (Romans 1:17-20).

2 Timothy 2:25-26
Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that GOD will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

Remember what Jesus said will happen to those who never knew Him or even those of us who may have proclaimed our love for Jesus on this earth, but didn't truly follow His teachings:

Matthew 7:21-24
"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only the one who does the will of my FATHER who is in Heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!' Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."

The scriptures make it very clear that believing in the Name of Jesus Christ means obedience to his teachings. Our loving FATHER cannot accept continued disobedience with no efforts being made to repent of sinful ways.

{4.3 How to Repent}

Matthew 4:16-17
"The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven has come near."

Matthew 3:8 (NLT)
Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to GOD.

For me, repentance from sins and behaviors of the past started with an understanding of root causes and external factors that contribute. From my experience, learning GOD's Word and fully surrendering my life to Jesus Christ allowed me to come out of the 'darkness', so the spiritual forces influencing me to consistently give in to sinful behaviors could be recognized.

In my case, full repentance could not occur while those demons still controlled my life. I was blinded to the root cause of my addiction, therefore could not change my behaviors resulting from it. That is why submission to the authority of Jesus Christ was required. Only after the demon of addiction was purged from my heart (by the power of Jesus) could the associated sinful behaviors be addressed.

Since a change of heart occurs when submitting yourself to Jesus Christ, a change of thoughts and habits must occur when repenting of sin.

If possible, it's best to encourage friends and loved ones to accept your new ways of thinking; but this step will likely mean letting go of some friends (and possibly even family members) whose influences could harm your plans for full repentance. It will probably include removing some of your favorite activities in favor of full obedience to GOD. Depending on your specific situation, much sacrifice might be required here. Basically, this step means cutting out all those things that were causing you to remain in sin.

Ezekiel 18:21 (NLT)
"But if wicked people turn away from all their sins and begin to obey my decrees and do what is just and right, they will surely live and not die."

For the guilty serving time in prison: own your crime, repent in prison, and share your story. (For the innocent serving time in prison: don't be bitter; instead use your time to serve GOD)

For the alcoholic, it means a complete change of lifestyle. No more visiting bars or nightclubs, no hanging out with drunken friends, etc. It probably means attending A.A. meetings.

For the prideful person, it means a complete change of mindset. Accepting humility as a daily part of life, sharing emotions with others (instead of putting up emotional walls), praising others instead of only thinking about yourself, etc.

For the angry person, it means being more considerate of others instead of reacting to your own selfish thoughts. Taking those angry thoughts captive and thinking about how Jesus Christ would react in each specific situation.

For the greedy person, it means a complete change of stewardship. Sharing with others, giving with a cheerful heart, sacrificing your own wants for the needs of others, etc.

For the self-loathing person, it means a complete change of perspective. Viewing yourself through the eyes of Jesus, rejecting that self-doubt, expressing love for others, etc.

Matthew 5:29-30
"If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away! It is better to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into hell. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away! It is better to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into hell."

James 4:8
Come near to GOD and HE will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

You get the idea. It's not possible to list the countless types of harmful behaviors exhibited by humans, brought on by evil spiritual forces and our own flesh. Each of us who comes to Jesus Christ must take a personal inventory of our own situation and determine our own faults. With the guidance of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, each of us needs to figure out the thoughts and behaviors that have chained us as slaves to the sins we are determined to escape from.

Ephesians 4:22-24
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.

2 Timothy 2:19
However, GOD's solid foundation remains standing, bearing this seal: "The LORD knows those who are his," and "Everyone who confesses the NAME of the LORD must turn away from evil."

If you ever feel overwhelmed by the challenges (and you most likely will), please remember to 'give it to GOD'. You can know that it's a temporary trial or temptation. Through much prayer and firm belief, GOD will deliver you from it … and you will become stronger in faith.

You may fail many times during this repentance step. Do not give up trying. Always remember that GOD knows your heart (even better than you), so just maintain a sincere desire to turn away from your sins. You will overcome.

1 Corinthians 10:13
No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. 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 endure it.

Proverbs 24:16
Although a righteous person may fall seven times, he gets up again, but the wicked will be brought down by calamity.

This will be a challenging step, since it requires changes that will cause discomfort, pain and even rejection in this world. However, it is absolutely worth it (remember the sacrifices of Jesus).

Mark 1:15
"The time has come," He said. "The Kingdom of GOD has come near. Repent and believe the Good News!"

2 Corinthians 7:9-10
Yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as GOD intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

{4.4 Don't Get Fooled}

A reminder that we're all created equal. I'm not better than you. You're not better than me. While our physical bodies are different and our talents might vary widely, we're both spirits.

Being honest with yourself is of major importance to conquer demons of the past. Jesus can cast them out of your heart, but they will attempt to gain entry again. Those who do not allow Jesus to rule their life will fall back into old sinful ways again (not truly saved yet?).

Luke 5:31-32
Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Wicked - evil or morally wrong.

Beware: Satan and his army will try to blind you to the need for repentance. Many times, the word 'wicked' is associated with the worst of the worst wrongdoers in this world. However, you need to understand any behavior that is a sin (being morally wrong) is wicked in GOD's eyes.

Don't fool yourself. Don't believe that you are exempt from these realities. Don't believe that you aren't affected (therefore there is no need to repent of anything). Don't believe your increased knowledge of GOD's Word means that you can handle the same old behaviors much better now. Always remember that you need a Savior too.

This is no exaggeration. All of us have sinned. We all need to seek GOD and humbly ask for his forgiveness, then turn away from our sins. Our Savior Jesus Christ has already suffered and sacrificed his life, which paid the price for our sins … we just need to repent now.

Also remember that you cannot fool GOD either, as HE knows everything about us. Our FATHER knows our true motives.

Just like the child who says they are sorry for sneaking a cookie from the jar, but with no real intention of stopping that behavior, GOD knows the true intentions of our heart. HE is patient with us, as we work towards overcoming our sinful past … but we must have full repentance in our heart.

If you think I'm some lunatic ranting about these things, then you must believe the same of GOD. I'm not saying these things, the Bible clearly tells us.

Psalm 14:3
All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Romans 3:23
For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of GOD.

Romans 3:12 (NLT)
All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one.

1 John 1:8
If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Acts 17:30
In the past GOD overlooked such ignorance, but now HE commands all people everywhere to repent.

We know that GOD is good. GOD is just. Therefore, GOD is a good judge. Like an earthly judge who is good at their job: the judge cannot allow a criminal off the hook for crimes committed, just because the judge wants to.

If an earthly judge allows a criminal to go free of consequences for crimes committed, based on biased or personal reasons (outside the requirements of law), that will make him a bad judge.

Likewise, if GOD allows any of us sinful people to escape his justice, wouldn't that also mean that HE is a 'bad' judge?

It is impossible for GOD to be a bad judge because HE is all Good (Psalm 119:68).

Colossians 3:25 (NLT)
But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid back for the wrong you have done. For GOD has no favorites.

Think about it; thank GOD that HE allows us to repent from our sins, in the Name of Jesus Christ… before our judgment day.

Psalm 89:14
Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your Throne; love and faithfulness go before YOU.

Deuteronomy 32:4
HE is the ROCK, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful GOD who does no wrong, upright and just is HE.

You can have a joyous, fulfilling life when you have given your life completely to Jesus. You just need to change your perspective from a worldly viewpoint to a spiritual point of view.

Always remember to think in terms that go beyond this lifetime and earthly events. Think in terms of Eternity.

Colossians 3:2 (NLT)
Think about the things of Heaven, not the things of earth.

Matthew 6:33 (NLT)
"Seek the Kingdom of GOD above all else, and live righteously, and HE will give you everything you need."

Once you've been able to grasp this spiritual way of thinking and begin living your life accordingly, these acts of repentance will become easier.

{4.5 Perishable Spirits}

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

For those of us who won't qualify for Eternal Life with GOD (those who don't follow Jesus), what does the Bible really mean when it uses the word 'perish'?

As mentioned in the beginning of this letter, the worldly definition for *perish* is to suffer complete ruin or destruction. It could be sudden, such as a person's violent death … or it can be gradual, like a banana that ruins over time.

From a spiritual perspective, while the word *perish* has similar meaning, it's actually something that represents a combination of being in a ruined state, but not ever being fully dead.

When Jesus speaks of us perishing, He is speaking of our spirit. While GOD has the absolute ability to destroy our spirit completely (since HE created it), that is not what GOD had intended. Just like other spiritual beings experience eternal consciousness (such as angels), our spirit is built to last forever. Even though our physical body will perish, in the sense that it will completely decay over time, our spirit will continue living. We also know that our spirit, like our physical body, can only be in one place at any given time.

Therefore, logically speaking, if all our spirits will be in existence forever (as designed by GOD), and they can only be in one place at any given time, and that place is absolute joy in the Kingdom of Heaven for those who believe in Jesus Christ, and we know those who don't believe in Jesus Christ will spiritually perish… where exactly will those non-believer spirits spend eternity?

First off, you need to understand the two different types of death potentially affecting our spirit:

The first death is when the spirit is separated from the physical body. Every one of us will likely experience this first death (when we die on this earth).

The second death is when the spirit is permanently separated from GOD. Only those rejected by GOD will experience this spiritual death, based on the judgment from Jesus Christ.

In both cases, the spirit remains conscious, but experiences different types of existence. Spiritual death is the worst. Hell is where those who are spiritually dead will spend eternity.

One of the biggest misconceptions for many is the incorrect belief that either a loving GOD would never send any human spirits to such a horrible place or that HE would only send the most despicable persons to such a place.

Many people have the incorrect assumption that GOD will somehow overlook our sinful lives and grant us entry into his Kingdom anyway, even if we didn't truly believe the teachings of Jesus Christ. If that were the case, then the sacrifices of Jesus would not have been necessary.

Proverbs 26:11 (NLT)
As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his foolishness.

Anybody who believes that repenting of sin is not necessary for Eternal Life in Heaven is saying the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus was meaningless.

Anybody who believes that repenting of sin is not necessary for Eternal Life in Heaven is calling Jesus a liar. By this irrational thinking, they are calling GOD a liar too.

That is exactly what Satan loves us to think.

{4.6 Hell is Forever}

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9
HE will punish those who do not know GOD and do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the LORD and from the glory of his might.

Ezekiel 33:11
Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! … '

The place that we refer to as 'hell' is real. Think of hell as a place of spiritual torment for those who are rejected by GOD and denied the rewards that GOD promises to those who truly love HIM. Those who reject Jesus Christ in this world will end up being 'thrown out' as worthless to the Kingdom of GOD.

Luke 13:28 (NLT)
"There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, for you will see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of GOD, but you will be thrown out."

The place of hell has been discussed since the Old Testament books, and there are other words that refer to this type of place: sheol, hades, gehenna, tartarus ... and the eternal lake of fire. Think of the worst life imprisonment conditions on earth, then know that hell is an even worse eternal prison sentence.

Malachi 4:1
"Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire," says the LORD ALMIGHTY. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them."

Hebrews 10:30-31
For we know HIM who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The LORD will judge his people". It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the Living GOD.

We must remember that even though we are not governed by Old Testament laws, those laws show us the character of GOD. When GOD commanded that Old Testament people must repay sin as “an eye for an eye” (Exodus 21:23-25), it shows GOD’s form of justice: the sinner receives a like punishment according to their sinful act. GOD doesn’t change, so that form of justice should still be expected, but it will occur on final judgment (for those who aren’t saved).

As GOD has told us, humans are made in the same image as HIM; hence our desire for justice to be served properly (and why Old Testament law demanded it). The following verse was spoken by GOD in the ancient days of Genesis. It shows GOD’s expected form of justice for our sins. While it specifies the sin of murder in the verse, the reasoning is that all other sins follow the same expectation; in that, whenever a person commits a sin against another person, the same level of punishment must be used against the sinner (the punishment fits the crime).

Genesis 9:6 (NLT)
“If anyone takes a human life, that person’s life will also be taken by human hands.
For GOD made human beings in his own image.”

For believers in Christ, we’ll now ‘turn the other cheek’ and let GOD handle the final justice for us (eye for an eye against the unsaved sinner). In doing so, GOD will allow us to become righteous through the sacrifices of Jesus Christ; not ‘eye for an eye’ against believers in Christ.

That seems to indicate varying ‘levels’ of hell (Revelation 20:12). While there is much unknown about hell in general, the Bible has plenty to say about the reality of hell (spiritual death).

Hellish facts:

- Hell was originally created for the devil and all his demon angels, but has been expanded to accommodate the many human spirits who have rejected GOD too.

- Hell is forever. It is like a spiritual, eternal ‘life sentence’ in prison.

- There is not a second chance for repenting after your earthly death. A person lives on this earth once, then dies to this earth, then is judged for all eternity.

- GOD doesn't send people to hell on his own will; anybody who goes to hell does so by their own choice. They send themselves to hell by rejecting the teachings of Jesus.

- GOD is fair and just, therefore will correctly judge all of us according to the exact doctrine that HE has provided to us (which is our Bible).

- Because Heaven is absolute Holiness, there can be no sinful spirits allowed there; else it wouldn’t be Heaven anymore. Since we all deserve eternal death, we must thank GOD for allowing the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to be acceptable for cleansing the sins of those who believe in Him (and thank Jesus Christ for his sacrifice). For those who don’t believe in the teachings of Jesus, they will be judged based on their own merit. Because we’re all sinners (and sin cannot be allowed in Heaven), GOD will have no choice but to cast them into hell… the lake of fire… to suffer… forever… and ever!

Please don't just listen to me though. Biblical scripture warns us of this place called hell:

Isaiah 5:14 (KJV)
Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.

Revelation 20:10
And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet are too, and they will be tormented there day and night forever and ever.

Matthew 25:41
"Then He will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

Revelation 20:15
Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Isaiah 14:15 (NLT)
Instead, you will be brought down to the place of the dead, down to its lowest depths.

Mark 9:43
"If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter into life crippled than to have two hands and go into hell, to the unquenchable fire."

Mark 9:47-48
"If your eye causes you to sin, tear it out! It is better to enter into the Kingdom of GOD with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies and the fire is never quenched."

Jude 1:7
In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

Matthew 13:49-50
"This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Psalm 9:16-17
The LORD is known by his acts of justice; the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands. The wicked go down to the realm of the dead, all the nations that forget GOD.

Daniel 12:2 (NLT)
Many of those whose bodies lie dead and buried will rise up, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace.

Revelation 21:8
"But to the cowards, unbelievers, detestable persons, murderers, the sexually immoral, and those who practice magic spells, idol worshipers, and all those who lie, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. **That is the second death**."

Revelation 14:11
"And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name."

These verses are GOD's warning to us about the eternal fate awaiting those who don't stay obedient to HIM (by believing in his Son).

While John 3:16 tells us GOD's promise of Eternal Life to those of us who follow Jesus Christ, that same verse also implies those who don't will perish. From understanding other biblical verses, we know that perish means eternal death (see John 5:24).

"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."

Titus 3:3-7
At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of GOD our SAVIOR appeared, HE saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. HE saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of Eternal Life.

Do not be deceived by the devil into believing that GOD does not follow through on his Word. That is the oldest trick in Satan's book, as it was first used against Eve (in the Garden of Eden).

Repent from any sinful ways now, so you can be cleansed of sins that will cause your spirit to be cast into that eternal lake of fire.

It's never too late to repent and be saved, as shown by the criminal being crucified next to Jesus (Luke 23:39-43). The only requirement is true repentance (from the heart).

By repenting of sins, you can be reborn into the righteousness of Jesus Christ and saved for Eternal Life!

{4.7 Heaven is Forever}

Hebrews 9:27-28
Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.

While it would be a critical mistake to overlook the reality of eternal condemnation in hell, you must understand that GOD loves us. As horrible as hell will be for the unsaved, HE wants for all of us to come to the truth of Jesus (for salvation). Heaven is most certainly a real place too.

It is your choice if you want to be included in the Kingdom of Heaven… FOREVER.

1 Timothy 2:3-4
This is good, and pleases GOD our SAVIOR, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

John 14:1-4
"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in GOD; believe also in Me. My FATHER's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that 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. You know the way to the place where I Am going."

Matthew 25:34
"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my FATHER; take your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'"

2 Corinthians 5:1
For 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.

Philippians 3:20-21
But our citizenship is in Heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17
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.

2 Timothy 4:18
The LORD will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly Kingdom. To HIM be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 21:3-5
And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! GOD's dwelling place is now among the people, and HE will dwell 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." HE who was seated on the throne said, "I AM making everything new!" Then HE said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

The story of the rich man and Lazarus can help you visualize the very different experiences between Heaven & hell. Please read **Luke 16:19-31** to get a better understanding of one person who inherits the Kingdom of Heaven and another person who does not. This story sends a direct message of repentance to all of us.

Mark 6:12
They went out and preached that people should repent.

5) GUARD

It's all about perspective and how you view this world we live in. Many of us get caught up in daily life. Mostly concerned about keeping schedules or maintaining a lifestyle that is promoted by our peers or the mass media. Solely focusing on the 'here and now' without much concern of life beyond this world.

It's true that many of us folks try to plan for our future here on earth: education, home, family, career, retirement, etc. But, what about the eternal future? If you remain too occupied with earthly life events and the daily grind, you can forget how valuable believing in Jesus can be. Not referring to the obvious value of believing in Jesus for Eternal Life with our heavenly FATHER, but there is much value in those same beliefs that can be applied to our life here on earth (present time).

Philippians 4:7
And the peace of GOD that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

If you've successfully submitted your life to Jesus Christ and continue working through full repentance, then you're in good shape (spiritually).

Based on my own experience, it's likely that you've battled through some challenges to this point, but are really motivated by your love for GOD and strong desire to follow Jesus now.

Proverbs 4:23
Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

With that being said, this next step is very important to maintain your strength (in the long term).

Simply stated, you must guard your heart very carefully.

{5.1 The Church}

1 Corinthians 12:27-28
Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And GOD has placed in the Church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.

Guarding your heart requires understanding the spiritual perspective of GOD. It requires constant renewal of your own spirit, as the burdens of this world can be overwhelming.

Humans are social beings (by GOD's design), and therefore influence each other; for better or worse. Learning from faithful leaders and being in faithful fellowship with others will encourage and enhance your personal faith journey. Regular gatherings of believers are a pleasing way to show our worship of GOD.

Hebrews 10:25 (NLT)
And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

There seems to be misconceptions about attending church services. Some people think attending church weekly is all we need to do to show GOD our full faith; believing that GOD will ultimately judge us based on our church attendance. Other people believe that never attending church is fine, as long as they are kind to others.

I think neither of those are accurate statements. It's true the New Testament Bible doesn't say that we must attend church weekly to gain GOD's grace, but it's also true the Bible says that we should 'not neglect our meeting together'.

Belonging to GOD's Church is essential for salvation, but attending local church services can be essential for guarding your heart.

Colossians 1:18 (NLT)
Christ is also the Head of the Church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So He is first in everything.

GOD's Church is the worldwide membership of all faithful believers, who are also known as the saints. GOD expects faithful Pastors (also known as elders or shepherds) to lead the many local churches in this world.

Seek out a good Pastor. There are very good Pastors out there who have dedicated their lives to sharing the Gospel message with their followers. Local church memberships range from very small to very big. These Pastors are faith leaders, who can provide biblical guidance and help lead you up the righteous path. Maybe you might even hear the calling to become a Pastor (?).

GOD has made his requirements of church leaders known, as they are held to a very high standard. You can know they are true by the message they deliver (compared to Gospel). Pastors should also be verified by the fruits of their personal behaviors. We must hold our church leaders accountable, as GOD also does:

Acts 20:28 (NLT)
So guard yourselves and GOD's people. Feed and shepherd GOD's flock—his Church, purchased with his own blood — over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders.

Titus 1:6-9 (NLT)
An elder must live a blameless life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who don't have a reputation for being wild or rebellious. A church leader is a manager of GOD's household, so he must live a blameless life. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker, violent, or dishonest with money. Rather, he must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must love what is good. He must live wisely and be just. He must live a devout and disciplined life. He must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong.

Find a good church, led by a good Pastor. Support the church, giving your time and money. Cheerfully participate however possible. This can help you stay on the righteous path.

If you cannot regularly attend local church services, at least expose yourself to televised faith leaders or online/streamed services. Seek out quality online resources dedicated to promoting the Word too, as these can enrich those who belong to GOD's Church.

Regardless, belonging to GOD's Church will guard you against the enemies →

{5.2 The Enemy Spirits}

1 Peter 5:8-9
Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Ephesians 6:16
In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

The worldly phrase says, 'the best defense is a good offense'. However, just like so many other things that prove the opposite is true between this world and the Kingdom of GOD, I'm saying 'the best offense is a good defense'.

That statement refers to the idea that it's best to defeat the enemy spirits by guarding your heart against their evil attacks. The shield of your faith is the defense against such attacks. Knowing the Word of GOD and having assurance in the sacrifices of Jesus Christ is all you need to defend against the enemy. The Holy Spirit can be your personal bodyguard and provide cover.

As referenced in the above verse, the 'flaming arrows of the evil one' are those thoughts that try to spiritually harm you: maybe a thought of self-doubt or when somebody says something that makes you feel less worthy. We all experience these types of attacks, even if the demon is telling us that we're alone in it.

You must evaluate those negative internal thoughts and compare against what the Bible tells you. Knowing the truth of GOD's love and expectations of righteousness, you can immediately identify any thought that is contrary to those beliefs and push it out of your thought process. When the devil tried to tempt Jesus Christ in the wilderness, Jesus knew GOD's Word perfectly, to defend against the devil (Matthew 4:1-11). We must follow these teachings of Jesus too.

2 Peter 3:17
Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position.

Matthew 4:10
Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the LORD your GOD, and serve HIM only.'"

The biggest takeaway here is the devil and his demons will attack using influential thoughts that encourage you to partake in a sinful behavior or try to make you feel unworthy in some way. The only weapon needed in the fight against evil is the SWORD of GOD. Faith in GOD's Word can shield you against the lies. Knowing GOD's Word will defend the absolute truth to yourself and promote this truth to others (which is a good offense). Enemy spirits will flee from that truth.

{5.3 The Enemy World}

James 4:4
You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against GOD? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of GOD.

John 16:33
"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

The evil spirits don't just attack you directly though. Remember that everybody else is also being attacked by demons. Most people fall victim to demonic influences, at least some of the time.

As you know, one person's spirit can influence another person's spirit, just like the Holy Spirit and evil spirits can influence a person's spirit. Groups of people together can be a big influence on an individual person's spirit.

Basic logic will tell you that, with so many people being corrupted by demons, the communities they live in will be corrupted too. That corruption expands out to the entire world population. Therefore, the morals and values of the world are significantly impacted by the spiritually corrupted people of the world.

We all know that laws and regulations must be in place, since even the devil can't fool us into believing that absolute lawlessness is a good idea for society. Thankfully, laws are put in place to at least keep some evil at bay. However, in addition to the laws being broken, there is only so much a law can protect us from (regarding immoral behaviors).

A culture is loosely defined as the customs and practices of a social group (a way of life). It could be a nation, community, workplace, etc. A culture is not a legal definition, but is more influenced by the likes and beliefs of the specified group of people.

Most people put our personal desires as higher priority than those of GOD; demons attack that warped perspective relentlessly. Worldly cultures are severely impacted. The result is an erosion of morals and values; not so much hardened criminal behaviors, but the more subtle types of behaviors which are against GOD's law.

Worldly values will say things like "*do whatever makes you happy*" (without regard to GOD), "*just believe in yourself*", or "*always follow your heart*" (which we know can easily deceive us).

The world defines success by how much money or material possessions you have obtained.
The world fully accepts and even encourages immoral behaviors that are against GOD.
The world rewards people who can attain powerful positions, without regard to good morals.

Men are praised by the number of sexual encounters they've had (with different partners).
Those who 'don't take disrespect from others' are admired in this world, even though Jesus tells us to turn the other cheek.

There are so many other examples, but basically any societal value that doesn't hold up against GOD's Word is from this world. So, resist the temptation to follow those beliefs and practices.

1 John 2:15-17
Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the FATHER is not in them. For everything in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — comes not from the FATHER but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of GOD lives forever.

I think much of society has the incorrect belief that, if something is acceptable to the majority of people in this world, it must be fine with GOD too. That is a false belief, especially considering the majority of people allow demonic influences into their heart.

James 3:14-15
But if you have bitter jealousy and selfishness in your hearts, do not boast and tell lies against the truth. Such wisdom does not come from above but is earthly, natural, demonic.

Typical world values seem to lead people to unhappiness, unfaithfulness, jealousy, bitterness, etc. Please realize that only godly living can bring a person true spiritual peace and joy. People love a fictional superhero, but Jesus is the real 'Superman'. Don't trust the world for your peace, but allow Jesus to reign as King in your heart. Listen to GOD's Word more than man's words.

Luke 16:15
But Jesus said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in men's eyes, but GOD knows your hearts. For what is highly prized among men is utterly detestable in GOD's sight."

So many people seem to be so worried about what other people think of them; however, they give no regard to what GOD might think of them. For true believers, it should be the other way around.

Being more interested in how many 'likes' you're getting on social media platforms than if GOD likes your heart is misguided. Being more concerned with how many followers you have on social media than being a follower of Jesus seems backwards.

Being so concerned with what others in this world might be thinking of you can be spiritually exhausting. It can be a ‘moving target’ too, dependent on worldly circumstances. At least you know that GOD never changes, as you have probably realized that people change their likes or emotional states all the time.

Always trying to impress others in a spiritually corrupt society can bring an otherwise righteous person into sin. Our desire to belong to a crowd can deceive us into justifying bad behaviors.

1 Corinthians 15:33
Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.”

The devil likes it when you only concern yourself with belonging to this world. Wouldn’t you like the freedom of not worrying about an unknown future here on earth, as well as freedom from being excessively concerned about what others are thinking?

I believe allowing yourself freedom **in** this world allows you freedom **from** this world.

Luke 12:15
Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

Matthew 6:33 (NLT)
“Seek the Kingdom of GOD above all else, and live righteously, and HE will give you everything you need.”

The world is falling away. Don’t get false perceptions that a society promoting freedoms to do as we wish is what GOD wants for us. People’s natural desires are against GOD’s desires. All you need to do is look back to recent history. I believe the degradation of our society is accelerating at a fast pace, and only true believers (the salt of the earth) can delay the progression. Certain behaviors that were up until recently considered totally unacceptable by society are now accepted, even governed by laws that try to force us to accept those behaviors. It’s only been a matter of mere decades this has occurred. Be careful of the television and Internet content you consume, as you are what you consume most. There is much filth being promoted everywhere today, so try to seek out quality Christian material, even as a source of entertainment. Also, while the ‘feel-good’ religious movies can promote a good message and therefore are surely encouraged, they are no full substitute for learning GOD’s Word.

1 John 5:3-4 (NLT)
Loving GOD means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. For every child of GOD defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith.

Micah 6:8
HE has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your GOD.

GOD sees everything that is happening too. Each of us must choose which side to serve. The world is against GOD. See Romans 1:29-31 for characteristics of those serving this world.

{5.4 The False Truths}

2 Corinthians 4:4
Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of GOD.

Romans 10:10
For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Con man - a person who cheats or tricks someone by gaining their trust and persuading them to believe something that is not true.

GOD is all truth. Satan is all lies. GOD's Kingdom is in Heaven. Satan's kingdom is on earth.

That's all you need to know for a good understanding that Bible is full of truth, but the world is full of lies. You must guard yourself against the spirit of deceit.

People inherently want to believe a truth that most suits their own needs. It's not that we purposely seek to believe lies, partly because our own pride doesn't want us to believe that we're gullible. While nobody wants to get suckered into believing a con man or shady salesman, we more easily fall prey to believing lies that are against GOD.

Romans 16:17-18 (NLT)
And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people.

Who is lying to us? What is gained by keeping people in the dark to the truth? Is it an intentional deception of the public masses?

Satan the devil is the ultimate con man. He has been around much longer than any of us and knows all the lies that work against us. His lies are most certainly intentional and very malicious by design. With his lies, Satan and his army convince many people of false beliefs which are meant to cause hatred and strife. The goal of evil spirits is to destroy people's relationships with each other, as well as the relationship with our loving FATHER. Satan is dividing countries from within, as well as causing nations to fight against each other.

Just like a con man, Satan convinces people to believe his lies. Just like a con man, he does it for his own personal gain (he wants your spirit).

The devil and his demons can be very cunning in their deception. They know how to tap into our personal biases and fears. They're very good at convincing people they are correct and other people are the enemy (when evil spirits are the real enemy). Satan knows how to get people to override what GOD wants from us, in favor of serving Satan's desires instead. The lies are many times disguised to make us believe that breaking GOD's law is necessary to correct a situation that affects our personal biases (we're willing to harm others to promote false truths).

Whether you want to admit it or not, anybody who falls for the lies of this world is serving Satan.

2 Corinthians 11:3 (NLT)
But I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted, just as Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent.

2 Corinthians 11:14
And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

Money and power have big potential for corrupting people. Our selfish desires many times override the desire to do what is right, unless we consistently keep the Holy Spirit in our heart and the Word of GOD in our mouth.

Because governments are headed by people, doesn't it make sense they are great targets for Satan himself? The leaders of nations are most certainly targeted by evil, in hopes of corrupting their decision making. I'm not saying that politicians are more likely to succumb to demonic influence than the rest of us, but we know that many of us fall victim to Satan's manipulations. The leaders of nations are no different. The difference is their decisions have potential for bigger impacts on this world (for better or worse). Therefore, Satan most certainly has government officials of all countries in his crosshairs.

Be careful of supporting political parties (without regard to GOD's Word). Vote for the politician's position on topics, not solely on their party affiliation. How do their proposals on legislation align with GOD's Word? Voters should demand Christian accountability from all elected politicians.

Note: The Bible tells us that governments are in place to maintain an orderly society. We must always follow the laws of our worldly governments (even if we totally disagree) … unless those worldly laws force you to break GOD's law. See Romans 13:1-2 and Acts 5:29.

Romans 13:5
Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.

Same with big media companies. The desire for power in their industry tempts news media and entertainment companies to produce news and entertainment that caters to the masses. As already stated, the masses in this world are spiritually corrupt. For the most part, people are easily convinced of things that are already present in their hearts and minds… even if those things are based on lies.

The result: fake news. It's hard for many to know what is real and what is fake. The proliferation of false information on the Internet has made the situation worse.

The only source of absolute truth is still the Bible. Anything else must be taken in the context as to which it's presented. Never allow the world's political systems or media companies to corrupt your ways of thinking. Just because something is legal in our world, that doesn't make it correct in GOD's eyes. Just because you hear about events and opinions on your favorite news channel, that doesn't make it truth.

2 Timothy 4:3
For there will be a time when people will not tolerate sound teaching. Instead, following their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves, because they have an insatiable curiosity to hear new things.

Acts 20:29-31
I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

Always be aware of false truths meant to serve a purpose outside of GOD's true Word.

Colossians 3:9-10
Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its CREATOR.

Do not contribute to spreading these lies to others. Always remain in GOD's true Word.

{5.5 The False Prophets}

Matthew 7:15-17
"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit."

2 John 1:7
I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.

Prophet - a person regarded as an inspired teacher or proclaimer of the will of GOD.

1 Corinthians 14:31
For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged.

When most of us think of prophets, we assume it only refers to the biblical prophets who shared GOD's visions of the future with us. While it's certainly true there were Old Testament prophets who were given GOD's message of the future to deliver to us, a prophet is somebody who hears from GOD and shares the message with others.

Pastors and other true believers are very important to helping us understand the will of GOD. Keep your ears open to hear their messages, so you can apply correct teachings to your daily life. In doing so, you can guard against the lies of the devil.

However:

BEWARE of false prophets! There are many religions and organized cults that spread false doctrines. Sometimes their leaders will twist GOD's Word to fit a political agenda or some other worldly cause. Some religious organizations may seem legitimate and even draw a multitude of followers (including well respected people), but they preach their own version of the Bible.

Religious organizations promoting their own traditions as higher priority than biblical teachings should be avoided. Any teaching that claims salvation is a result of something else we must do (in addition to believing in Jesus Christ) should be called out as false religion.

Beware of those who only preach hand-picked Bible verses to meet their own agenda, while neglecting the entirety of the Bible's message. Beware of those who select specific verses to promote a false message (usually taking the verse out of the context of which it was written).

Guard against false religion and false prophets by comparing any of their teachings against scriptural text. Bible verses should be researched against the context of the book/chapter from which they are written.

Finally, while it seemed to be a bigger concern in Old Testament times, there is no doubt that GOD does not like the practices of psychics, fortune tellers, sorcerers, clairvoyants, etc. Anybody who claims to have abilities to tell your future or speak with your dead relatives is a liar (or demonically influenced). Do not allow yourself to fall prey to those sinful practices.

To the so-called psychics, repent and turn your life to Jesus too. All who believe in Jesus Christ can be saved!

1 John 4:1
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.

1 John 4:5-6 (NLT)
Those people belong to this world, so they speak from the world's viewpoint, and the world listens to them. But we belong to GOD, and those who know GOD listen to us. If they do not belong to GOD, they do not listen to us. That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception.

[Absolute theory only:

Not validated as truth, but it's possible the psychics are getting fooled themselves, in this way:

Demons watch us very closely. If a demon sees a psychic's customer list, the demon can also watch the customer very closely. The demon can learn valuable info about that customer, which can then be whispered back to the psychic (via their thoughts). In turn, the psychic can relay that info back to their customer during the next session. For example, maybe the customer's grandmother had long ago given them a teddy bear to sleep with every night and the demon tells the psychic about it too.

Result: the customer is amazed of how the psychic knew that detailed personal info about them, the psychic truly believes they have a special gift, and the demon can continue the same type of effort with the psychic's other customers]

Leviticus 19:31 (NLT)
Do not defile yourselves by turning to mediums or to those who consult the spirits of the dead. I AM the LORD your GOD.

Matthew 24:24 (NLT)
"For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even GOD's chosen ones."

The same defense required against the devil and his schemes should also be used against false prophets. Always have your shield of faith … and the SWORD of GOD. Jesus is truth!

{5.6 The End Times}

1 Timothy 4:1
The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

Luke 21:34-36
"But be on your guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day close down upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will overtake all who live on the face of the whole earth. But stay alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that must happen, and to stand before the Son of Man."

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10
The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

Your life in this world will end. This current world will end. Will you be ready for either?

The truth is nobody understands the actual end times events that will occur and certainly not any timeline of when they will occur. You've probably read or heard about some who claim to know the date or year of the end times (usually leaders of false religious cults). They are all sadly misguided or outright liars. Nobody on this planet knows when the end times will occur. It will happen quickly, and many will be unprepared. Jesus tells us this directly, so be advised:

Mark 13:32-33
"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in Heaven, nor the Son, but only the FATHER. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come."

You can be sure of two things though – there will be an end of this age and every day you wake up is one day closer to that time. We certainly know there will be an end time in this world for each of us personally (we will die on this earth); and each day you wake up is one day closer to that time.

So, how do you prepare for these events? The quick answer is to always be on your guard against the schemes of the devil, this world, false prophets, etc. Always remain faithful to your Savior, Jesus Christ.

Be alert; always be clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ:

Revelation 16:15 (NLT)
"Look, I will come as unexpectedly as a thief! Blessed are all who are watching for Me, who keep their clothing ready so they will not have to walk around naked and ashamed."

I personally treat each day here on earth as a blessing from GOD, to do his work. Behave as if every day is both the last day of your life and the first day of the rest of your life. Our mission on this earth is to promote the Kingdom of GOD, so we can be prepared for our own judgment day (which will determine our eternal destination).

Do not assume that tomorrow will be there for you. From my own experience, during this faith journey, that little voice in your head might tell you that GOD can wait until tomorrow; telling you its fine to do as you please today.

Be careful, as you don't know the day or time of your physical death. Don't make future plans without regard to your own mortality.

James 4:14-15
Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the LORD's will, we will live and do this or that."

Acts 17:31
For HE has set a day when HE will judge the world with justice by the Man HE has appointed. HE has given proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead.

There are many prophesies of our future; spoken by Jesus Christ during his ministry on earth, Old Testament prophecy, as well as prophetic visions provided to the Apostle John while he was imprisoned on Patmos Island (the Book of Revelation).

The study of these prophetic messages is outside the scope of this letter, but I encourage you to research it yourself. Please note that, to truly grasp these prophecies, you need to have a good understanding of the entire story of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments.

Whatever the case, always be aware that Satan the devil, who was thrown down here to earth has a single mission: the destruction of mankind. He is very angry with GOD and hates us so much that no amount of horrible evil is out of his desire for our lives. You must guard against it every single day of your life on this earth.

Revelation 12:12
Therefore you heavens rejoice, and all who reside in them! But woe to the earth and the sea because the devil has come down to you! He is filled with terrible anger, for he knows that he only has a little time!

Whether or not you choose to learn more about prophetic scripture for the future of this world, you must be aware that each day is another day closer to that time … and this world will continue to fall away until that time. Each day, many people of this world are straying further away from the love of GOD. The sacrifices of Jesus Christ are being pushed further away by the many people who are blinded by the god of this world (the devil).

2 Timothy 3:1-5
But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of GOD — having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

2 Peter 3:3 (NLT)
Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires.

Matthew 24:10-14
“At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

Note: for all the seemingly bad news (as we get closer to end times), you can still rejoice and understand this is part of the Gospel (Good News) for those of us who believe in Jesus Christ.

Luke 21:28
“But when these things begin to happen, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Revelation 22:11-12
"Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy. Look, I Am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done."

John 14:3
"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."

Jesus is coming back again (at the end of this age). He will reign as King of all those who believe in Him!

{5.7 GOD Never Changes}

Malachi 3:6 (NLT)
"I am the LORD, and I do not change…"

Hebrews 13:8
Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Isaiah 40:8
The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our GOD endures forever.

Matthew 24:35
"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my Words will never pass away."

We know our GOD through the Bible. We know that GOD is absolute love. We know that GOD is absolute truth. We know that GOD is Holy and Just. We know that GOD is omnipresent (present everywhere). We know that GOD is omniscient (all knowing).

We also know that GOD never changes. HE is the same GOD throughout the ages and forever. The Bible clearly tells us that GOD's Word does not fade away… ever. Jesus Christ never changes; the same obedience is still required today as in the days of early Christians.

Be strongly advised: It's obvious that a 'watered down' version of Christianity is being promoted today. Just enough faith to keep people feeling good, but no sacrifice required. Don't fall into false beliefs of those who claim the Bible no longer applies the same as it did in the days of Jesus or that we need to be more progressive in our beliefs. Any belief that GOD accepts new interpretations of the Gospel is false. Beware 'Christian Nationalist' beliefs not found in scripture.

{5.8 Stay Committed}

While the future promise of living forever in absolute paradise is a huge motivation to remain faithful to GOD, the realities of this earthly life can drag us down too. Daily life can throw many trials and challenges our way, causing some to fall away from that strong faith.

Unbelief at times is understandable, but you must stay the course (Mark 9:24)… else you will become food for the demons.

Hebrews 3:12
See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the Living GOD.

John 6:66
From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed Him.

Romans 11:20-21 (ESV)
That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. For if GOD did not spare the natural branches, neither will HE spare you.

Biblical **endurance** is the quality of remaining committed to faithfully serving GOD despite setbacks, troubling times, and other adversity. Staying the path of Jesus Christ, no matter what challenges come your way. Endurance is required to ensure your faith is guarded for the long haul. GOD blesses those who stay firm in their commitment to HIM.

Hebrews 12:1 (NLT)
Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race GOD has set before us.

Romans 5:3-5
Not only this, but we also rejoice in sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance, character, and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint, because the love of GOD has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Matthew 24:13 (NLT)
But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Biblical **perseverance** is the quality of remaining committed to faithfully serving GOD despite growing tired and burned out. Trusting in the sacrifices of Jesus Christ, no matter how much effort is required or how exhausting the burdens of this world can be. Perseverance is required to ensure your faith will stand against the test of time.

James 1:12
Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the LORD has promised to those who love HIM.

2 Corinthians 2:9
Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything.

Galatians 6:9
Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Biblical **self-control** is the quality of maintaining full control over your words and actions. Controlling your tongue (by means of the Holy Spirit) so that no evil is spoken against anybody; even those who commit sin against you. Resisting the temptations of evil and worldly passions. Self-control is required to maintain a righteous life in Christ for the long term.

2 Timothy 1:7
For GOD did not give us a Spirit of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Proverbs 16:32 (NLT)
Better to be patient than powerful; better to have self-control than to conquer a city.

Biblical **discipline** is the quality of staying consistent in the practices that produce good fruit for the purpose of serving GOD. Choosing the narrow gate; rejecting the pleasures of this world to indulge in the good works of Jesus Christ instead. Discipline is required to remain on the righteous path of Eternal Life.

Discipline is also defined as those 'corrections' that GOD enforces on his children, when we stray from our faith.

1 Corinthians 9:25 (NLT)
All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize.

Hebrews 12:11
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 12:6 (NLT)
For the LORD disciplines those HE loves, and HE punishes each one HE accepts as his child.

Just like being successful at anything in this world, success in faithful service to GOD requires commitment, significant effort, and sacrifice. Just like worldly success brings worldly riches and rewards, success in faithful service to GOD brings eternal riches and rewards. The difference is the worldly prize will be gone someday, whereas the heavenly prize will last Forever!

2 Corinthians 6:14 (NLT)
Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness?

Therefore, always stay alert and guard yourself against the traps that will block your chances at the eternal prize.

{5.9 Pray Always}

Philippians 4:6
Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to GOD.

Colossians 4:2
Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Matthew 21:22 (NLT)
"You can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it."

Prayer - a solemn request for help or expression of thanks addressed to GOD.

Guarding our life against the devil and this evil world requires constant support from our FATHER. Prayer is the best method for us to speak directly to our FATHER. Just like our close human relationships, frequent communication is very important.

When a believer in Christ prays, the FATHER listens. Jesus shows all of us the perfect example of how to pray. Back in Section 2.7 of this letter, Bible verse Matthew 6:9-13 is referenced; this is where Jesus provides a perfect model for our prayer life (known as the LORD's Prayer).

You must pray with a heart of absolute faith. You must love and respect GOD with all your heart**,** soul, and mind. You must be in a righteous standing with GOD. You should give thanks for your blessings. You should ask GOD for forgiveness of your sins. You can boldly ask GOD for other 'things' in your daily life; a true believer will be aligned with GOD on what to ask for.

Prayers can be said out loud or silently (in your mind), since GOD knows the heart.

Prayer should **not** be a laundry list of things that you want GOD to give you (James 4:3).
Prayer should **not** be a repeatable phrase that is said solely out of 'obligation'.
Prayer should **not** be used to show off to others how faithful you are.
Prayer should **not** only be when it is convenient for your busy schedule.

Prayer **is** a dedicated time to honor GOD, an open conversation with our FATHER.
Prayer **is** a time to give thanks and praise to our FATHER; this is an act of worship.
Prayer **is** a time to ask our FATHER for the wisdom and strength to guard against the devil.
Prayer **is** the time to ask our FATHER to forgive, protect and help others (in this fallen world).

Matthew 22:37 (NLT)
Jesus replied, "You must love the LORD your GOD with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind."

Matthew 6:6-8
"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. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your FATHER knows what you need before you ask HIM."

You can pray for very personal needs; specific requests that will help in your faith journey. Selfish desires are not what Jesus means by 'ask and you shall receive'. As stated in step #2, winning the lottery is probably not something that you should expect to happen from saying a prayer. If GOD desires for you to win the lottery, HE already knows it can help promote his glory… so, if that is the case, you'd better use those lottery winnings accordingly.

Consistently pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ, desiring for them to also experience GOD's blessings.

Philemon 1:6 (NLT)
And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ.

Don't worry about missing the mark when you pray… our FATHER knows if you are praying with a genuine heart. GOD already knows what you need. If you are concerned about how to pray, then pray for the wisdom of how to pray!

Matthew 26:41
"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Romans 8:26
In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

If wondering how often or when you should pray, always remember the devil and his demon army are attacking us 24/7. Guarding against those attacks is a daily commitment. We like GOD's blessings and protections all the time, and we should pray all the time. As long as we are alive (both physically and spiritually), it is because of GOD, and we love HIM with everything we are… therefore should pray as such.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
Always rejoice, constantly pray, in everything give thanks. For this is GOD's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 6:18 (NLT)
Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

The other reason we need to keep prayer in our daily life is to keep our love for GOD as first and foremost priority. Constant communication with our HIGHER POWER assures us of the reasons we are here on earth now.

Our heavenly FATHER wants a true relationship with each of us. While solemn prayer is very effective when done regularly, it's also good to casually reach out to GOD in your daily life too. For example, it could just be a quick thanks; acknowledgment of a specific blessing at some random point in your day.

Proverbs 15:29
The LORD is far from the wicked, but HE hears the prayer of the righteous.

Finally, there is another very important part of our prayer life: Listening for GOD. Communication is a two-way process. The Bible makes it clear that GOD speaks to believers (Job 33:14, John 10:27). I can absolutely testify to that truth.

If you believe with all your heart (therefore live according to Jesus) and listen with an open mind, our almighty GOD will send you clear messages. It could be a stern warning against a bad action you are considering. It could be a correction against a bad action you already completed. It could also be a comforting reminder that GOD is there for you (and loves you very much).

An example: After becoming a sober believer in Christ, there was a strong temptation to visit the local liquor store. The family was gone for the weekend, and I had the house to myself. Being weak in the flesh, a demon voice was trying to convince me it would be totally fine to have a few drinks… just this one time. So, I grabbed my keys, with plans to go buy a six-pack of beer. However, for no explainable physical reason, my automatic garage door opener did not work. That had never been a problem before this day. After multiple attempts, it still failed completely. My devilish thoughts immediately told me to disconnect the automatic opener, so the garage could be opened manually (and I could drive off). However, because of my faith, I took the thought captive and realized that GOD was talking to me; warning not to leave my house at that time. It didn't take long to change my plans, head back inside and pray. I had listened to GOD. Final part of this story: that same garage door opener worked fine by later that evening, when I went to a friend's house instead. The garage door opener has worked fine ever since then, so there is no doubt this was GOD working directly in my life. I can only imagine the potential consequences if I had not listened (although GOD can forgive us when we fall too).

1 Peter 3:12
For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.

Since becoming an absolute believer, I've had other similar experiences when GOD spoke to me. Another type of example: When trying to figure out the correct decision on an important life event (and praying on it), the very next song that I hear on the radio absolutely confirms that GOD is providing the answer. Sometimes GOD uses other people to speak to us. You might think I'm crazy or it was just coincidences, but I know it was GOD!

{5.10 Trust In GOD}

Hebrews 10:22
Let us draw near to GOD with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Psalm 141:3-4
Set a guard over my mouth, LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips. Do not let my heart be drawn to what is evil so that I take part in wicked deeds along with those who are evildoers; do not let me eat their delicacies.

Psalm 119:9-12
How can a young person maintain a pure life? By guarding it according to your instructions! With all my heart I seek YOU. Do not allow me to stray from your commands! In my heart I store up your words, so I might not sin against YOU. YOU deserve praise, O LORD! Teach me your statutes!

A reminder about the spiritual battle of Good versus evil: the real battle is being fought within all of us. Spiritual forces from both sides want to win your spirit over to their side… for eternity.

Evil spirits are the enemy. They are headed by Satan the devil and his army of demon warriors. They attack the world. We are all engaged in the battle, whether we know it or not.

We ourselves (in the human flesh) are too weak to overcome evil spirits. They have the default advantages of knowing our weaknesses, the element of surprise, the longevity of their own existence, invisibility, higher level wisdom, non-relenting desire to destroy us, etc.

Good spirits are much more powerful than the evil ones. GOD the FATHER, GOD the Son, and GOD the Holy Spirit represent the united force of the Holy Trinity; they have countless angels on their side too. These are the spirits that can easily help us overcome the evil ones.

1 Peter 3:9-11
Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it."

Please know that you don't need to guard your heart by yourself. By giving it to GOD, you can be protected from the evil one; protection offered by the ONE who created everything.

Psalm 27:1
Of David. 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?

You must always trust in GOD. You must surrender your life to Jesus Christ, who can reside within each of us. You must allow the Holy Spirit to remain in your heart. You must always guard your heart using the shield of faith and the SWORD of GOD.

If not, the evil spirits will be able to successfully attack you again.

Psalm 23:1-6
The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. HE makes me lie down in green pastures. HE leads me beside still waters. HE restores my soul. HE leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 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. YOU prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; YOU anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of The LORD forever.

It's all about what's in your heart. Whatever is in your heart will manifest itself in your thoughts, words, and actions. That's why your heart is the target for the devil. That's why your heart must be guarded carefully. Watch against harboring any malicious intent or deception in your heart. Be able to recognize the negative emotions that can trigger maliciousness or a deceptive heart.

Proverbs 21:2
A person may think their own ways are right, but the LORD weighs the heart.

3 John 1:11
Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from GOD. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen GOD.

Jesus is our Good Shepherd, and the faithful believers are his flock. When times get tough, the demons will try inserting negative thoughts into our head… but we must turn those thoughts to Jesus instead. Always remember the sacrifices that Jesus suffered for you. Always remember to keep your focus on the promises of GOD our FATHER, specifically regarding Eternal Life to those who believe in Jesus Christ.

John 10:11
"I Am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

There will be times of loneliness, despair, grief, anxiety, etc. The enemy will always try to take advantage of those vulnerable times, but remember that Jesus Christ gives us the strength we need to overcome. Always combat the enemy thoughts with the knowledge of your Savior:

Philippians 4:13
For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:8 (NLT)
And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

In Jesus' name we pray.

6) CRUCIFY

He died for you. Will you die for Him?

Matthew 10:38
"Whoever does not take up their cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me."

Luke 14:27
"And whoever does not carry their cross and follow Me cannot be my disciple."

Jesus sacrificed everything he could for us. He lived a perfectly sinless life, sacrificing the desires of the flesh for the desires of our FATHER. He sacrificed any selfishness for the sake of helping others instead. He sacrificed his earthly life, getting nailed and crucified on the cross, just so we may have an opportunity to join Him in the Kingdom of Heaven.

GOD acknowledged the sacrifices of Jesus as fully acceptable to grant us the opportunity of Eternal Life. GOD promised those of us who believe in Jesus that we could join HIM in the Kingdom of Heaven and live forever.

Jesus told us that, if we believe in Him, we need to 'take up our own cross' and follow the same sacrificial way of life.

To truly believe in Jesus Christ is to follow the same path as Him (1 Peter 2:21-25).

This was my last step to complete … to ensure complete freedom from the slavery of sin.

{6.1 The Enemy Flesh}

There is yet another foe you must fight against: yourself.

We wrestle with our own flesh. Our natural, selfish desires are against GOD's desires. As already mentioned, the natural sin we all inherit is the desire to please ourselves first.

John 3:6 (NLT)
Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.

Psalm 51:5
Look, I was guilty of sin from birth, a sinner the moment my mother conceived me.

** The word 'flesh' is used here, as it refers solely to the physical body (as opposed to the spirit) **

Our flesh always desires to feel comfortable and fully satisfied. We don't like to be hungry, cold, or tired. We desire to look better, feel better. We don't like any form of discomfort or pain, and our flesh is willing to do whatever is necessary to satisfy itself … at any cost.

Romans 7:18 (NLT)
And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't.

Regardless of what's in our heart, our flesh still wants what it wants. The flesh doesn't think about consequences or the future, it only thinks about being satisfied right now. Therefore, our spirit must subdue and conquer it. We must crucify our flesh.

Romans 8:7-8
The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to GOD; it does not submit to GOD's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please GOD.

Galatians 5:16-18
But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The person within you is greater than the person in this world. Your spirit is more powerful than your fleshly body. With that being said, your flesh will not give over control of you easily either. Like repenting, the strength required to overcome yourself (spiritually) is a result of being saved.

{6.2 The Temple of GOD}

1 Corinthians 3:16-17
Don't you know that you yourselves are GOD's temple and that GOD's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys GOD's temple, GOD will destroy that person; for GOD's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NLT)
Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by GOD? You do not belong to yourself; for GOD bought you with a high price. So you must honor GOD with your body.

Holy – Set apart from the world, devoted to righteousness. Jesus is the perfect model for us.

Sanctification – The action of making or declaring something holy.

Sacrifice - to suffer loss of, give up, renounce, or destroy something that is normally favored, especially for the purpose of a specific belief.

You do not own yourself. GOD owns you. If you believe in Jesus Christ, then you were redeemed by the blood of Jesus. That includes both your spirit and body. The Holy Spirit, residing within all true Christians, uses your body as his temple.

GOD is absolutely Holy. GOD's possessions are holy too. Therefore, if something isn't holy, it cannot remain in GOD's possession; it must be removed.

This is the call for sacrificing the harmful pleasures of the flesh, in favor of serving GOD.

You are a wonderful creation of GOD. I am a wonderful creation of GOD. We are considered GOD's temple. We are expected to be holy and honor GOD's temple (ourselves).

We are reserved for the work of GOD. Sanctification is the process of becoming holy; purifying ourselves and removing anything that contaminates our heart and body (GOD's temple).

This poor widow shows us the meaning of true sacrifice, in what matters is not so much the quantity of the 'worldly' sacrifice… but what matters is the true reason for it and willingness to accept the unwanted loss experienced because of the sacrifice:

Luke 21:1-4
As Jesus looked up, He saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "Truly I tell you," He said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

Sacrificing for GOD is really a matter of the heart. A true sacrifice consists of discomfort or pain that is experienced by you. Since GOD knows the motives of the heart, HE knows if something you give up is a true sacrifice or not.

{6.3 Bad Habits}

Romans 13:13-14
Let us live decently as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in discord and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to arouse its desires.

Many of us who've been alive on earth for a while have probably developed some kind of harmful habit, at some point or another. For many, these habits can easily become a permanent way of life. For the most part, picking up a bad habit is very easy for us … but stopping the bad habit is very difficult for us.

Whether it's bad eating habits, drinking excessively, smoking, drugs, cursing, sex or pornography addictions, laziness, bad sleeping habits, etc.

Our physical flesh has natural instincts such as eating food for survival, having sex for reproduction, or resting the body for restoration … but our sinful nature will cause us to warp those same behaviors for better pleasure or comfort.

Gluttony - excess in eating or drinking; greedy or excessive indulgence.
Sloth - reluctance to work or make an effort; laziness.

Proverbs 23:19-21
Listen, my son, and be wise, and set your heart on the right path: Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.

The longer we allow the flesh to rule us, the worse these habits can become … and the more difficult to stop them.

[For those who haven't engaged in any real bad habits yet, be forewarned of such habits]

Personally speaking, I was no different. During my teenage years, in addition to the demons that set up camp in my heart, I had picked up other bad habits. Even after completing the first five steps described in this letter, I still smoked cigarettes, loved pizza and burgers, never got a good night's sleep, and generally didn't care as much for my bodily health.

Thinking that, if I stayed on the spiritual path of Jesus, these activities were fine. At least I was no longer controlled by those nasty demons, so these fleshly habits weren't so bad… right?

WRONG!

You may have heard the phrase 'you're only as strong as your weakest link'. A linked chain might be very strong overall, but if it has one weak link anywhere in that chain… it will break easily at that point.

There's truth to that here too. Your flesh is your weakest link.

{6.4 Pathway to Sin}

NOTE: There is a difference between spiritual corruption and fleshly bad habits. As an example, an alcoholic suffers from spiritual corruption, but a highly active social drinker may just be giving in to temptations of the flesh. It's very important to take a personal inventory of yourself, and understand if a bad habit is one of demonic influence, which can only be relieved by submitting to Jesus, or a habit of the flesh (which takes sacrifice on your part too)

Another Note: It's also important to understand that having an occasional alcoholic beverage or sometimes eating ice cream late at night does not qualify you as a hopeless slave to the flesh.

The problem is when we allow our flesh to rule our daily life; consistently giving in to the selfish demands of the flesh. You must take an honest review of yourself to determine where you might have problems controlling the flesh (and associated desires).

Galatians 6:7-8
For a person will reap what he sows, because the person who sows to his own flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap Eternal Life from the Spirit.

John 6:63
"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life."

Sin entrenches itself in the flesh very easily. Satan knows that taking advantage of our selfish flesh can provide another pathway to sin. If we allow the flesh to determine how we live in our daily life, eventually we'll fall prey to those demons again.

Bad living catches up to you anyway and leads to bad health. Bad health limits your physical abilities to promote the Kingdom of GOD properly.

I understand there are many exercise-motivated individuals out there, but our flesh is naturally lazy. As we were created by our FATHER for good works, it's important to do whatever we can to maintain the best health possible.

In addition, if we are practicing Christians, we must provide a good example to others. If we are trying to spread our love of the Gospel with others, we cannot promote bad habits too.

Ephesians 4:15-16 (NLT)
Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

GOD wants our best, not just the leftovers.

{6.5 Tame the Tongue}

Ephesians 4:29
Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Ephesians 5:4
Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

Proverbs 15:4
The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.

Proverbs 18:21 (NLT)
The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences.

James 3:10
From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. These things should not be so, my brothers and sisters.

2 Timothy 2:16
Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.

James 3:8
…but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

The words we speak matter. According to our Bible, our words matter quite a bit. They can be a very powerful, influential force to others. Both good and bad.

Most of our words are spoken from our heart, which is why guarding our heart against evil forces is very important. Angry, vulgar speech can be the spawn of a demonically influenced heart. However, I believe we also speak at a more superficial level too. When trying to simply impress friends or even lighthearted mocking of others, it seems to be more controllable speech. Our fleshly desire to show off or be funny may cause us to sin without true intentions to do so.

Watch the cursing. They are called ‘curse’ words for a reason, as they can invoke angry or immoral types of emotions. Even if you don’t mean any harm, a foul-mouthed person does not show the character of Jesus.

Don't talk immorally. Be careful of telling dirty jokes. While others may laugh with you, is it promoting the teachings of Jesus?

That doesn’t mean you can’t tell jokes or have fun times with friends. It just means to be aware of the words you speak. Don’t get in bad habits of cursing in your everyday speech or always searching for the next dirty joke.

Matthew 12:36
“I tell you that on the Day of Judgment, people will give an account for every worthless word they speak.”

Any speech that goes against the teachings of Jesus is doing the devil's work.

{6.6 Sins of the Flesh}

1 Corinthians 6:18
Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 (NLT)
GOD’s will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor — not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know GOD and his ways.

As part of GOD’s awesome creation, humans are built for reproduction. To ensure the human population continues to grow through many generations, mankind is gifted with physiology and the desire to procreate. A very strong desire to procreate.

We obviously know that it takes a man and a woman to conceive a child. GOD’s plan for us, ever since the first man and woman (Adam & Eve) is to bind a man and woman in marriage, so they can not only conceive children, but raise those children in GOD’s love too.

To help facilitate the need for marital sexual relations and as a blessing to show love for each other, both man and woman are given to strong sexual desires. GOD expects the man and his wife to enjoy each other physically and spiritually, through the act of sexual relations.

Any sexual relation outside of those marriage expectations is against GOD. Satan knows that too. Throughout the history of mankind, the devil has found many ways to corrupt our natural desire for marriage and the associated sexual acts.

Hebrews 13:4
Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for GOD will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

The world is severely corrupted in this area. There are so many external influences that target our natural sexual desires directly, much of it without any concern to the sanctity of marriage. Because the world promotes so much of it, many people fall prey to the sexual desires of the flesh. In a society that doesn't actively promote GOD's requirements, sexual perversion thrives.

This message here is not meant to target any particular type of sexual act outside of marriage (between a natural-born man and woman), but just trying to point out what GOD tells us.

Beware of sexual engagements that might get the approval of man (even praise from man) but are against GOD's law. Seemingly casual sexual relationships (outside of marriage) are not within GOD's allowances. Beware of pornography, as it encourages sinful thoughts and actions.

1 Corinthians 7:2-3 (NLT)
But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs.

NOTE: GOD made each of us as gender male or female. If you're getting restless with your natural gender, please pray to GOD for help accepting the way HE created you. If you feel physically attracted to the same gender, please pray to GOD… so you can follow the correct path that HE wants for you. Do not fall into the tricks of the devil.

Anything is possible with GOD, but you must believe with all your heart first and foremost. You must also practice self-control to avoid the pitfalls which may lead you into temptation.

**To those who explain they were "born that way", please be advised that is probably a correct statement. Also remember that we are all born as sinners and will be tempted towards being unholy in some way… which is why we must become born again, through the Spirit of GOD*.

Colossians 3:5
Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

Bottom line: Even though GOD gave us the natural desire to reproduce, HE also gave us a spirit of self-control. Do not fall prey to the world's viewpoints or your weak, corrupted flesh.

{6.7 Die to Self}

Romans 7:21-25 (NLT)
So, I find the law that when I want to do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of GOD in my inner being. But I see a different law in my members waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to GOD through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of GOD with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

1 Peter 4:3-5 (NLT)
You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy—their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols. Of course, your former friends are surprised when you no longer plunge into the flood of wild and destructive things they do. So they slander you. But remember that they will have to face GOD, who stands ready to judge everyone, both the living and the dead.

A reminder that 'worship of idols' is when you place anything of higher importance than GOD.

All the bad habits and types of worldly lifestyles described here will not apply to everybody. As mentioned, the longer we've allowed our fleshly desires to rule our daily life, the more these types of habits might stack up. For those who are younger or maybe didn't expose themselves to much of these behaviors, please count your blessings and be forewarned against such practices.

The single shared commonality is that we all have a physical body. Our body is born with the basic instinct of satisfying itself. That's the problem here.

Regardless of your personal lifestyle, you are fully aware that your body demands comfort and pleasure whenever possible and avoids discomfort and pain whenever possible.

I'll mention it again: Jesus tells us that GOD's primary requirements are to love HIM the most and love other people as much as yourself. The reason sin is even bad to start with is because sinful behaviors will harm us personally, harm others, or harm our relationship with GOD.

Satisfying GOD's requirements goes against your fleshly demands. Therefore, you must choose which side to follow; either GOD or your flesh, but not both.

Analyzing the situation is easy: follow your flesh and have as much comfort and pleasure for your earthly lifetime, then risk experiencing eternal suffering **or** follow GOD and suffer discomfort and pain here on earth, but gain an Eternal Life of absolute peace, happiness, and joy. I think the choice is obvious (for the long term).

Of course, while analyzing the desired path should be a no-brainer, committing to the requirements for achieving the eternal prize can be much more difficult.

Why?

Because we must die to self. As John 3:16 tells us, following GOD requires us to "believe in" Jesus Christ. Jesus tells us (in all four Gospels) to deny ourselves, lose our life to this world, take up our own cross and follow Him.

Jesus was crucified on a cross and we must crucify our flesh too.

Romans 8:5-8
Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to GOD; it does not submit to GOD's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please GOD.

According to our Christian Bible (not me), the choice is to follow either GOD or the flesh. Following the flesh is living for this physical world, but following GOD is living from a spiritual viewpoint.

Romans 8:12-14
Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation — but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. For those who are led by the Spirit of GOD are the children of GOD.

Much like repenting, this step can be very challenging too. Whereas the first three steps described in this letter just require you to give yourself to Jesus (for salvation), full repentance from past sins and now putting down the flesh requires pain and sacrifice on your part too.

Because of this difficulty, I could only have success with crucifying my flesh after completing the first five steps. Only after surrendering to Jesus and changing my focus away from the demonic influences (repenting of old thought patterns), I was able tackle the challenge of defeating my fleshly desires.

Your own personal fleshly desires are those things that make you a slave to it. If you've come this far in your faith journey, these are those leftover desires that you know aren't best suited for a quality relationship with the FATHER, the Son, and the Holy Spirit… therefore must be overcome.

With that being said, your flesh can be a very powerful adversary. If allowed to rule your life for a long time, the flesh will not give up easily. Fighting yourself can be a difficult battle because winning a fight requires hurting your opponent... and this opponent is... you!

Romans 6:6-7 (NLT)
We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.

Galatians 2:20
I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of GOD, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Galatians 5:24-25
Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit.

As you can see, there are verses in the Bible that refer to the process of dying to self as being crucified. As you know, crucifixion was a long, painful death (not quick by any means). There is much suffering when being crucified. Only the worst of criminals were subject to being crucified back in the day of Jesus.

Likewise, we must treat our flesh as such. We cannot be nice to it whatsoever. We can't just 'tame' the flesh, we must absolutely kill it! [this does NOT mean to actually kill yourself]

Of course, like actual crucifixions, conquering our flesh and related sinful passions can be a suffering process too. Our flesh will cause us pain and discomfort, but we must starve it out.

In my example, giving up cigarettes produced very discomforting withdrawals at first. I had to overcome it by thinking of the pain that Jesus went through on the cross. Suffering for good.

Those who do overcome being a slave to the flesh will reap tremendous rewards!

Luke 18:22
When Jesus heard this, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven. Then come, follow Me."

The above verse was in the context of Jesus speaking to a very wealthy man of the time. The man appeared to be genuine in his desire for GOD's Kingdom, so he asked Jesus what must be done to inherit Eternal Life. The man was fully aware of GOD's laws and acknowledged that he obeyed the commandments faithfully. When Jesus told the man to give up all his wealth, the man walked away in defeat because he knew how much he adored the luxurious life. His dependency on personal wealth was more important than trusting GOD. Jesus is teaching us that real sacrifice is required to be his true disciple. See also Matthew 19:16-22, Mark 10:17-23.

Jesus then said that "Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the Kingdom of GOD" (Luke 18:25). He is teaching us that we cannot put our love and dependency on money or material items, but must trust in GOD first.

I believe this verse can be used as a metaphor for battling your flesh too. You might have a genuine desire to be granted Eternal Life with our FATHER, you have submitted to Christ and repented of past sins; but you need to give up everything for discipleship, including worldly desires of the flesh. You cannot depend on yourself here, so you must completely trust in GOD.

Luke 18:27
Jesus replied, "What is impossible with man is possible with GOD."

Just like full repentance of past sins, crucifying your fleshly desires is not a requirement for salvation, but is a result of salvation. It can be a very discomforting experience that might be overwhelming to the point of giving up and walking away… like the wealthy man in the story mentioned above. Only absolute faith and full submission to GOD can guarantee you success.

Bottom line here: in order to remain faithful to serving Jesus, I had to kill the beast (my flesh). You cannot share control of yourself with your flesh, you must put it down. Give it to GOD.

{6.8 Living Sacrifice}

Romans 12:1-2
Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of GOD's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to GOD — this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform 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.

Old Testament people were required to sacrifice animals for forgiveness of their sins, as well as a show of worship to GOD. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ fulfilled that law for forgiveness of sins, thereby eliminating the requirement of animal sacrifice. GOD is not interested in the offering of dead animals anymore, but we must now become a living sacrifice (to show worship to GOD).

Psalm 4:5
Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the LORD.

Jesus Christ presented his body as the sacrificial lamb to our FATHER, so we must present our living bodies as a sacrifice to GOD as well … by crucifying our flesh.

Ephesians 5:1-2
Follow GOD's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to GOD.

Just like fighting off the demons is not something you can take on without the power of Jesus Christ and guidance of the Holy Spirit, wrestling with your own flesh should not be done alone. Receive the Holy Trinity to get you through those tough periods. Pray to GOD for strength to carry on, especially during troubling times or when temptation is very strong against you.

Always remember that GOD won't let you experience any temptation that you are not capable of overcoming or escaping. When you firmly believe in that, you'll be amazed by your strength.

1 Corinthians 10:13
No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. 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 endure it.

1 Peter 1:6-7
In all 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 the proven genuineness of your faith of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Please do not allow this step to cause you to abandon your faith. Do not believe this step is not necessary for discipleship of Jesus. It may seem daunting at times, but you must remember that good works done while in the flesh are rewarded (even while still here on earth).

{6.9 Live with Him}

Romans 6:15-16
What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

2 Timothy 2:11-12 (NLT)
This is a trustworthy saying: If we die with Him, we will also live with Him. If we endure hardship, we will reign with Him. If we deny Him, He will deny us.

You may be thinking that all of this self-sacrifice seems like a lot of effort to please GOD, especially since it includes denying ourselves of some things that aren't even sinful. While overcoming the power of the evil one is important, why do we need to 'die to self' also?

Answer #1: We must remember that, even though we are not under GOD's Old Testament ceremonial/sacrificial laws, our calling is to faithfully follow the path of Jesus Christ. When Jesus commands us to deny ourselves and take up our cross, He is instructing us to do whatever is required to ensure we complete our mission as best possible; specifically, to become a disciple and bring more people to Him. Self-sacrifices are required for the advancement of our mission.

Answer #2: We must remember that our spirit has the power of self-control, therefore we must exercise discipline in all things spiritual. Our fleshly body has needs and desires, but does not have the ability to discern what is best for itself. If we allow our natural desires to always take control, the outcome will not be good. The flesh is not capable of understanding the spiritual nature of GOD or potential future consequences of actions, etc. In addition, our flesh is weak against temptation … and the devil knows it can be an easy gateway to cause us to sin further. Our spirit must always be in full control of our flesh.

1 Corinthians 10:23-24
"I have the right to do anything," you say — but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything" — but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

Romans 6:19 (NLT)
Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.

My example:

Nowhere in the New Testament does it say that we cannot eat greasy cheeseburgers every day. Eating burgers is not a sin.

However, we know that eating too many burgers is bad for our health. If I'm eating greasy burgers three times a day, that will be a problem. While it shouldn't be considered gluttony, since I'm just eating the expected three meals per day, it's only a matter of time before my health suffers for it. If my health is suffering, it disables my abilities to serve GOD. If my bad eating habits lead to early death, then I cannot share the Good News of our LORD to others anymore.

Therefore, even though the Bible does not forbid me from eating burgers three times daily, and even though burgers are my favorite food, I must not practice such eating habits. If not for my own physical health and appearance, it is a living sacrifice for GOD, part of taking up my own cross.

As it so happens, denying those daily burgers will also allow me to live a healthier, longer and happier earthly life too... which is what GOD wants for us!

Even though we live in a hostile world: you want to stay alive on this earth as long as possible, which allows more time to mature in your faith and promote the Kingdom of GOD to others. [See Romans 8:18 and Philippians 1:22-28]

{6.10 Free at Last}

Galatians 5:1
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.

Romans 6:12-14 (NLT)
Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to GOD, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the Glory of GOD. Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of GOD's grace.

1 Peter 2:11-12 (ESV)
Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to GOD when HE judges the world.

Not everybody is as much a slave to this sinful world as I was. With that being said, be very careful in your self-analysis; because if you're not committed to the righteous life as taught by Jesus Christ, you belong to the world.

Pray from a spiritual heart of absolute faith for the continued strength to overcome this world (including your flesh), and you'll be amazed at how GOD responds.

So, there you have it. Crucifying your flesh can be a discomforting process to go through. However, based on my own experience, it becomes easier as you progress through it. Just like anything, the more you stay committed to it, the stronger discipline you'll apply to it. Always keep your eyes on the eternal prize. Always think about the risks of giving in to the flesh weighed against the eternal benefits of maintaining full spiritual control over the flesh.

You can live **in** the flesh, but not **by** the flesh. It's a matter of perspective.

Above all, pray to GOD and think about the sacrifices of our Savior Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 9:27 (NLT)
I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

In my situation, after working through this sixth step, I was free from slavery to the devil, free from slavery to the world, and free from slavery to my flesh.

Romans 6:17-18
But thanks be to GOD that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

HALLELUJAH! It's true freedom that you can only experience if you've lived it.

7) SHARE

Romans 10:9
If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that GOD raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

The true believers in Jesus Christ are born again. It's an awesome, refreshing change from the worldly beliefs of the past. It allows us to continue serving GOD with all our heart, as well as personal freedom from the bondage of sin or the burdens of past events.

Once you are born again, you are free to confidently share this message of faith with others. You can sow the seed of faith. Plant the seed in the heart of people and GOD can grow their faith greatly.

2 Corinthians 9:6
Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

Based on scripture, it's obvious that GOD is very pleased with those who share his Word. HE will reward those who do so.

This final step for true discipleship is very important:

Share this message with as many others as possible!

{7.1 Starting Over}

Before proceeding, you should fully understand what it means to be 'born again' or 'saved'. These words can be used interchangeably, but can possibly be summed up as this:

Being born again is something that you become when you make the decision to give your life to Jesus Christ. You were once born of the flesh, but now born of the spirit.

Being saved is something that you become when GOD's mercy is granted to you, despite your sinful self. You are considered a child of GOD (by his grace).

I believe that being born again means washing away your past. It means that we're starting a new life now. Proceeding with your life, committed to living from a spiritual perspective; not just living for this world.

You ask forgiveness of your sins and offer forgiveness to all those who harmed you in the past.

With nothing to truly offer of godly value, i was worthless to the Kingdom of GOD before HE saved me. From my personal experience, being saved means that GOD provides you with an amazing new opportunity to live forever, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. You will receive GOD's favor and feel the warmth of his love, starting in this earthly life.

All those hurts you've endured in the past are not relevant when you are born again/saved. Everything starts new. You view everything from a spiritual perspective. All those folks who may have harmed you in the past were also under worldly and demonic influences. After you are born again, none of it matters.

The only thing that matters is Eternal Life, rejoicing in GOD our SAVIOR!

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

Note: I'm not claiming this will be easy either, especially for those who've experienced extreme injustices and have been severely traumatized by evil … but I believe that all can overcome. Always pray for the strength and courage to look beyond worldly experiences and instead view life from the spiritual perspective of 'now and forever', based on the Kingdom of GOD.

Once born again, you can forgive everybody who did anything harmful to you in the past. That is probably a good idea anyway, because you must also be forgiven for anything that you have done in your past (your own sins against GOD and others).

Instead of harboring any sadness or resentment from your past, you can now rejoice. Be joyous in your daily life and spread that joy to others around you. Being saved eternally for the Kingdom of Heaven is the absolute greatest reason for joy today… and every day.

That doesn't mean you'll never have a bad day. It doesn't mean that you won't have challenges, trials, and troubling times. You will.

You will have earthly difficulties whether you are saved or not, but at least any suffering done by the righteous person is credited by GOD (good time served). Suffering for the devil is worthless in the eyes of GOD.

Matthew 5:44-45
"But I say to you, love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be like your FATHER in Heaven, since HE causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

1 Peter 3:14
But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened."

Rejoice! You are a 'born again' child, saved by GOD… so please tell others your good news!

{7.2 Glory to GOD}

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

Colossians 3:17
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.

Always remember that you are only able to succeed because of GOD. Jesus Christ has taught us well and paved a road to Eternal Salvation, and the Holy Spirit is our daily guide to stay on that road … so the glory goes to GOD!

1 Timothy 1:17
Now to the KING eternal, immortal, invisible, the only GOD, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

GOD our FATHER provides for us. HE gives us the blessings that we love. HE gives us the people in our life whom we love. HE gives us clarity of his will for our lives. HE gives us everything we need, but there is one thing GOD will not give us (and rightfully so): GOD wants all the glory!

Isaiah 42:8
"I am the LORD! That is MY NAME! I will not share my glory with anyone else, or the praise due ME with idols."

Whenever you accomplish anything of value or receive accolades for a job 'well done', you must remember that it's because GOD blessed you. It's true that you need to put in the work and effort… but remember that GOD gave you the talents, abilities, and energy to complete the task. Therefore, all the glory must go to GOD.

Glory be to the FATHER, the Son, and the Holy Spirit!!! Please make sure to tell others.

{7.3 The Great Commission}

Matthew 28:19-20
"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."

This verse is referred to as the Great Commission, which is the statement directly from Jesus Christ Himself, commanding his apostles and all disciples (for all ages) to help teach others to also be disciples of Jesus. For those of us who are saved for Eternal Life, this is expected.

We need to 'learn' the Word, then 'live' the Word … and we must also 'share' the Word.

Romans 10:15
And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News!"

You know that believers are the 'salt of the earth', helping preserve GOD's goodness in this world, thereby delaying the inevitable demise of this world as we know it. [Matthew 5:13]

Why should GOD delay the end of this world? The Bible is clear that GOD wants the salt of the earth people to bring others to the Gospel too. The longer this world delays the moral decay of society, the more people can be brought to HIM.

Of course being salt of the earth means living according to the teachings of Jesus, but it also means sharing the Good News with as many people as possible. Jesus referred to Himself as the 'light of the world' while He was living here on earth. Those who believe in Jesus are also told to be the light of the world.

Being the light of the world means we must shine GOD's love in this world. Jesus warns us the end is coming, and we will not be able to shine our light in this world after that. Living the Word of GOD (with a cheerful spirit) shows others that a truly peaceful life can be achieved. When others see your success, despite this chaotic world, the hope is they will desire the same; then you can share the faith journey with them too.

John 9:4-5
"As long as it is day, we must do the works of HIM who sent Me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I Am in the world, I Am the light of the world."

Matthew 5:14-15
"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house."

Just remember the command to share the Gospel message with others and influence this world in a godly manner is one given to us directly from Jesus Christ. The promise of Eternal Life is directed to those who believe in Jesus (by living the Word of GOD).

Be a warrior for Jesus... by sharing the Gospel in a hostile world!

{7.4 Here I Am}

Isaiah 6:8 (NLT)
Then I heard the LORD asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?" I said, "Here I am. Send me."

The big question you will probably have: "how do I best share the Gospel with others?".

That is certainly a valid question, but there is no single answer. Even though we're all made from the same image of GOD, we're each unique to GOD too.

I can provide my own story here, but cannot answer the question for how you can best serve GOD. The best ONE to answer that question (for you): GOD.

Not just for sharing the Good News, but generally speaking: GOD has a unique plan for your life (all for good). As I've worked through each of the steps outlined in this letter, and remained open to trusting in GOD, there is no doubt that HE has absolutely shown me his plans for my life.

The only requirement is to pray to GOD from a fully believing heart.

Jeremiah 29:11-13
"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. Then you will call on ME and come and pray to ME, and I will listen to you. You will seek ME and find ME when you seek ME with all your heart."

Proverbs 16:9 (ESV)
The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.

The best approach to seeking out how GOD can use you to promote his Kingdom is to respond to the call the same as Isaiah did (in the verse shown above). After committing your life to serve GOD, you can just reach out to HIM and say, "Here I am. Send me".

If you seek out GOD (with a trusting heart) and genuinely give yourself completely to his Word, our almighty FATHER, who created everything in this universe, will establish a plan specifically for your life here on earth. I can testify to this truth myself, as I was a lost spirit before GOD saved me from my own prison of sin. After devoting myself to a new life and seeking my own path to sharing the Good News, GOD put the passion in my heart to write this letter to you.

{7.5 Use Your Gift}

1 Peter 4:10
Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of GOD's grace in its various forms.

To best serve others, you should use whatever blessings GOD has provisioned for you. Some examples are below, but there are many ways to share GOD's Word:

If you have the gift of speech, use it to passionately speak GOD's message to others.

If you have the gift of composition, use it to write articles and messages of good faith.

If you have the gift of compassion, use it to help those in need and show GOD's love.

If you have the gift of being mechanically inclined or 'handy', use it to build/repair for others.

If you have the gift of high intelligence, use it to gain biblical insight and share knowledge.

If you have the gift of personality, use it to draw more friends to the message of Jesus Christ.

If you have the gift of a lovely singing voice, use it to sing songs of praise to our loving GOD.

If you have the gift of social media popularity, use it to spread the Gospel to all your followers.

If you have the gift of wealth, use it to fund needy organizations dedicated to serving GOD.

If you have the gift of politics, use your power to govern according to the Christian message.

If you have the gift of being a celebrity, use it to shine the glory of GOD to your worldly fans.

Even if you just share this letter with loved ones or anybody else, that is spreading the message!

Romans 12:6-8 (NLT)
In his grace, GOD has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if GOD has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as GOD has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If GOD has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

If you don't know what gift you may have or how to use it for serving GOD and sharing the message, then pray about it. If you pray with a faithful heart (and have some patience), you will get your answer.

There is no magical answer here. Even if you just discuss the love of Jesus instead of the usual worldly chatter when casually speaking with those close to you, that is sharing the Good News.

Hebrews 10:24 (NLT)
Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.

Whatever gift you may have, all believers in Christ have an expectation to know the Bible. You cannot faithfully follow Jesus Christ if you don't know who He is and what He says. Knowing the testimony of Jesus Christ will allow you to have a deep and personal relationship with Him.

2 Timothy 3:16-17
All Scripture is GOD-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of GOD may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1 Corinthians 3:10-11
By the grace GOD has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the foundation, but we can build upon that foundation. When you study the Bible with guidance from the Holy Spirit, asking GOD for biblical clarity, you will know GOD's Word. You will have the authority to share that Word with everybody and anybody who will listen.

You should absolutely be aware that all believers will be saved for Eternal Life, but also judged according to the quality of our good works (which brings eternal treasures).

1 Corinthians 3:12-13
If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.

Note: Those who use their spiritual gifts to promote the Kingdom of Heaven and give glory to GOD will be strengthened with even more gifts; but those who don't use these gifts as GOD intended will risk losing their gifts and the trust of HIM.

The words that a proven NFL champion team lived by will also apply here: **"**Do your job**"**.

Luke 19:26
"He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away."

Luke 12:47-48 (NLT)
"And a servant who knows what the master wants, but isn't prepared and doesn't carry out those instructions, will be severely punished. But someone who does not know, and then does something wrong, will be punished only lightly. **When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required**."

Becoming a true Christian who shares the Gospel message with others can be a very rewarding experience. Using your natural born gifts to promote GOD's Kingdom will please GOD very much.

However… be strongly advised that doing GOD's work is also a very big responsibility, not ever to be taken too lightly. As the verse immediately above says, those of us who know (and share) GOD's message with others are held to a higher standard than those who never pay much attention to it. To those who are given much knowledge from GOD, much is also required from them.

Colossians 3:23-24
Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Basically, the more GOD will trust you with doing his work here on earth, the more HE will give to you; but also, the more that HE will expect from you. While the punishment is greater to those who know GOD, yet consistently fail… the eternal rewards are so much greater for those who successfully endure this world, in favor of serving GOD.

{7.6 Endure Persecution}

Romans 8:17 (NLT)
And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of GOD's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

Just as Jesus Christ suffered for the Gospel, we too must be ready to suffer for it.

We can endure any suffering while also rejoicing, since we know that we'll receive GOD's eternal favor too.

Matthew 5:11-12
"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in Heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

While it's true that you can now rejoice in the love of GOD, which is motivation to share that same joy with others, you must be aware of all those things learned about the devil and his demon army.

As already discussed, we know the devil's evil plan is to destroy our plan for salvation. The devil tries to accomplish this by destroying our relationship with GOD and most certainly wants to stop us from sharing the truth with anybody else.

The devil, who rules this world (for now), will use the wickedness in people to limit your ability and/or motivation to share GOD's message with others.

Courage is required to faithfully serve up GOD's message of love in such a hateful world.

Speaking the Word with other believers can give you strength and encouragement to face the rest of this unbelieving world. Belonging to a true Bible-based church allows each member to increase their knowledge and faith, so they can be armed with the ability to share effectively.

Proverbs 27:17
As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Although participating in a quality church can expose believers to many others who can help promote the faith, Jesus directly tells us that anytime anybody speaks the Gospel message to anybody else (in any place), He is there to support us:

Matthew 18:20
"For where two or three are assembled in my Name, I Am there among them."

The real challenge is to share the Gospel message with those who are not as accepting of it. Unbelievers are not in GOD's Family, but we believers must reach out to them.

Luke 19:10
"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

It seems one of the biggest reasons why GOD's message is not always shared as widespread as it should be is because many times, we only share the Word with others who already love the Word too. While it's certainly important to share the Good News with other believers, who can sharpen each other with better understanding, it's probably more important to share that same message with those who don't believe yet. Those who are spiritually blinded to this truth need to hear GOD's Word with more urgency than those who are already on the faithful path. One of the biggest topics of discussion among believers should be around how to bring these unbelievers to Jesus (remember what Jesus said in Luke 15:7).

Of course, the biggest obstacle to sharing the Gospel is the great resistance of this world. The ruler of this world (Satan) wants to ensure this world is a place that does not welcome the teachings of Jesus. Because Satan is able to blind unbelievers to the truth, they will generally not be open to hearing about your faith… at least initially.

1 Peter 3:15-17
But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. 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. For it is better, if it is GOD's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

As you prepare to share the news of your joyous salvation with those close to you, be prepared for immediate doubts and rejection. Depending on several factors, such as how close the person is to you, how much faith they might already have, their inherent personality, and of course how much demonic influence is weighing on them: you should expect varying types of responses and varying intensities of those responses. Much of it will be negative.

The more you work to share the Word of GOD outside your close circle of loved ones, the harsher reactions you should expect from many others. If trying to promote the full message across the world, expect the negativity to increase greatly.

They'll probably think you're crazy. They will ridicule and mock you mercilessly. They will slander you to others and call you a liar. They will distance themselves from you. They may get angry with you. Family may even disown you.

While it can be difficult to lose family and friends, the Bible tells us to expect persecution.

2 Timothy 4:2 (NLT)
Preach the word of GOD. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching.

Seven reasons to pursue sharing the love of GOD, regardless of negative reactions:

1) Every single person's spirit is valuable. If your sharing of GOD's Word can help bring even one person to Eternal Salvation, it's worth your own suffering for it.

2) A person's first reaction does not need to be their last reaction. If you continue sharing GOD's Word with others, even when they are initially hostile to it, you might find a breakthrough point when they actually listen. If you can soften even one person's initially hardened heart to the love of Jesus, it's worth your own suffering for it.

3) Your own faith can be reinforced by positive messages. If sharing GOD's Word with others can help you stay on the faithful path too, it's worth your own suffering for it.

4) Share your success story. Help others understand that true salvation is not something only attained after we die; it starts now. If those who've known you for a while see that turning your life to Jesus has brought you a newfound joy, you should share the details. Even if it means that most people still reject your message, it's worth your own suffering for it.

5) Teach the children well. Any Christian parent loves their children unconditionally. What better way to show that love than by raising them up by sharing the message of GOD's love? Since children are the future leaders of this world, which ruler do you want them to be serving (Jesus or Satan)? If you can help the future leaders of this world serve the righteous path, then it's worth your own suffering for it.

6) Delay the decay. The unbelievers and social media trolls have no concerns about sharing their own message, many times spewing vile hate that serves the devil well. If Christians remain silent while the haters spread their own beliefs, then we contribute to the moral decay of this world. If you spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to counteract the bad messages that seem to go viral so quickly, then it's worth your own suffering for it.

7) GOD is always watching us. Even if nobody ever listens to your faithful message of GOD, you will still get full credit for your efforts. Since sharing GOD's Word gains favor with HIM, and the result is Eternal Life in the Kingdom of Heaven… it's definitely worth your own suffering for it!

Isaiah 41:10 (NLT)
"Don't be afraid, for I AM with you. Don't be discouraged, for I AM your GOD. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand."

Fear not! Just know the power of GOD is on your side. HE is much more powerful than the power of the devil or this world.

{7.6.1 Overcome Spiritually}

Ephesians 6:19-20
Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Proverbs 29:25
Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

The natural human reaction is to withdraw ourselves from any hostile situation. Being ridiculed and shamed for things that we say is enough to stop many of us from continuing to say those things. You must overcome any hostility for speaking the Word of GOD too.

Matthew 10:26
"But don't be afraid of those who threaten you. For the time is coming when everything that is covered will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all."

Matthew 10:33 (NLT)
"But everyone who denies Me here on earth, I will also deny before my FATHER in Heaven."

Because we naturally desire to be liked and accepted by others (here in this world), the best method to overcome fears of rejection when speaking the Gospel is to think of the things beyond this world. Thinking in terms of eternity and with absolute faith in the Word of GOD is enough to continue boldly sharing his Word.

{7.6.2 The First Martyrs}

Martyr - a person who is killed because of their religious or other beliefs.

Philippians 2:8
He humbled Himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death -- even death on a cross!

Acts 12:1-2
It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.

Similar to Jesus Christ, the apostles were persecuted greatly for sharing the news of GOD's Kingdom. They had absolute faith and were willing to suffer for Jesus, even to the point of death. Even though the Bible itself only mentions the deaths of Judas (who betrayed Jesus) and James (mentioned in the verse above), there are other historical documents and facts that indicate most of the apostles were brutally murdered for their faith. For example, the apostle Paul was beheaded, and Peter was crucified like Jesus (but upside down). The only apostle believed to have died a 'natural' death was John (who was imprisoned for his faith). Please feel free to research it yourself.

The Story of Stephen:
The Book of Acts (chapters 6 & 7) details the story of the first documented Christian martyr. Stephen was somebody who stood firm in his faith. He spoke the wisdom given to him through the Holy Spirit… and that angered the crowds of the day.

Refusing to give in to the resistance against him, Stephen was brought up before the religious judicial council to defend himself (against false witnesses). Stephen spoke the truth of Old Testament history and then brought up the fact these same leaders were responsible for betraying and murdering the Son of GOD (Acts 7:52-53).

Acts 7:54-60
When they heard these things, they became furious and ground their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked intently toward heaven and saw the Glory of GOD, and Jesus standing at the right hand of GOD. "Look!" he said. "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of GOD!" But they covered their ears, shouting out with a loud voice, and rushed at him with one intent. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. They continued to stone Stephen while he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Then he fell to his knees and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" When he had said this, he died.

Stephen was stoned to death by the angry mob. I'm sure Satan was encouraging the people to brutally kill Stephen.

Notice a very significant part of this passage: Jesus was encouraging Stephen to stand his ground. Based on New Testament scripture, we already know that Jesus was raised from the dead here on earth and is now **seated** at the right hand of GOD (in Heaven). However, while Stephen was being stoned to death, Jesus (the Son of Man) was giving him a **standing** ovation! [See Matthew 22:44, Hebrews 1:3, 1 Peter 3:22 for seated references]

Another significant part of this passage: Notice the final words of Stephen, immediately before succumbing to his own death. Instead of cursing those responsible for inflicting such a painful death on him, Stephen asked GOD to forgive them. Does that sound familiar? That was the same message spoken by Jesus Christ, as he suffered physical death on a cross (Luke 23:34).

The lesson there is that when you truly 'believe in' the Son of GOD (Jesus Christ), you not only learn his words and behaviors, but also live by them… and are willing to die by them too.

John 14:12
"Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in Me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the FATHER."

Although you should build a solid foundation of absolute faith in Jesus Christ, even to the point of risking death, you can take comfort that most of us won't be required to die a brutal death for our faith. We should thank Jesus daily that He already died for us in such a manner.

Take even more comfort that Jesus Christ is your personal fan. He is happy when you speak his truth to others, even if it means suffering some persecution for it. Always remember that when Jesus is happy with you, GOD is happy with you!

{7.7.7 Final Message}

Mark 16:15-16
He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."
This refers to being baptized in the spirit, not the worldly tradition

John 20:21
Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the FATHER has sent me, I Am sending you."

GOD has provided everything you need to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, with the assurance of living forever in absolute peace, happiness, and joy. HE sent his only begotten Son to live a life of complete earthly sacrifice and die a brutal death, in order to provide you with a certain path to this awesome Eternal Life.

Such a promise from our CREATOR should encourage us to share that Good News with others. You must become a salesman (or saleswoman). As any good salesman is knowledgeable about the product they are selling and believes in it, you must know the Gospel to sell it to others too.

The man of Jesus Christ was able to speak for the FATHER perfectly, and no other religious experts of the day could ever trip Jesus up on his words (even though they tried desperately). Jesus performed many miracles that can only be explained by GOD's divine intervention and those miracles were witnessed by many in those days. Please feel free to read about these miracles yourself (in the Bible).

7 Miracles
Turning Water into Wine (John 2:1-12)
Healing the Nobleman's Son (John 4:46-54)
Healing the Man at the Pool (John 5:1-11)
Feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:1-15)
Walking on Water (John 6:16-21)
Healing a Man Born Blind (John 9:1-12)
Resurrecting Lazarus (John 11)

Of course, the biggest miracle of all was performed on the third day after Jesus was crucified by mankind … when GOD resurrected Jesus from his grave. He walked around the earth for forty days after being raised up from the dead. Many people saw Jesus in his resurrected body, and it is well documented (in all four Gospels). Without that absolute proof of 'life after death', it would be more difficult to believe in Eternal Life.

After Jesus was raised from the dead and walked the earth for 40 days, He was taken up from this earth completely (to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven).

Acts 1:9
After He had said this, while they were watching, He was lifted up and a cloud hid Him from their sight.

1 Peter 3:22 (NLT)
Now Christ has gone to Heaven. He is seated in the place of honor next to GOD, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority.

The fact is that Jesus Christ died on this earth, then was resurrected from the dead and taken to Heaven by GOD. There were many human witnesses to all these events.

GOD has promised a similar type of resurrection for those of us who believe. You too can never die! You too can live forever with your CREATOR! That alone is cause for faith in the Bible and hope for the eternal promises.

Think about all the apostles, who witnessed these events… and therefore so believed, they were willing to die brutal deaths themselves.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 (NLT)
But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

Revelation 21:1
Then I saw "a new Heaven and a new Earth," for the first Heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

When Adam and Eve first walked this earth, GOD lived among them; Heaven and Earth were connected, and it was a perfect paradise. However, when Adam and Eve sinned against GOD in the Garden of Eden, the connection was broken off… and the Kingdom of Heaven has been separated from the earth since that time.

Mankind has been living on this disconnected earth since then, separated by a 'sea' that cannot be crossed over to GOD's Kingdom. This sea is obviously not referencing the oceans of this earth, but is symbolic of the 'sea of unbelievers and wicked people' that inhabit the earth.

When the end of this age comes, GOD will save the believers and eject all those who rejected Christ. At that time, GOD will re-establish the original plan. This new Heaven and new Earth will be connected again, no longer separated by the 'sea' that could not be crossed over. The sea of wicked spirits will be gone forever.

Only saved believers (the children of GOD) will inhabit the sacred 'new Jerusalem' city, which will be directly connected to the Kingdom of Heaven (Revelation 21:2-3).

This new heavenly Kingdom will endure eternally; Jesus Christ will reign as King… and all of us who believe in GOD the Son will live there FOREVER!!

Revelation 22:7
"Look, I Am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll."

Revelation 22:13
"I Am the ALPHA and the OMEGA, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

Jesus must be in your DNA. Jesus can be your best friend ever ... forever!

John 15:14
"You are my friends if you do what I command."

Always remember that it's the awesome grace of GOD our FATHER that saves you. HE has told you grace is saved for those who believe in Jesus Christ. Believing in Jesus is more than just historical knowledge of Him, but having absolute faith. Obedience to Jesus is how you show that faith. It's a loving relationship, based on absolute trust that Jesus Christ is your personal Savior.

John 14:21
"Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love Me. And because they love Me, my FATHER will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them."

1 John 2:4-6
Whoever says, "I know Him," but does not do what He commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys his Word, love for GOD is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in Him: Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did.

We need to bring this world to GOD, by bringing GOD to this world… promoting the Word of GOD to all. Share the Good News in a world so full of bad news.

Don't wait to share this message with family and friends. They can grow in faith with you!

Live the Word of GOD and share your personal experiences. Show that you can have joy in your heart, while living for Jesus.

Even if just sharing this letter with loved ones might start a conversation, that's doing your part.

Analogy: Picture a huge cruise ship, such as the famous Titanic. The ship is very well stocked with comforts and entertainment for the many passengers. Everybody is eating, dancing, and enjoying the cruise.

Unfortunately, a single devastating event occurs: the ship strikes an iceberg, and it slices right through the vessel's outer protection (below the water surface). The ship starts sinking.

Even though it's only a matter of time before the ship sinks into the deep, cold waters… the passengers don't realize the impending doom. There are plenty of lifeboats available, but they keep on dancing and enjoying the lively entertainment.

You have been given an opportunity to realize the ship is now sinking fast. You have a chance to be saved from a certain death. You can grab a lifeboat for yourself, silently drop it into the water, jump in and row yourself to safety (while the rest of passengers go down with the ship) **OR** you can choose to warn the other passengers of the sinking ship, speaking confidently from your knowledge of the situation.

Keep in mind that, not only are there strangers on this ship with you, but close family and friends as well.

You can tell these passengers that, even though the ship is sinking, there are plenty of lifeboats available. Help them onto a lifeboat. Make sure your lifeboat is full of other passengers too. All of you can then reach land safely together.

This world is a sinking ship. This world will certainly go down too. So many people are not even truly aware of the situation. Jesus is the lifeboat. By committing your life to Jesus, you are jumping on the lifeboat. Think about it: you might be obedient to Jesus as best possible, but when you reach the safe destination by yourself, what do you think GOD will say if you are the only one in the lifeboat? Wouldn't GOD be more pleased if you had helped as many others as possible also jump on the lifeboat of Jesus and all those other people also made it safely to GOD's Kingdom?

If most of the people on the ship don't believe you (and choose to keep dancing instead), you must keep on warning the others. Even if only a single person joins you in the lifeboat, it would absolutely be worth the effort.

Nevertheless, GOD will see how you tried to save as many others as possible (not just yourself) and be pleased with you.

Philippians 2:13 (NLT)
For GOD is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases HIM.

The truth of GOD does not change. The culture of our day does not define the terms for your salvation. Being a true Christian is not a '9-to-5' job. Just attending a local church service every Sunday does not qualify a person for salvation.

Romans 14:11-12
It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the LORD, 'every knee will bow before ME; every tongue will acknowledge GOD.'" So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to GOD.

Philippians 2:9-11
Therefore GOD exalted Him to the highest place and gave him the Name that is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, in Heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

The Bible reminds us of GOD's sovereignty. The Bible tells us of Christ's authority, who every single person to ever live on this earth will eventually have to acknowledge. We will **all** bow down to the absolute divine powers of the LORD.

If you bow down in this present day, you can be welcomed into the Kingdom of Heaven on your judgment day … but if you reject the truth now, you will be forced to bow down on your judgment day (and Jesus will deny ever knowing you).

Matthew 25:31-33
"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left."

Matthew 25:34
"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my FATHER; take your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'"

Matthew 25:41
"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

You have a chance to be part of the elite holy people of GOD!

You have a chance to share in an Eternal Life of absolute peace, happiness, and joy… with your CREATOR (and other true believers).

Psalm 1:1-2
How blessed is the one who does not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of scoffers! Instead he finds pleasure in obeying the LORD's commands; he meditates on his commands day and night.

John 3:36
Whoever believes in the Son has Eternal Life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for GOD's wrath remains on them.

John 8:32
"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Make no mistake about it: the earth, as we know it today, is not a playground; it's a battlefield!

We are engaged in the battle between good and evil; a type of spiritual warfare.

I was a lost spirit, a slave to sin; saved only by the grace and mercy of our loving GOD. Believe me, you are most certainly able to be saved too. I'm not claiming to be 'holier than thou' or that you must become some kind of religious freak. You can still live a very fulfilling life, while serving and praising GOD.

Now in my fifties, I just want to know what GOD's will is for me... and then want to do that will. That's it. The only item on my personal 'bucket list' is to share this message with as many others as possible.

Psalm 106:1 (NLT)
Praise the LORD! Give thanks to the LORD, for HE is good! His faithful love endures forever.

Revelation 4:11
"YOU are worthy, our LORD and GOD, to receive glory and honor and power, for YOU created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Please note this letter can serve as a framework, but your personal blueprint is different than mine. You can live your salvation with specific plans, as directed by GOD.

If you fully surrender your life to Jesus Christ, you will be on the guaranteed path to inheriting an Eternal Life of absolute peace, happiness, and joy… starting today.

Make a pledge; together we can raise up an army of Christian warriors, fighting to keep the goodness of our Savior Jesus Christ in this world.

NOBODY BUT JESUS!

Matthew 13:43
"Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their FATHER. Whoever has ears, let them hear."

John 10:28
"I give them Eternal Life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand."

1 Peter 5:10-11
And the GOD of all grace, who called you to his Eternal Glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will HIMSELF restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To HIM be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

John 19:30
When He had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, He bowed his head and gave up his Spirit.

John 3:17
For GOD did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.

I hope to see you in the Kingdom of Heaven!

-- Ron O.

†

If you have absolute faith now, please tell others about it. Feel free to share this letter with as many people as you can… and help sow the seeds of Faith!

✝ What is '**Lordship Salvation**'?

2 Corinthians 5:15
And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.

You believe in GOD… who created the universe, this world, and all people who have ever lived.

You know that Jesus Christ is the only Son of GOD, sent to this world to be sacrificed… so all people who believe in Him will also have Eternal Life with GOD (see John 3:16).

Jesus is very clear on what it means to 'believe in' Him. Contrary to much of the message being delivered today, this type of belief requires active commitment from you too. Just believing that Jesus is the Son and died for your sins is not enough to be saved; that superficial belief could lead a person to a false sense of salvation. Acknowledge that Jesus is 'King of kings and Lord of lords' (Revelation 19:16).

Analogy: Why do kids graduating high school want to pursue a college degree? For most, it's to land a nice career they can enjoy… and will pay the bills. You might truly believe getting a college degree will benefit your future career greatly. But, just believing "a college degree will benefit my career greatly" is not enough to realize the benefits of that degree.

You must 'believe in' college enough to commit yourself to the rigorous activities required to pursue a college degree. Attending classes daily, homework, late night studying for exams, big tuition payments, etc. It takes dedication, lots of hard work and sacrifice to stay on the path to obtain that degree. It can be difficult and challenging, so you will need to utilize all available resources to help you pass the courses. You will probably fail at times, but learn from it and keep on the path to success.

You will remain committed to these requirements until the day you get that degree. Only then can you realize the full benefits of a college degree to your career.

Likewise, the path to salvation requires absolute belief and loyal commitment… which can only be achieved by submitting to Jesus Christ (the only Son of GOD) as your personal Lord and Savior. Just like the college student believes and follows the requirements needed to graduate, the true believer in Christ believes and follows his lead to Eternal Life.

Jesus must become the most important person in your life (even more important than yourself). This means full commitment to everything that Jesus teaches us. It means engaging in a daily relationship with Him, confirming your commitment, living by his words, asking forgiveness when you fail, etc.

In exchange for your loyalty, Jesus Christ will free you from slavery to sin… and give you Eternal Life!

2 Corinthians 5:16-17
So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

It's important to note that, if you believe in Jesus, then your heart will be dedicated to serving Him. There will be times when you fail, but just remain loyal to Jesus… and committed to living the Word. GOD will direct your path and provide the necessary resources to accomplish his work. It doesn't matter how many 'works' you perform (or what they are), just believe in Jesus as your personal Lord & Savior.

♥ Salvation is confessing your sins to GOD and others (1 John 1:9, Acts 19:18, James 5:16).

1 John 1:9
If we confess our sins, HE is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

What does this mean?

Basically, this sums up the saved person. Confessing your sins to GOD, as well as confessing to other people, is an act of true belief in the Son of GOD:

1) Confessing your sins to GOD: Acknowledges GOD, who is supreme to all. When you confess to GOD (from your heart), it shows that you believe in GOD and know that HE is in authority. You are confessing that GOD is real, as you certainly wouldn't be confessing to somebody you didn't believe existed.

2) Confessing your sins to GOD: Acknowledges that GOD has a sovereign will and moral expectations for you. Sin cannot exist without the moral law of GOD. This act shows that you believe in that law and know there are consequences for breaking it.

3) Confessing your sins to GOD: Acknowledges that you fall short of meeting GOD's moral law and expectations… and you are fully aware of it.

4) Confessing your sins to GOD: Acknowledges that you must rely on GOD to forgive your transgressions. You believe that GOD is the true JUDGE of your eternal destiny.

5) Confessing your sins to GOD: Acknowledges that you believe GOD is loving and does forgive those who ask humbly from their heart. You understand GOD's grace and mercy.

6) Confessing your sins to GOD: Acknowledges belief in the Son of GOD, Jesus Christ; because Jesus teaches us this message too (about sin and forgiveness).

7) Confessing your sins to others: Acknowledges this same message to other people, as Jesus teaches us to bring others to Him. It also shows your own awareness that you are no better than those you are speaking to; we're all sinners!

The Old Testament story of King David is a perfect example of a true believer who confesses his own sin to GOD. David was a man after GOD's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22).

See Psalm 51:1-17 for the confession of David.

[SUMMARY]

GOD created mankind to have an intimate relationship with him.

The relationship between GOD and man was broken (because of man).

That relationship must be fixed (for unification again).

Either GOD must change, or man must change (to fix the relationship).

GOD never changes.

Therefore, man must change.

However, man cannot change.

Because man is not capable of fixing it, unification with GOD is not possible (with man).

Even though not dependent on unification with man, GOD is the only ONE who can fix it.

Since GOD doesn't ever change... and man is not capable of change... but change is required for unification... GOD must become man to fix it (for man).

That is what HE did!

[This is what GOD has done for us… through his Son, Jesus Christ]
John 3:16 - 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.

[This is what we must do for GOD… through his Son, Jesus Christ]
Matthew 16:24 - Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me".