

BASIC TRAINING



FIELD MANUAL

ABOUT OUR COVER DESIGN

Our cover artwork resulted from a request by a Special Forces Chaplain distributing our materials to men and women involved in Operation Desert Storm. The symbolism is entirely scriptural.

- The Bible represents the one and only foundation for spiritual life, which is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ according to the true Gospel of the Word of God (1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20).
- The knife is a reminder that every believer is called to be a good soldier of Christ Jesus and fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3). Paul, in the original language, describes combat in the spiritual arena to be the most grueling, agonizing, hand-to-hand kind (Eph. 6:12; Phil. 1:30; 2 Cor. 10:3).
- The compass represents divine guidance. We must not only “stand firm” in battle (Eph. 6:11, 14), but our lives must follow the compass of the will of God, as we grow and serve in faith (2 Pet. 1:5–7; 3:18).

- The beret is a symbol of excellence through training. Believers must excel in both training (Heb. 5:14; 2 Tim. 2:15) and in practical virtue (1 Thess. 4:1, 10; 2 Pet. 1:5; Gal. 5:22–23). Every believer should strive to imitate the excellence of Jesus Christ through training, enduring, and overcoming.

“Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence ...” 2 Pet. 1:5

*The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight.
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.*
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

*“Today on friendly fields of strife are sown
the seeds, that on other days and at other
times, will bear the fruits of victory.”*
Gen. Douglas MacArthur

Gene Cunningham
Basic Training Bible Ministries

As Jesus Christ prepared to send the disciples for the first time throughout Israel with His message, He included in their instructions this admonition: “*Freely you have received, freely give*” (Matthew 10:8). This six-word summary of grace explains the financial policy of the publications and audio ministries of Basic Training. All audio materials and publications are provided **without charge** to anyone who requests them. For a catalog of available materials write:



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*“Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier
of Christ Jesus.” 2 Timothy 2:3*

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Published 1990, 3rd Printing 2018
Printed in the United States of America

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Before you begin any study of the Word of God, take a few moments to make sure that you are in fellowship with God, filled with the Holy Spirit. Comprehension, like everything else in the Christian life, is a gift that can be appropriated only by faith. The Bible clearly lays out three requirements that must be met before we can expect to understand God's Word. All three require nothing from us but faith.

1. **We must be believers in Jesus Christ** (John 3:16).
It is impossible for unbelievers to understand the Word of God (1 Cor. 2:14). Jesus declared to the leading religious leader of His day that apart from spiritual birth, man is blind to the things of God. *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit ... You must be born again"* (John 3:6).
2. **We must be filled with the Spirit** (1 Cor. 2:12).
Only the Spirit of God knows the thoughts of God. As believers, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit; but when we sin, we break fellowship with God and cease to function in the power of the Spirit. When we confess our sins, God is always *"faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). The moment we confess, we are restored to fellowship and are again under the control of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, able to learn.
3. **We must approach in faith** (Heb. 11:6).
Only when we approach in humility, with child-like faith, will the Word of God make sense to us (Matt. 18:4; Heb. 11:3). Where we find Scripture at odds with our ideas or our desires, we must submit to the authority of the Word. Intimacy, understanding, and power are reserved for those who are willing to do God's will (John 7:17).

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ABIDING: ABSOLUTE THINKING

John 15:1–10

1. The word “*abide*” speaks of perfect provision, supply, sustenance, fellowship—at-home-ness!
Deu. 33:27–28, “*The eternal God is a dwelling place and underneath are the everlasting arms ... so Israel dwells in security ... in a land of grain and new wine*” (note the absolutes).
2. “*Abide*” in **John 15:4** is an aorist imperative (ingressive)—a command possible at all times because of absolute provisions.
Psalms 90:1a–2b, “*Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations ... even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*”
3. There is never a time or condition under which the child of God may not “*abide.*”
Psalms 91:1, “*He who dwells in the shelter [secret place] of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say [volitional] to the LORD, ‘My refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust!’*” (*batach*—“body slam,” **1 Pet. 5:7**).
Psalms 91:4, “*He will cover you with His pinions and under His wings you may seek*

refuge. His faithfulness [absolute] is a shield and bulwark” (cf., Psalm 91:5–6).

Psalm 91:9–10a, *“For you have made the LORD, my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place. No evil will befall you.”*

4. The key to abiding is living in the reality of absolute divine provisions.

John 13:17, *“If you know these things [four absolutes: salvation, security, spirituality, service], you are blessed [joyful] if you do them” (i.e., live by them).*

5. “Abiding” means there is total provision for every need of every believer at every point of his life.

Psalm 23:1–5, *“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want ... my cup overflows.”*

James 1:2–4, *“Consider it all **joy**, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, **knowing** that the testing of your faith produces endurance, and let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, **lacking** in nothing.”*

6. Earthly problems are temporal and variable, but divine solutions are absolute.

Gen. 50:20, *“You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.”*

Rom. 8:28, *“God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God [abide] ... [and] are called according to His purpose.”*

Loneliness, emptiness, weakness, helplessness, failure, defeat, scorn, contempt—all bid us “abide in Him.” The pain of defeat, shame of sin remind us of the price of not abiding!

7. The only time Jesus Christ is at home in us is when we abide in Him.

Eph. 3:16–17, *“That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory [absolute provisions], to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell [be at home] in your hearts through faith ...”*

Col. 3:15–16, *“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell [abide] within you ...”*

AMBASSADORSHIP

1. An ambassador does not appoint himself. We are appointed by Christ (2 Cor. 5:18–20).
2. An ambassador does not support himself. God supplies all our needs (Eph. 1:3; Phil. 4:19).
3. An ambassador is not a citizen of the country where he is sent. We are citizens of Heaven (Phil. 3:20).
4. An ambassador has instructions in written form. We have the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16).
5. An ambassador cannot take insults personally; he is accepted or rejected not on his own merit but because of who he represents. We are not to take it personally when we are despised and rejected by those who hate Jesus Christ (John 15:19–21).
6. An ambassador does not enter a country to profit himself. We are on earth to serve the Lord (2 Cor. 5:15).
7. An ambassador is a personal representative of someone else; everything he does and says reflects on the one who sent him. We are representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ by action as well as by word (John 13:35; 17:23).
8. An ambassador's perspective is service; his prospect is reward. We are commissioned for

service and will be rewarded (Mat. 5:12; 2 John 1:8; Rev. 22:12).

9. An ambassador is recalled when war is declared. The recall of all believers at the Rapture of the Church will announce the beginning of the end for Satan (1 Thess. 2:1–12).

AVAILABLE PEOPLE

1. **Moses** (Num. 12:3; Heb. 11:25–26). To Moses, availability meant self-denial and great hardship to accomplish the plan of God.
2. **David** (2 Sam. 16:11; 1 Sam. 16:13; 17:37), In the battle with Goliath, there was only one person available for the fight: David. What made David so great? The fact that he stepped out of a multitude of warriors and said, “I’ll be the one.” Any other person could have stepped forward and accomplished the task. But David made the voluntary decision to be available.
3. **Elijah** (1 Kings 17:2–3, 8–9). Elijah is considered by many the greatest prophet of the Jews. What made him great? He followed instructions. God told him to go to the brook Cherith, and he went to the brook Cherith. God told him to go to Zarephath; he went to Zarephath. No argument, no complaint; he just obeyed. He was available.

4. **Isaiah** (Isa. 6:8). The great statement of Isaiah's availability was so simple, "*Here am I. Send me!*"
5. **Esther** (Est. 4:16). Esther was one of the great ladies of the Old Testament. She faced something that could have meant her death, and she said, "*if I perish, I perish.*" She chose to be available.
6. **Mary** (Luke 1:38). When Mary was told that she, a virgin, would bear a child, she said, "*Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.*" She would face slander and maligning, but she was willing to pay the price.
7. **Paul** (2 Tim. 4:16). Though at his last trial everyone deserted him, Paul remained available to God. Throughout his ministry, Paul had poured out his life for the people to whom he took the Gospel (1 Thess. 2:8); and because all along the line he had made decisions for service, he knew at the end that reward was waiting (2 Tim. 4:6–8).

Raw Material

A five-pound bag of iron made into horseshoe nails is worth \$5.50. Made into needles, it is worth \$3,000. Made into mainsprings for watches, it is

worth \$250,000. We are raw materials in the hands of God. What will be our worth in Heaven? The answer depends on how much refining we allow God to do in our lives on Earth.

BIBLICAL SPIRITUALITY

John 4:24, *“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

1. At the moment of salvation, God the Holy Spirit indwells the body of the believer in Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19).
2. Two power systems reside inside every believer: the power of the flesh (sin nature) and the power of the Spirit of God (Rom. 7:17, 23; 15:3).
3. The option and objective of the spiritual life is to volitionally choose not to live in the energy of the flesh, but in the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8:4–8). This is a decision to live by faith.
4. There are four major commands in Scripture concerning spiritual life:
 - a. Be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). This is a life of study in God’s Word (John 16:13), obedience and fellowship (1 John 1:7), and confession and correction when we sin (1 John 1:9; 1 Cor. 11:31).

- b. Grieve not the Spirit (Eph. 4:30). The context shows that personal sins grieve the Spirit, thus breaking fellowship with God, for then the sin nature is in control. Again, confession and correction are necessary.
 - c. Quench not the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19). Here, the context suggests that the Spirit is quenched by sins of omission, neglect of spiritual disciplines, apathy toward spiritual responsibilities. Compare 2 Tim. 1:6–7.
 - d. Walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16; 4:25). Walking in the Spirit is the maintenance of fellowship with God—persistence in the filling of the Spirit. This is also called “walking in the Light” (1 John 1:7).
5. Walking in the Spirit will result in consistent spiritual growth (Eph. 2:14–19; 2 Pet. 1:5–7; 1 Pet. 3:18).
 6. The evidence of walking in the Spirit will be increasing spiritual fruit in the believer’s life (Gal. 5:22–23; 1 Cor. 13:4–8).
 7. The spiritual life is a life of “abiding in Christ” (John 15:1–7), and is marked by study, effective prayer, productivity, joy, and love.

8. The spiritual life is the means by which Jesus Christ is formed in us, and lives through us (Gal. 2:20; 4:19).

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

Part One

1. The blood of Christ speaks of Jesus' voluntary self-sacrifice on the cross for our sins.

1 Pet. 1:18–19, *“Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”*

John 1:29, *“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”*

Rev. 1:5b, *“To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood.”*

2. By the price of His blood, Jesus accomplished three great works at the cross.

Rom. 3:23–25, *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being **justified** [declared righteous] as a gift by His grace through the **redemption** [payment of a penalty] which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a **propitiation** [divine satisfaction] in His blood through faith.”*

3. The finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross is sufficient to provide salvation for all men.

Rev. 5:9, *“And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.’”*

John 12:32, *“And I, if I am lifted up [crucified] from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.”*

4. However, to receive the benefits of Jesus’ blood, we must believe in Him.

John 6:29, 47, 54, *“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent ... Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life ... he who eats My flesh and drinks My blood [i.e., believes in His life and death] has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.’”*

John 1:12, *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”*

5. The blood of Christ continues to cleanse the believer from all sins.

1 John 1:7, *“But if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship*

with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

6. It is through the blood of Christ that we can be reconciled to God and have peace with Him.

Eph. 2:13, *“But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”*

Col. 1:20, *“Through Him [Jesus] to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross ...”*

Rom. 5:1, *“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

7. The term *“blood of Christ”* encompasses the entire scope of the spiritual sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Heb. 9:14, *“How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works [religion without faith] to serve the living God?”*

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

Part Two

1. The term “*blood of Christ*” as used in the New Testament, is a comprehensive figure of speech which encompasses not only Jesus’ physical sufferings, but also His spiritual sacrifice.
2. In fact, Jesus did not fear the physical pain of the crucifixion. He told His disciples not to fear such things (Mat. 10:28), and the prophet Isaiah tells us that through all the physical affliction, the Lord Jesus never uttered a whimper (Isa. 53:7).
3. In telling of Gethsemane, Mark uses three words in Mark 14:33–34 that speak of the terrible dread that fell on Him “unto death,” or “as far as death.”
4. Since we know that Jesus died physically of His own free will (John 10:18) and told the disciples not to fear death, He must have been fearing something else.
5. The Scripture teaches that fear originates in spiritual death (Gen. 3:10; Heb. 2:14–15). What Jesus feared in the Garden was sin and death (spiritual), which He was never confronted with before. He had never known fear.

6. On the cross, Jesus had to pay the penalty for the sins of the world. That penalty is spiritual death. See Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12, 17, 21; 6:23.
7. In order to pay our debt on the cross (Col. 2:14), Jesus, “*because of the suffering of death*” (i.e., of fallen men), had to “*taste death for everyone*” (Heb. 2:9).
8. Each of the physical afflictions of His crucifixion were actually divinely designed to reveal the penalty which God the Father would impose on His Son spiritually:
 - a. Crown of Thorns (Mat. 27:29)—pictures bearing the curse of fallen man (Gen. 3:17–18)
 - b. Scourging (Mat. 27:26)—Jesus was scourged by the Father (Isa. 53:4–5), and it is this scourging by which we are healed.
 - c. Pierced by Nails (John 20:25; Acts 2:23)—His soul was pierced through with every sin of every man in history (Isa. 53:5; Col. 2:14).
9. Peter tells us that “*He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed*” (1 Pet. 2:24).

10. In speaking of His bearing our sins, Isaiah links it to “the anguish of His soul” and says that “*He poured out Himself [literally, His soul] to death*” (Isa. 53:12).
11. These considerations do not diminish His physical sufferings, nor detract from His physical blood. In truth, we see how incomprehensible was the price He was required to pay for our sins.
2 Cor. 5:21, “*He [God] made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*”

THE CHRISTIAN WALK

Gen. 5:24, “*Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.*”

1. Walk by Faith.
Rom. 4:12, “*... follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham ...*”
2 Cor. 5:7, “*For we walk by faith, not by sight.*”
2. Walk in Newness of Life.
Rom. 6:4, “*... as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*”

3. Walk in the Spirit.
Gal. 5:16, 25, *“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh ... if we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”*
4. Walk in Good Works.
Eph. 2:10, *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works ... we [should] walk in them.”*
5. Walk Worthy of the Lord.
Eph. 4:1, *“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore [entreat] you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.”*
Col. 1:10, *“So that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”*
6. Walk in Love.
Eph. 5:1–2, *“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you ...”*
John 15:12, *“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.”*

7. Walk in the Light.
Eph. 5:8, *“For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord, walk as children of Light.”*
1 John 1:7, *“If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”*
8. Walk in Grace.
Col. 2:6–7, *“Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.”*

Principle: There are eight figures of the Christian walk here. Eight is the biblical number of completeness and illustrates here the way to fulfillment in the abundant life of Christ.

THE CHRISTIAN WAY OF LIFE
Basic Rules for Christian Life
“Overcoming” by Faith (John 5:4–5)

1. *“By faith,”* learn to accept conditions as God’s will for your life, and be thankful (Rom. 8:28; 1 Thess. 3:3; 5:18).
2. *“By faith,”* maintain fellowship with God, walking in the Light (1 John 1:7).

3. “*By faith,*” consistently and daily examine your conduct, confessing all known sins (1 Cor. 11:28, 31; 1 John 1:9).
4. “*By faith,*” receive the Word of God daily, as being more necessary than daily food (Mat. 5:6; 4:4; 2 Pet. 3:18).
5. “*By faith,*” approach the throne of grace boldly in every case of need, requesting aid, casting every care on Him (Heb. 4:15–16; 1 Pet. 5:8).
6. “*By faith,*” resist the attempts of Satan, and he will flee from you (Eph. 6:10–13; 1 Pet. 5:8).
7. “*By faith,*” maintain the habit of thinking and meditating on spiritual values and priorities (Phil. 4:6–9).

2 Cor. 5:7, “*For we walk by faith, not by sight.*”

2 Cor. 4:16–17, “*Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.*”

THE CROSS TO THE CROWN

Salvation is only the beginning of God’s plan for man. After salvation, the believer’s objective is to advance through the stages of spiritual growth on

the path from the cross to the crown. At each stage, the believer faces increasingly intense tests that can only be passed through faith. Paul, in Rom. 1:17, says that believers progress “*from faith to faith.*” The five Hebrew words for faith illustrate the five stages of growth described in the New Testament:

1. The Babe (1 Pet. 2:2). All believers enter the family of God as infants when they exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. After the tremendous stress of birth, of being cast from the realm of darkness to the light, every infant’s first impulse is to nurse. The objective is nourishment, but the baby receives great comfort in feeding. God’s objective for the spiritual infant is growth, but He begins the process with comfort. Not much is expected of the child in his first years. Babies eat, sleep, cry, and mess, and parents do not get upset about the fact that their babies cannot change their own diapers or fix their own meals. Spiritual infants are just as helpless and need a great deal of nurturing, encouragement, and patient instruction. Spiritual infancy is illustrated by *amen*, the leaning-faith of Gen. 15:6.
2. The Adolescent (1 John 2:13–14). The Apostle John describes adolescent believers as the young, the strong, the eager. These are

believers who have grown to the point at which they understand some principles of truth and are beginning to apply them to life. But, like most adolescents, they have the growing pains of arrogance and rebellion against authority. They are sometimes too eager to act on their own, and this often gets them into trouble. They have knowledge, which they mistake for wisdom, but they lack experience. Their tendency is to want to apply the truth to other people's lives. Adolescents may be troublesome, but they are at least not apathetic. They must be patiently trained and encouraged to channel their energies. No one makes it to maturity without passing through adolescence. Spiritual adolescence is illustrated by *batach*, the wrestling-faith of Psalm 27:3; 37:3.

3. The Mature (Heb. 5:14; 6:1). The mature believer is able to take meat—the advanced doctrine of the Word. A Christian who has arrived at spiritual maturity knows enough about the Bible to take responsibility for his own life. He knows how to apply the Word of God to himself, so instead of airing all his problems, he figures out how to solve them. He is not ready to take on everyone else's problems, but he can take control of his own

life. He understands that God has a plan for his life, and he becomes occupied with fulfilling that plan. He gives himself to training and discipline, exercising himself and building spiritual muscle. Spiritual maturity is illustrated by *chasah*, the confident-faith of Psalm 57:1 that takes refuge in the Lord.

4. The Hero of Faith (Isa. 53:12; Hebrews 11). Heroes of faith are men and women who have gone beyond maturity and have learned to fight the good fight. They have advanced beyond simply taking responsibility for their own lives to becoming responsible for the lives of other people. They are always ready to pick up fallen comrades, to treat their wounds, to encourage them, and supply their needs. Heroes of faith still make mistakes and they still fail, but they always stand back up and go back into battle. Hero-of-faith status is illustrated by *yackal*, the healing-faith of Job 13:15.
5. The Friend of God (James 2:23–25). The highest of all possible achievements in life is to become a friend of God. Every believer has the potential and the assets necessary to reach this point, but very few Christians do. It takes persistence and tenacity. The only people who make it this far are the people who absolutely

refuse to quit. Friend-of-God status is illustrated by *qawah*, the enduring-faith of Isa. 40:31.

DOCTRINE OF SPIRITUAL FLEXIBILITY

1. A motto of the Roman Soldier was, “*You may bend me, but you will never break me.*”
2. In the spiritual battle, we must develop spiritual flexibility—the ability to adapt, adjust to pressures.
3. We must bend, but not break; adapt, but not compromise; flex without falling, shattering.
4. Without proper temper, a knife blade will snap. The same is true of people. Temper results from being heated and cooled.
Principle: Heroes are forged in the furnace of adversity.
5. Both **1 Pet. 1:6–7** and **James 1:2–4** speak of the necessity of the fires of trial and adversity to develop flexibility.
6. **Phil. 4:11–13** is one of the greatest statements of spiritual flexibility.
7. There is a process of development in these verses:
 - a. Learn (Phil. 4:11) from conditions and circumstances. Life is a great teacher if we are good students.
 - b. Knowing (Phil. 4:12). Flexibility is developed by having to adjust to

changes in life. Note the extremes here: poverty vs. prosperity, hunger vs. fullness, abundance vs. necessity.

- c. Ability (Phil. 4:13). Flexibility produces power, ability. Past experience produces confidence in Paul.
8. Spiritual flexibility begins with personal contentment (Phil. 4:11). This demands character as a result of trial (Rom. 5:3–5).
 9. From inner contentment comes adaptability (Phil. 4:12). We are no longer threatened or intimidated by change. The issue is no longer what we have, but what we are.
 10. This produces a tremendous power in our life (Phil. 4:13). From inner strength comes outer dynamic, but all comes from the priority of life—Jesus Christ.
 11. God's ability is channeled through our availability:
 - a. Availability
 - b. Teachability
 - c. Adaptability
 - d. Stability
 - e. Invincibility

ENDURANCE

*The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight.
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

1. Endurance is a vital factor in the spiritual life.
Heb. 10:36, *“For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.”*
Heb. 12:1b–2, *“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus ...”*
2. Endurance can only be developed by pushing beyond our present limitations.
Rom. 5:3, *“We also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance [endurance].”*
James 1:3, *“Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance ...”*
3. Spiritual endurance involves patient waiting for the will of God to be fulfilled in us by the Word of God.
Psalms 119:32, *“I shall run the way of Your commandments, for You will enlarge my heart [build endurance in me].”*

Isa. 40:31, *“Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength, they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.”*

Heb. 6:15, *“And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise ...”*

4. Endurance is the key to the abundant life.

John 15:9, *“Just as the Father loved Me, I also have loved you, abide [endure] in My love.”*

Luke 21:19, *“By your endurance you will gain your lives.”*

5. Endurance is the key to eternal reward.

2 Tim. 2:12, *“If we endure, we will also reign with Him.”*

6. Endurance is the result of keeping one’s eyes on Jesus.

Heb. 12:1b–3, *“Let us run with endurance ... fixing our eyes on Jesus ... who ... endured the cross ... for consider Him who has endured ...”*

Heb. 11:27, *“By faith he [Moses] left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.”*

7. Consider a distance runner’s perspective and apply it to the life of faith.

“People can’t understand why a man runs. They don’t see any sport in it, argue that it lacks the sight-thrill of body contact, the color of rough conflict. Yet the conflict is there, more raw and challenging than any man versus competition. In track it is a man against himself, the cruelest of all opponents. The other runners are not the real enemies. His adversary lies deep within him, in his ability, with brain and heart, to control and master himself and his emotions.”
Glenn Cunningham

THE ESSENCE OF GOD

Sovereignty: God rules over all (Psalm 103:19; Rom. 8:28).

Righteousness: God is perfect. His plan is perfect (Rom. 1:17).

Justice: God is fair. He cannot be unfair (Isa. 30:18).

Love: God’s love is perfect and unconditional (1 John 4:8; 1:16).

Eternal Life: God has always been and always will be (John 11:25).

Omniscience: God knows everything—past, present, and future (Psalm 139:1–4; John 1:47–48).

Omnipresence: God is always there—everywhere (Psalm 139:7–12).

Omnipotence: God has the power to do anything (Luke 1:37).

Immutability: God never changes—ever (Heb. 13:8).

Veracity: God is absolute Truth (Isa. 65:16) and through His Truth, we can be related to these ten attributes, in this life, and for eternity (John 3:16, 18; 14:6).

Stop and **Remember Jesus' Love**,
then **Every Obstacle** will become an **Opportunity**
for you to drive **On In Victory!**

Rom. 5:8, *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”*

John 1:12, *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”*

John 16:33, *“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”*

ETERNAL SECURITY

Rom 11:29, *“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”*

John 6:37b, *“The one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.”*

1. To understand our eternal security in Christ, it is essential to correctly understand salvation itself:
 - a. Eternal life is a gift. We did not earn it by our merit; we cannot lose it by demerit (John 3:16; Rom. 3:24; 4:4–5; 6:23).
 - b. On the cross, Jesus Christ died and paid for all our sins: past, present, and future (Isa. 53:4–6, 11; 2 Cor. 5:21; John 19:30).
 - c. Eternal life is just that—eternal. It can never cease or be interrupted in any way (John 3:16, 36; 5:24; Heb. 5:9; 1 John 5:11, 13).
2. At the moment of salvation, we are imputed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. That is, His righteousness is eternally deposited to our account with God (Rom. 4:3, 22–24; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Cor. 1:30).
3. At the same time, all sins were blotted out and forgotten. This is called expiation in theology (Col. 2:13–14; Isa. 1:18; Psalm 103:3, 12; Heb. 10:17).
4. When one believes in Christ as Savior, he is born from above, and created as a new spiritual creature (John 3:6–7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 3:5).
5. At the instant of salvation, the Holy Spirit indwells the believer and seals him as the

eternal possession of God (Rom. 8:9; Eph. 4:30).

6. The believer is transferred out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:13–14).
7. God sees every believer as already resurrected, glorified, and seated with Jesus Christ in Heaven (Eph. 2:4–7; Col. 2:8–13; 3:1–4; Rom. 8:28–30).
8. Jesus Christ personally guaranteed the eternal security of the believer, holding us by His power (John 10:28–29; 1 Pet. 1:5).
9. All sin in the life of the believer results in broken fellowship with God (1 John 1:6–7), divine discipline (Heb. 12:5–11), and loss of eternal reward (1 Cor. 3:10–15) but not loss of salvation. We are restored to fellowship by confession and correction (1 John 1:7–9).
10. If a believer sins persistently, discipline will intensify to the point of death, but his salvation is secure (1 Cor. 5:1–5; 1 John 5:16).

FAITH

1. Faith is contrary to human reason and logic (Rom. 4:18; Mat. 11:25).
2. Faith does not depend on sight (Rom. 4:18; 2 Cor. 4:18).

3. Faith is simply trusting God's Word (Rom. 4:18; 10:17; Gal. 3:16; Heb. 4:2).
4. Faith looks impossibility in the face, yet requires no proof (Rom. 4:19; Heb. 11:11).
5. Faith is possible only when we consider ourselves dead (Rom. 4:19; 6:7-8, 11).
6. Faith does not waver (Rom. 4:20; James 1:6-8).
7. Faith is conviction, not profession (Rom. 4:21; 1 Cor. 4:19-20).

THE ANVIL

Last eve, I paused beside the blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil sing the vesper chime.
Then looking in I noticed on the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.
"How many anvils have you had?" said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, and then with a twinkling eye
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."
And so, I thought, the Anvil of God's Word,
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon.
And though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The Anvil is unchanged, the hammers gone!
— attributed to John Clifford

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

- 1. God is faithful to forgive sins.**
1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous [just] to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- 2. God is faithful to keep us saved.**
2 Tim. 2:13, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."
- 3. God is faithful to deliver us through temptations.**
1 Cor. 10:13, "No temptation has overcome you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able ..."
- 4. God is faithful to keep His promises to us.**
Heb. 10:23, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who has promised is faithful."
- 5. God is faithful to us in suffering.**
1 Pet. 4:19, "Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right."
- 6. God is faithful in fulfilling His plan for us.**
1 Thess. 5:24, "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to past."

7. **God is faithful to strengthen us.**
2 Thess. 3:3, *“But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.”*
8. **God is the faithful partner of our union with Christ.**
1 Cor. 1:9, *“God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”*
9. **Christ is a faithful and merciful high priest.**
Heb. 2:17, *“Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest ...”*
10. **Jesus Christ is synonymous with faithfulness.**
Rev. 19:11, *“And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war.”*

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

1. The biblical idea of fellowship is one of agreement producing communion, unity, and compatibility. The word *koinonia* means “joint participation” in something.

2. Fellowship begins with faith in Jesus Christ.
1 Cor. 1:9, *“God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”*
Philemon 6, *“And I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ’s sake.”*
3. Fellowship with God requires agreement with His Word.
1 John 1:7, *“If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin [unrighteousness].”*
4. Therefore, when we sin, confession restores us to fellowship, because we agree with God that sin is sin.
1 John 1:9, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*
1 John 2:1, *“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”*
5. Since confession produces the filling of the Spirit, it is called “the fellowship of the Spirit.”

2 Cor. 13:14, *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”*

FIVE COMMANDS FOR CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

1 Corinthians 16:13–14

1 Pet. 5:8, *“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”*

Prov. 28:1, *“The righteous are bold as a lion.”*

1. **Be on the alert.** The present imperative is a command to habitual vigilance. Thomas Jefferson said, *“Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.”* Jesus constantly challenged His disciples to spiritual vigilance. *“Be on guard [prosecho], so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap”* (Luke 21:34), and *“But keep on the alert [agrupneo] at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man”* (Luke 21:36). The word *prosecho* means “to hold before you, be attentive.” *Agrupneo* means “to be awake, not sleeping.” Our word here is *gregoreo*, meaning “watch vigilantly.”

2. **Stand firm in the faith.** The present imperative from the verb *histemi* was the battle-cry of the elite Roman soldier. It meant “to hold your ground in the face of enemy assault.” Paul uses this word four times in Eph. 6:10–14. The Christian soldier is enabled to “stand firm” by means of faith in the unchanging Word of God. Our feet are planted on the foundation of the promises of God (*cf.*, Heb. 6:17–20). When we have “*put on the full armor of God*” (Eph. 6:14–18), through Bible study (the belt), spirituality and sanctification (the breastplate), personal witness (the sandals), daily trust (shield of faith), eternal assurance (helmet), application of God’s Word to life (the sword), and prayer (logistical supply), we can then “**STAND FIRM.**”

3. **Act like men.** The word *andrizo* means “to be manly or courageous.” In ancient Rome, the first of the virtues taught and admired was courage in battle. For the Christian soldier, courage in life comes from confidence in God and His plan. Knowing that God is in complete control (Rom. 8:28) gives us confidence and courage in facing and enduring trials and afflictions. “*Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom*”

of God” (Acts 14:22). But by steady spiritual growth, we are able to “*attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ*” (Eph. 4:13).

4. **Be strong.** Strength in the spiritual life comes from three sources: First, from the control of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:16–19); second, from the Word of God (Heb. 4:12; Eph. 1:17–19); and finally, from genuine spiritual growth or edification (Eph. 6:10; 2 Tim. 2:1–2). As we combine these elements in our life, we display a spiritual power not of this Earth nor of ourselves. As 2 Tim. 1:7 says, “*For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.*”
5. **Let all be done in love.** Divine love is the greatest virtue and strength. It is the source of our salvation (John 3:16; Eph. 2:4–7), the stimulus for service (2 Cor. 5:14–15), the pinnacle of growth (2 Pet. 1:7), and the greatest witness (John 13:34–35). Love overcomes all things (1 Cor. 13:4–8; Rom. 12:9, 21).

FIVE FACTORS OF EFFECTIVE FAITH

Daniel 11:32–35

1. **Effective faith is built on genuine knowledge of God.** This means knowing God, not just knowing about Him. We come to know Him as Creator through His creation (Rom. 1:18–21), He reveals Himself to us through His Word (2 Tim. 3:16–17), and we come to know Him in a personal way through Jesus Christ our Redeemer (Phil. 3:7–14).
2. **Effective faith is spiritual power at work.** James says that “*Faith without works is dead*” (James 2:17, 26). Faith takes the power of God’s Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23) and Word (Heb. 4:12), and puts it to work in life (Mat. 5:13–16; Eph. 2:10). Power is the characteristic of the growing Christian (Eph. 1:18–19; 3:14–19; Col. 1:24–29; 2 Pet. 1:5–7).
3. **Effective faith turns personal faith into public ministry.** Every believer in Jesus Christ is an ambassador of the Lord (2 Cor. 5:14–21), a priest of God (1 Pet. 2:5–9), and a minister to other believers (1 Cor. 12:4–11). We all have a teaching ministry to others by our words and deeds (Heb. 5:11–14; 1 Thess. 1:3–10). The Apostle Paul sees this task as a

mission of obligation, opportunity, and honor in Rom. 1:14–17.

- 4. Effective faith will always result in persecution.** In times of persecution, God gives the believer who is faithful “a little help” because a little help combined with effective faith is always enough! It only took David one stone and faith to slay Goliath. Because this world hates Jesus Christ (John 15:18–24), it also hates and persecutes those who most reflect Him (Mat. 5:10–12; 2 Tim. 3:12). It is the highest honor a believer can attain, to share in his Master’s sufferings (Phil. 1:27–30; Col. 1:24; 1 Pet. 4:12–14).
- 5. Effective faith follows a path of continual refining, purifying.** This is the “*faith to faith*” principle of Rom. 1:17. Prov. 4:18 compares this path to the growing light of dawn turning to day. Cleansing is a major theme in salvation (Eph. 5:26; John 13:10), spiritual growth (1 John 1:7, and in confession and correction (1 John 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:19–22). David gives a beautiful picture of God’s power and willingness to forgive and cleanse in Psalm 51. The path of correction is outlined in James 4:6–10.

Application: In Dan. 12:3, we see the ultimate end of those who pursue and attain to effective faith.

Our resurrection bodies will shine like the stars of Heaven—some faintly, others brilliantly. Which will you choose to be?

THE FIVE TECHNIQUES OF THE CHRISTIAN WAY OF LIFE

A definition of technique: “The mechanical performance or practice of any art, the practical details or methods by which an artist in any line expresses his mental conception (theology), mechanical skill in any art.”

Five Techniques

1. **Confession** (self-judgment)
Psalms 32, 38, 51; 1 Cor. 11:28–31; 1 John 1:7–22. The technique by which we deal with personal sins for cleansing, forgiveness, restoration to full fellowship, power, service. Use daily!
2. **Spirituality**
Eph. 5:18 gives us the command. **Eph. 1:23; 3:16–20; and 4:1–16** show the mechanics. Dependence on the filling of the Holy Spirit leads to disciplined study, prayer, and application.
3. **Faith-Rest Life**
Mat. 11:29; Phil. 4:6–7; and Hebrews 4 show us reliance on the promises, principles,

and doctrines of the Word, producing inner rest, peace, and tranquility. This is a Daniel-in-the-lion's-den attitude—spiritual calm, poise!

4. **Living in the Word**

Mat. 4:4; Psalm 119:103–104; and 138:2 express a lifestyle of dependence on the Word, a decision (Heb. 4:11) to saturate the soul with the Word; personal study above and beyond group study.

5. **Occupation with Jesus Christ**

Heb. 3:1, *“Consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.”*

Heb. 12:2, *“Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.”*

Heb. 12:3, *“Consider Him who endured ...”*

Phil. 3:10, *“That I may know Him ...”*

Principle: Study and Imitate His Life (1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Peter 2:21).

FIVE WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

2 Cor. 5:17 does not say that if any man is in Christ he **ought** to become a new creature and old things **ought** to pass away. It does not say that if any man is in Christ, he **feels** like a new creature, or he **acts** like a new creature. It says, *“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”*

These are statements of absolute, accomplished fact; they refer to positional reality. When we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit instantaneously performs five irrevocable works in us:

1. **Baptism: new position**

By the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we are placed in Christ, becoming a part of His Body forever (1 Cor. 12:13). This gives us a new position spiritually. Before we believed, we were dead **in Adam**; now we are alive **in Christ**. We have been identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3–4) and have been seated with Him in Heaven (Eph. 2:4–7; Col. 3:1–4).

2. **Regeneration: new life**

Regeneration is the work by which God the Holy Spirit makes us spiritually alive (Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:4–6). We are born again, this time as children of God (1 Pet. 1:23; John 3:3–7; 1:12, 18). Whereas before we were physically alive but spiritually dead, now we are spiritually alive in Christ and positionally dead to the flesh (John 5:21; Rom. 6:13). Eternal life has been imputed to us—we have been transferred from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of light (1 John 5:12; Col. 1:13).

3. **Indwelling: new power**

At the moment of salvation, we are permanently indwelt by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9–11). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit supplies us with an inherent power that can be activated through the filling of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18). Before salvation, our only source of motivation and power was the sin nature. But now, not only is the power of the sin nature broken, but we are able to draw on the omnipotence of God (John 7:37–39; 14:17–20; 17:26).

4. **Gifting: new purpose**

At salvation, the Holy Spirit gives each of us a unique spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:7, 11) and a unique work to accomplish (Mat. 25:15; Mark 13:34). The purpose of our spiritual gift is to manifest the power of the Spirit of God within us by edifying the Body of Christ in some way. The work chosen by God for us is something that no one else could ever accomplish and that will remain undone for eternity if we do not do it. Only in the exercise of our gifts, in the work God has chosen for us, can we fulfill the plan of God for our lives and achieve the eternal greatness for which we were designed.

5. **Sealing: new destiny**

Sealing is the work by which the Holy Spirit assures our eternal destiny (Eph. 1:13–14; 4:30). In ancient times, the seal signified three things: ownership, security, and safe delivery. In Rom. 15:28, Paul applies all three ideas when he says he has put his seal on money collected in Asia for the saints in Jerusalem: the money would be identified, kept secure, and delivered safely to its ultimate destination. In the same way, every believer is marked as God's private and precious possession, with God's own guarantee of safe delivery.

FREEDOM

Gal. 5:1, *"It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery."*

John 8:32, 36, *"And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free ... So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."*

1. I am free from failure, for ...
"I can do all things through Him [Christ] who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).
2. I am free from want, for ...
"... my God will supply all [my] needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

3. I am free from fear, for ...
“God has not given us a spirit of timidity [fear], but of power, and love and discipline”
 (2 Tim. 1:7).
4. I am free from doubt, for ...
“God has allotted to each [of us] a measure of faith” (Rom. 12:3).
5. I am free from weakness, for ...
“The Lord is the defense [strength] of my life” (Psalm 27:1).
6. I am free from the power of Satan, for ...
“Greater is He who is in you [Christ Jesus] than he [Satan] who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).
7. I am free from defeat, for ...
“God ... always leads us in triumph in Christ” (2 Cor. 2:14).

THE LAST LESSONS OF THE SAVIOR

1. Jesus, on the cross, teaches us the necessity of forgiving our enemies.
Luke 23:34, *“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”*
2. In His agony, He teaches us to honor our parents, and to fulfill life’s duties.
John 19:26b–27, *“Woman, behold your son ... behold, your mother.”*
3. To the dying thief, He teaches that eternal life can be found only by faith in Him.

Luke 23:43, *“And He said to him, ‘Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.’”*

4. Through quoting Scripture, He teaches volumes about the penalty of sin, and the character of a Holy God.

Mat. 27:46, *“About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?’”*

5. By a request, He revealed the human frailty which He partook, and the value of compassion among men.

John 19:28, *“I am thirsty.”*

6. With a victory shout, He announced His triumph over Satan, sin, and death.

John 19:30, *“It is finished!”*

7. With a sigh, He showed the final release and certainty of a lifetime of submission to his heavenly Father.

Luke 23:46, *“And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT.’ Having said this, He breathed His last.”*

GOD IS ABLE

1. **The declaration of divine power**

Mat. 19:26, *“With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”*

2. **God is able to save forever those who believe in Jesus Christ.**
Heb. 7:25, "Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."
3. **God is able to supply every need.**
2 Cor. 9:8, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed."
4. **God is able to deliver all who are tempted.**
Heb. 2:18, "For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted."
5. **God is able to sustain the weak believer and make him stand.**
Rom. 14:4, "Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand."
6. **God is able to keep us from falling and make us blameless.**
Jude 24–25, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory,

majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

7. **God is able to surpass all expectations and requests.**

Eph. 3:20, *“Now to Him who is able to do far more [exceedingly] abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.”*

8. **God is able to raise us up in resurrection in the likeness of His Son.**

Heb. 11:19, *“He [Abraham] considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead ...”*

THE GOOD SOLDIER OF CHRIST JESUS

2 Tim. 2:1–3, *“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”*

Characteristics:

1. In person: spiritually strong through dependence upon the grace of God
2. In public: effective in leadership, example, and in teaching others
3. In persecution: able to endure, persevere, and press on in affliction

The soldier of Christ must keep the fire of his service burning bright.

2 Tim. 1:6–7, *“For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh [i.e., stir into flame] the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us the spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.”*

2 Tim. 1:13–14, *“Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you”* (cf., Eph. 4:11–16; 5:18; 6:10–18).

A good soldier trains daily in the use of his weapons and armor.

2 Tim. 2:15, *“Be diligent [study] to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”*

2 Tim. 3:16–17, *“All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”*

A good soldier of Christ must keep himself pure.

2 Tim. 2:20–22, *“Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and*

some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”

The good soldier must prepare for persecution, and be able to endure it.

2 Tim. 3:10–12, *“Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord delivered me! Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”* (cf., Acts 13:13–14:28).

The good soldier must fight the good fight to the finish.

2 Tim. 4:7–8, *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing”* (cf., 1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12; 1 Cor. 9:25; Phil. 4:1; James 1:12; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10).

HOW TO REDEEM TIME

The only day we can redeem is **today** (Isa. 49:8; Mat. 6:30–33; 2 Cor. 6:2); and throughout Scripture, we are continually exhorted to listen to God **today** (Exodus 17; Psalms 90, 95, 106; 1 Cor. 10:1–10; Hebrews 3). Every morning, God lays before each of us 24 hours—1,440 minutes, and gives us the opportunity to buy out as much of that time as we want to for eternity. Every minute we spend in fellowship, filled with the Spirit, belongs to us forever; every minute we are out of fellowship is lost.

To buy time, we have to have capital; our capital is the Word of God. Everything comes to us from the Word (Mat. 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:16), and the Word is the only thing we will take with us from this realm into eternity (Psalm 90:12).

1. Be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).
2. Study (Rom. 12:2, 2 Pet. 3:18).
3. Apply the Word (Col. 4:5; 1 Pet. 2:15).
4. Endure/wait (Isa. 40:31; Rom. 8:18; James 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:7; 2:19–21; 3:14–18; 4:1).
5. Pray (Eph. 6:18; Heb. 13:15; James 5:13–18).
6. Submit (Eph. 5:21).
7. Serve (1 Tim. 4:14; 1 Cor. 12:7, 11; 13:1–13).

HUMILITY/MEEKNESS

- 1. Humility to be sought**
Zeph. 2:3, *“Seek the LORD, all you humble of the earth who have carried out His ordinances; seek righteousness, seek humility ...”*
- 2. Manifest in restraint**
Luke 6:28–29, *“Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.”*
- 3. Produced by the Holy Spirit**
Gal. 5:22–23, *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness [meekness], self-control ...”*
- 4. Essential in teaching**
2 Tim. 2:25, *“With gentleness [meekness] correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth.”*
- 5. Essential in learning**
James 1:21, *“Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.”*

6. **Valuable to God**
James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5; Prov. 3:34, *“God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”*
7. **The path to promotion**
1 Pet. 5:6, *“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.”*
- Humility gives proper self-evaluation**
Rom. 12:3, *“For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”*
8. **Examples of humility:**
- Moses, Num. 12:3
 - David, 2 Sam. 16:11
 - Jeremiah, Jer. 26:14
 - Stephen, Acts 7:60
 - Paul, 2 Tim. 4:16
9. **Evidences of humility:**
- Forbearance to others, Eph. 4:2; 6:9; Col 3:13
 - Endurance in trials, 1 Cor. 13:7; James 1:12
 - Compassion, 1 Thess. 2:7
 - Peaceability, James 3:17

10. **The primary characteristic of Christ**
Isa. 53:7; Mat. 11:29; 21:5
11. **Promises to the humble**
Psalm 22:26; 37:11; 147:6; Isa. 29:19

THE “I AM” SAYINGS (JESUS PROCLAIMS HIS DEITY)

“God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM,’ and He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” Exo. 3:14

The above statement was given to Moses when God called him to be the deliverer of the children of Israel. Moses wanted to know how to respond when the children of Israel asked for the name of the God who sent him. “I AM” is the root of the name JEHOVAH. Jesus used the “I AM” statement, both to reveal His divine nature, and to show His purpose as Messiah.

1. Messiah had to be the unique God-man. “I ... am He” (John 4:26). The woman at the well was looking for the promised Messiah (Christ). This was Jesus’ response to her. Remember another title for the Messiah was “IMMANUEL” (Mat. 1:23), which means “GOD WITH US.”

2. Only Jesus Christ can feed the hunger of men's souls. *"I am the bread of life"* (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51).
3. Only God in human flesh could bring light into a sin-darkened world. *"I am the Light of the world"* (John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46). *"In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men"* (John 1:4).
4. In order to give eternal life, the Savior must be eternal. *"Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am'"* (John 8:58). *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever"* (Heb. 13:8).
5. Only the Son of God could offer entrance into eternal life. *"I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved"* (John 10:9a).
6. Jesus alone is the Shepherd of men's souls. *"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep"* (John 10:10b–11). *"The LORD [God] is my shepherd, I shall not want"* (Psalm 23:1).
7. Only the Messiah (God incarnate) could claim to be the unique, only-begotten Son of

God. *“I am the Son of God”* (John 10:36b).
“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

8. The Lord Jesus Christ is the very essence of eternal life. *“I am the resurrection and the life”* (John 11:25a).
9. To Jesus alone belongs the title *“Lord.”* *“You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am”* (John 13:13).
10. Therefore, Jesus the Messiah is the only way to God. *“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me’”* (John 14:6).

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

1. Imitation is the foundation of discipleship, the surest and quickest method of training.
1 Cor. 4:16, *“Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me.”*
2. The Corinthians could imitate Paul, for he was imitating Jesus Christ.
1 Cor. 11:1, *“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.”* Here, the imitation has to do with self-sacrifice for the cause of the ministry (1 Cor. 10:22–33).

3. As the believer imitates Christ, he reflects the character of the invisible God.
Eph. 5:1, *“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.”* In the context here, the imitation specifically relates to God’s love expressed in forgiveness (Eph. 4:32; 5:2).
4. Paul illustrates the fact that the minister of God’s Word is to be an example to those he teaches.
1 Pet. 5:2–3, *“Shepherd the flock of God ... not ... lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”*
5. To become an **example**, you first must be an **imitator**.
1 Thess. 1:6–7, *“You also became **imitators** of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an **example** to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.”*
6. Imitation is the primary teaching method of Jesus Christ.
1 Pet. 2:21, *“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.”*

7. The call *“Follow Me”* was used by ancient rabbis to call their disciples to a life of learning by imitation, **Mat. 4:19; John 21:19, 22.**
8. **Mark 3:14** tells us that, *“He appointed twelve, so that they might be with Him ...”*—the emphasis being on association.
9. According to **Mat. 10:24–25 and Luke 6:40**, the principle of imitation is conformity, *“A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.”*
10. This principle was fulfilled when the training of the disciples was finally completed. **Acts 4:13**, *“Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.”*
11. Therefore, the quest of the pastor-teacher must be to imitate Christ, and to be imitated in the faith. **Heb. 13:7**, *“Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.”*

A LIFE OF SPIRITUAL POWER

- 1. A life of power is the birthright of the believer in Jesus Christ.**
Dan. 11:32b–33, *“But the people who know their God will display strength and take action. Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many ...”*
- 2. Spiritual power is developed by training in obedience to God’s Spirit and Word.**
2 Tim. 1:7, *“For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.”*
Heb. 4:12, *“For the word of God is living and active [powerful, NKJV] and sharper than any two-edged sword ...”*
- 3. This power is displayed in effective proclamation of Jesus Christ to the world.**
Rom. 1:14–17, *“I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes ... For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, ‘BUT THE RIGHTEOUS [just] man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.’”*

Col. 1:28–29, *“We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.”*

4. **We develop power by trusting God when we are weak.**

2 Cor. 12:9, *“And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”*

Heb. 11:34, *“... from weakness [they] were made strong ...”*

5. **The trend of religion in the last days is profession without power.**

2 Tim. 3:1–5, *“But realize this, that in the last days difficult [perilous, NKJV] times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money ... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power ...”*

6. **The power of Christ is resurrection power, received by faith.**

1 Tim. 3:16, *“By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness; He who was*

revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”

Phil. 3:7, 10, *“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ ... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings ...”*

MAN’S BARRIER WITH GOD

1. Our sin

Rom. 5:12, *“Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”*

Rom. 3:23, *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

2. Sin’s penalty

Rom. 6:23, *“For the wages of sin is death [eternal], but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

1 Cor. 15:22, *“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”*

3. God’s character

Rom. 3:10, *“... THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE.”*

Rom. 10:3, *“For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.”*

THE BARRIER REMOVED

1. **Jesus redeemed, justified us.**

Rom. 3:24, *“Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”*

Rom. 5:1, *“Therefore, having been justified by faith [in Jesus], we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ...”*

2. **Jesus paid our penalty.**

Gal. 3:13, *“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us ...”*

1 Cor. 15:3, *“... Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”*

3. **Jesus became our righteousness.**

2 Cor. 5:21, *“He [God] made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

Eph. 2:13–14, *“But now in Christ Jesus you ... have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace ... [who] broke down the barrier ...”*

THE OVERCOMER

Rev. 3:21, *“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”*

Jesus is victorious in overcoming every trial we may ever face.

John 16:33, *“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world.”*

Rev. 5:5, *“And one of the elders said to me, ‘Stop weeping; behold the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.’”*

We enter into His victory by trusting, believing in Him.

1 John 5:4–5, *“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”*

John 1:12, *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”*

In the battle of light versus darkness, we overcome evil with good.

Rom. 12:21, *“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

2 Pet. 2:19b, *“For by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.”*

Our victory over Satan and the world is in three stages.

Rev. 12:11, *“And they overcame him [Satan] because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.”*

1. **First, there must be salvation.** This was provided by the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross in our place. Because He bore our sins, we may receive His righteousness in simple faith (*cf.*, 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 4:3, 23–24).
2. **Next, there must be spiritual growth in His Word.** The *“word of their testimony”* means the word to which they testify. The power of the Word of God is not realized until it is received by faith into our life (*cf.*, Heb. 4:2, 12; Mat. 4:4; Psalm 119:105).
3. **Finally, there must be the sacrifice of self even unto death.** Jesus’ demand for discipleship was simple, *“And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me”* (Mat. 10:38) and *“If anyone*

wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Mat. 16:24). The application of this by the Apostle Paul was, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).

The victory that begins at salvation will end in Heaven.

Rev. 21:7, “He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.”

THE POWER OF DECISION MAKING

Heb. 11:24–26, “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.”

1 Kings 18:21, “How long will you hesitate between two opinions?”

Five Steps of Success or Failure

1. **Attitude**, cf., James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5. There are only two dominant attitudes: arrogance (self-centered) or humility (Christ-centered).
2. **Priorities**, cf. Mat. 6:33; 2 Tim. 2:1–5. This is our value system. Our priorities are either

eternal or they are temporal. Jesus said, “*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*” (Luke 12:34).

3. **Decisions**, *cf.* Josh. 24:15; Phil. 3:7–14. We all have to make decisions. Our choices will be either spiritual or carnal, sacrificial or selfish (*cf.*, Rom. 8:5–11).
4. **Actions**, *cf.*, Mat. 12:33; James 2:1–12. Out of our decisions come our actions. The deeds that we do reveal the secrets of our heart. Either our deeds are right or they are wrong.
5. **Results**, *cf.*, Gen. 4:7; Gal. 6:7–8. The results of our actions will bring either blessing or cursing. We cannot change a life of cursing unless we go back to our attitude toward God.

Factors That Determine our Destiny

1. **Decision.** Every decision we make will later play a part in making us. We are the product, not of our environment, but of our decisions. It is not only in choosing, but in rejecting the evil that our life is blessed.
2. **Tendency.** Often, when we decide in a certain way, we develop a trend, or tendency, in our life. We tend to follow familiar paths, things we have done before.
3. **Habit.** Our tendencies form into habits. We can develop good or bad habits, and we can break them as well. Habits result from

- making decisions in the same way over and over until it is normal and natural to continue.
4. **Character.** A person's character is the result of habits they have formed over a period of time. It is much easier to change a habit than one's character. The easiest of all is to not make decisions that lead to the habits that are difficult to break.
 5. **Destiny.** The character we build has much to do with our destiny—both in time and eternity. That disciplined character will bring the believer blessing in eternity is clear from 2 Pet. 1:5–11. Failure to build the character of Christ into our lives will also have eternal results (1 Cor. 3:10–15).

PRIORITIES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

1. The **First Person:** Jesus Christ is the ultimate priority.
Col. 1:16–18, *“For by Him all things were created ... He is before all things ... so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.”*
2. The **First Possession:** The kingdom of God—the greatest gift
Mat. 6:33, *“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*

3. The **First Offering**: The giving of one's self
2 Cor. 8:5, *“And this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.”*

4. The **First Denial**: The denial of self
Luke 9:23, *“If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”*
The worst education that teaches self-denial is infinitely superior to any education which teaches all else but that.

5. The **First Discipline**: The discipline of prayer
1 Tim. 2:1–4, *“First of all [priority], then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of ... God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”*

6. The **First Commandment**: To love God supremely
Mat. 22:37–38, *“And He [Jesus] said to him, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ This is the great and foremost commandment.”*

7. **The First Excuse:** Too busy to have time for God
Mat. 8:21–22, *“Another of the disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father,’ But Jesus said to him, ‘Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead.’”*

Applications:

1. Is the Lord Jesus Christ first in my life, my decisions?
2. Do I place highest value on God’s kingdom, or my desires?
3. Am I self-disciplined and self-denying because of priorities?
4. What comes first, my duty or my excuses?

THE ROYAL HONOR CODE

As members of the Royal Family of God, we are called to live by a royal code of conduct, a code that sets a divine standard. We will never be able to attain this standard unless we choose to put grace to work every day of our lives.

1. **The Law of Life**
“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you

free from the law of sin and of death” (Rom. 8:1–2).

As believers, we have been set free from death, from sin, and from Satan (John 5:24). In Christ, we have been endowed with everything we need to live an abundant life (John 10:10; Eph. 1:3). As we learn to walk according to the Spirit and to conduct ourselves as those who are alive to God (Rom. 6:11–13; 8:1–4), we will begin to experience that abundance.

2. **The Law of Liberty**

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery” (Gal. 5:1).

Jesus Christ wants us to enjoy the freedom He died for. He loves for us to make decisions, and He loves for us to be different from each other. Anything the Bible does not forbid is spiritually neutral and is, therefore, an area in which we individually must choose what we will and will not do.

We also need to remember that God intends for each of us to be free, that each of us will answer directly to God for how we use our freedom, and that it is never acceptable to try to force another believer to make the choices

we think he should make or to judge and malign him for the choices he has made. The judgmental believer is always a weak believer. Our freedom in Christ can never be taken from us, but it can be forfeited.

3. **The Law of Love**

“Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves” (Rom. 15:1).

The law of love is higher than the law of liberty. Liberty justifiably says, “I have the right to do anything that is not forbidden in the Word.” But love says, “Though I may do anything, there are certain allowable things I will not do if they will cause others to stumble.” The law of love recognizes that while we have freedom, we are our brother’s keeper (1 Corinthians 8). So, for the sake of weak believers, we restrain certain activities that are good and proper in themselves, lest we become a stumbling block. God will not force us to live by the law of love, and He does not look with pleasure on our trying to force anyone else to live by it.

4. **The Law of Self-Denial**

“All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all

things edify. Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor ... just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved” (1 Cor. 10:23–24, 33).

Under the law of self-denial, we restrict ourselves for the sake of unbelievers. We remember that we are ambassadors of Christ and that how we live may be a more forceful declaration of the Gospel than what we say (2 Cor. 3:2–3). We are willing to deny ourselves for the sake of being an effective witness in the place where God has put us. Every believer’s sphere of influence is different, therefore every believer’s self-imposed restrictions will be different. All of us have to decide for ourselves what we will do and will not do for the sake of manifesting Christ to our world.

5. The Law of Supreme Sacrifice

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

This is a law that only heroes live by. The law of supreme sacrifice best illustrates the passion of the love of Jesus Christ. He who is

the center of the universe considered others as more important than Himself and humbled Himself to the point of death on a cross (Phil. 2:3–8) so that we might have life. He is the personification of self-sacrifice and self-denial.

To live under the law of supreme sacrifice means that we are willing to become selfless, to consider the plan of God as more important than ourselves, to consider the weak believer and the unbeliever as more important than ourselves. Those who give up everything to enter into the love of Christ find that all they sacrifice is no sacrifice at all compared to the joy of the fellowship of His sufferings.

SEVEN FIGURES OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Seven New Testament figures of Christ and the Church illustrate the intimacy of the relationship between Christ and believers in the Church Age. Each picture reinforces the truth that fellowship with Jesus Christ is the only thing that can satisfy our souls. Each picture also points to the organic unity of the Church and reinforces the truth that all Church-Age believers are irrevocably joined to one another.

1. **The Shepherd and the sheep** picture the utter helplessness of all believers and the extent of the Lord's tender love (John 10:2–16; 21:15–17). As the Good Shepherd, the crucified Lord laid down His life for the sheep (John 10:11). As the Great Shepherd, the resurrected Lord sustains and supplies believers with every good thing in the plan of God (Heb. 13:20–21). As the Chief Shepherd, the returning Lord is the source of eternal blessings and eternal reward for those who follow Him (1 Pet. 5:4).
2. **The Vine and the branches** picture the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ and the production in our lives that comes from communion with Him (John 15:1–7). Jesus Christ is fruitful through the branches that draw their life from Him. All life flows through the vine, the branch can do nothing on its own. Christian fruitfulness has to do with abiding, with faith, with receiving—never with working from human strength. Only in Christ can we bear fruit.
3. **The Chief Cornerstone and the stones of the building** picture the invisible, spiritual temple being built by Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:5–9). Israel **had** a temple, the Church **is** a temple, *“a dwelling of God in the Spirit”*

(Eph. 2:22). The cornerstone aligns and ties together the entire building. Believers are related to each other as stones, built on one foundation (1 Cor. 3:11). It takes many stones to make a building, and all are dependent on each other (Mat. 16:18).

4. **The High Priest and priests of the temple** picture the relationship of service shared by Christ with believers (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:5–6). Jesus Christ is our High Priest (Hebrews 5–8). He is a Priest forever (Psalm 110:4). Because He is also the King, we are members of a royal priesthood. As priests, we are to offer worship and sacrifices of praise, of intercession, and of ourselves to God (Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15).
5. **The Head and the Body** is the most often used description of Christ and the Church. It pictures the unity of believers and the authority of Christ (Rom. 12:5). In the human body, each member has a specific and individual function. Each member, though different, is necessary. The Church is one Body—the Body of Christ. Every believer is placed “*in Christ*” at the moment of salvation (1 Cor. 12:13), and all are exhorted to live as one (Ephesians 4).

6. **The last Adam and the new creation** picture the risen Christ as the Head of a new race—a new species of creation (1 Cor. 15:45–50). The first Adam brought sin and death; the last Adam brought righteousness and life. By spiritual birth, believers have become part of the new creation and will be given bodies like the resurrection body of Christ (Gal. 5:17; John 14:2–3; 1 Cor. 15:20–57; Rom. 8:23).
7. **The Bridegroom and the bride** is perhaps the most intimate description of the relationship between Christ and His Church (Eph. 5:22–23). It pictures not only Christ’s authority over and protection of His Church, but also the tenderness, the love, the unity, and the intimacy that will exist between Christ and the Church forever (2 Tim. 2:12; Eph. 1:20–21; Rom. 8:17).

SEVEN STEPS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

2 Peter 1:5–7

2 Pet. 3:18, *“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Principle: By *“applying all diligence”* (2 Pet. 1:5, “spiritual zeal”), we convert the grace provisions of 2 Pet. 1:1–4 into the character of Jesus Christ.

1. **On the foundation of our faith, we must build virtue (excellence).** The word for “*excellence*” used in 2 Pet. 1:5 and 3 is *arete*, meaning “the display of divine might, power.” This power is ours through the control of the Holy Spirit (*cf.* Eph. 3:7, 20; 5:18).
2. **Only in this virtue can we add true biblical knowledge of Christ.** The supply of knowledge comes from the study of God’s Word enabled by His Spirit (*cf.*, Eph. 1:15–20; 3:14–21; 2 Tim. 2:15).
3. **True knowledge brings self-control for obedience.** Self-control here is *enkratos*, meaning “inner authority, control.” The Spirit of God sets up, through the Word of God, a “command post” in the soul (*cf.*, 2 Cor. 10:3–6; 1 Pet. 1:22–23; 3:15).
4. **From this inner authority comes the power to endure.** This perseverance is persistent growth in the face of opposition from the world (*cf.*, Mat. 5:10–12; 2 Tim. 3:10–13; Dan. 11:32–35; Heb. 10:35–36).
5. **Persistent growth leads to Christ-likeness, conformity to Him.** “*Godliness*” is defined in 1 Tim. 3:16 as “[Christ] *manifested in the*

flesh” (cf., Paul’s desire in Phil. 3:7–14; Col. 1:24–29).

6. **Conformity to Christ results in love for His brethren.** This “*brotherly kindness*” is love for the family of God. Consider John 13:34–35; 1 Thess. 4:9–10; 1 Pet. 1:22–23; 2 Pet. 1:7.
7. **Love for God’s people generates love for all, for Christ died for all.** This is not human emotion, but the unconditional love of God, without preference or respect for appearances. Consider the qualities outlined in 1 Cor. 13:4–8. These are produced only under the Spirit’s control (Gal. 5:22–23)

Application: These steps lead to the assurance of a useful, productive life of spiritual focus, stability, and eternal reward (see 2 Pet. 1:8–11).

SEVEN STEPS OF SPIRITUAL RECOVERY

James 4:6–10

Principle: “*But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it [the Scripture] says, ‘GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE’*” (James 4:6).

1. **The first step is spiritual submission to God.** The word for “submission” in verse 10 (“*humble*”) means “to take your rightful place in rank.” This is a total, unconditional

release of any right or claim to your life. It is “putting Jesus Christ on the throne of your life” (1 Pet. 3:15).

2. **In this submission, we can now resist the devil.** This resistance is in the power of faith, in the filling of the Spirit. Satan will try to hinder our recovery. We must lay aside “entangling sins” (Heb. 12:1), “*come to [our] senses*” (Luke 15:17), and “*escape ... the snare of the devil,*” which captivates us (2 Tim. 2:26).
3. **We now can begin the journey home and draw near to God.** Just as the father in the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32), God is awaiting our return. Once we start home, He will meet and welcome us. This is the point where we begin applying the steps of 2 Pet. 1:5–7.
4. **Recovery demands correction of habits and action.** The hands here speak of what we do. “*Cleanse*” is “to wash.” This requires confession of deeds done (1 John 1:9) and washing, our action in applying the Word (Eph. 5:26).
5. **There must also be the purification of double-minded attitudes.** This “double-mindedness” (James 1:8), is a wavering

between God's will and our own will. "*Your will*" (Mat. 26:39) must take precedence over "my will" (James 4:13–15; Isa. 14:12–15). This decision must take place for true revival. See 1 Kings 18:21.

6. **Only by true repentance will one endure the long journey home.** The path of spiritual recovery is often painful. We must face all the bad decisions made in departing from the will of God. The key phrase is "be turned," the root idea of repentance. What provided "*laughter*" on the way down, now becomes a cause of "mourning and weeping" as we return to God. Compare Jesus' words, Mat. 5:4, 8.
7. **When we are back in His presence, humility will carry us to blessing.** The "*presence of the LORD*" is the completion of our recovery. Jonah fled "*from the presence of the LORD*" (Jonah 1:3), that is, the plan of God for us as far as location, function, and attitude. As with the prodigal, we are now fully equipped to serve effectively and enjoy fellowship with the Father, for His plan for us never changes (Rom. 11:29).

Application: Whereas James 4:10 speaks to the believer after recovery, 1 Pet. 5:6 gives the same

instruction, but to one “*under the mighty hand of God.*” Compare this to David in Psalm 38:1–2.

SEVEN STEPS OF SPIRITUAL RETREAT

Ephesians 4:17–19

Heb. 10:38–39, “*BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK [retreats], MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.*”

1. **The first step of retreat is when the believer lives just like an unbeliever.** This is the “walk” of carnality (1 Cor. 3:1–3) and worldliness (James 4:1–4).
2. **This results in a vacuum—a void in the mind.** The mind of the believer is designed for the Word of God (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23–24). The believer now attempts to fill the void with things of this world. Note the picture in Jer. 2:13. Bible study ceases here.
3. **Spiritual vacuum produces a blackout in the soul.** The “understanding darkened” (Eph. 4:18) is the blackout of light from past Bible learning. Once we reject the necessity of Bible study in our life, we begin to dismantle edification already in the soul.

4. **We enter a life alienated from God and His grace.** The “abundant life” is rejected for temporal life. We have volitionally isolated ourselves spiritually and alienated ourselves from God’s will. Instead of being “set apart” from the world, we are separated from God (see Gal. 5:1–7).
5. **The heart now becomes hardened, the soul scarred.** The process called “*hardness of ... heart*” (Eph 4:18; Heb. 3:7, 15) is the destructive process in the soul resulting from rejecting God or His Word. First, it is volitional, then “God hardens” the heart as judgment (Exo. 4:21; 7:3; Rom. 1:18–28).
6. **The rebel now betrays himself to self-gratification, worldliness.** This is the “frantic search for happiness” seen in James 4:1–4 and Ezekiel 16. The word for “deliver over” (Eph. 4:19) is the same word used of Judas’ betrayal of the Lord. The believer’s sin now becomes idolatry and spiritual adultery. The “*friend of the world*” has made himself “*an enemy of God*” (James 4:4; Phil. 3:18).
7. **The final stage in total self-defilement is implacable lust.** “Every kind of impurity” means all limits and boundaries have been

passed (*cf.*, Rom. 1:28–32). “*Greediness*” is a word meaning “insatiable and implacable, unable to be satisfied.” The soul has become a “*broken cistern*” (Jer. 2:13).

Principle: The only hope is recovery according to the steps of James 4:6–10, followed by persistent growth outlined in 2 Pet. 1:5–7. Otherwise, the end is the “sin unto death” (see 1 John 5:16; Acts 5:1–11). This believer has not lost his salvation, he is simply an “unfruitful branch” (John 15:2).

THE SIMPLICITY OF SALVATION

The greatest stumbling block to men entering eternal life is the simplicity of salvation. Men want to **do** something to earn salvation, but God says it is a gift because Jesus Christ paid the price on the cross. He bought eternal life for every man.

However, the gift must be received by faith. The Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas, “*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*” To which they answered, “*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved*” (Acts 16:30–31).

Salvation’s Simplicity

1. **As simple as coming when called.** “*Come to Me all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest*” (Mat. 11:28).

2. **As simple as drinking water.** *“But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life”* (John 4:14).
“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water’” (John 7:37b–38).
3. **As simple as eating bread.** *“I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst ... I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh”* (John 6:35, 51).
4. **As simple as entering a door.** *“I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved”* (John 10:9a).
5. **As simple as receiving a gift.** *“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Rom. 6:23).
6. **As simple as calling for help.** *“For WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED”* (Rom. 10:13).

7. **As simple as the trust of a child.** *“And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, ‘Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven’”* (Mat. 18:2–3).
8. **As simple as believing in Jesus Christ.** *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes [in Me] has eternal life”* (John 6:47).
“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25–26).

SMALL THINGS

*Shamgar had an ox goad
David had a sling
Dorcas had a needle
Rahab had some string
Mary had some ointment
Moses had a rod
What small things do you have
That you'll dedicate to God?*

What can God use to accomplish His purpose? Anything we will give Him, but especially, He delights in using small things.

A shepherd's rod—Exo. 4:3
The jawbone of an ass—Judges 15:15
Five smooth stones—1 Sam. 17:40
A handful of meal—1 Kings 17:12
A little jar of oil—2 Kings 4:2
A small cloud—1 Kings 18:44
A little man—Zech. 4:10
A mustard seed—Mat. 13:32
Five loaves and two fishes—John 6:9

SURE THINGS

1. *“The testimony [Word] of the LORD is sure”* (Psalm 19:7; 111:7; 2 Pet. 1:19).
2. The judgment of God is sure (Psalm 58:11).
3. The coming of the Lord is sure (Joel 2:1).
4. *“Be sure your sin will find you out”* (Num. 32:23).
5. *“You will surely die”* (Gen. 2:17; Heb. 9:27).
6. Faith in Jesus Christ is the only sure hope for eternity (Heb. 6:19–20).
7. The blessing of God is sure to the faithful (Psalm 23:6).

Things Which Must Be

1. Because of sin, you must surely die (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12).
2. Therefore, *“we must all appear before the judgment seat”* (2 Cor. 5:10).

3. Because of this, we “*must be born again*” (John 3:7).
4. Therefore, “*the gospel must ... be preached*” (Mark 13:10).
5. The one “*who comes to God must believe*” (Heb. 11:6).
6. These things being true, we must pay much closer attention to the things which we have heard (Heb. 2:1).

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Gift of the Spirit and Spiritual Gifts

The phrase “*the gift of the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 2:18) has to do with the indwelling of the Spirit at salvation (Rom. 8:9). By contrast, the “*gifts of the Holy Spirit*” refers to the unique enabling by the Spirit of God to the individual believer for specific service (1 Cor. 12:7). It is important to understand that no one can possess a spiritual gift until first they receive the gift of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, which includes the gift of the Spirit indwelling the believer.

The Unifying Power of Spiritual Gifts

All spiritual gifts are sovereignly bestowed by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7, 11, 18). All gifts are under the direction of one Lord—Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:5). The effects or results are given by one

God—the Heavenly Father (1 Cor. 12:6). Because the family of God is the Body of Christ on this Earth, spiritual gifts empower each member to play the part God designed for them. All gifts work by the same power—love (1 Cor. 13:1–3); all are designed to edify the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:12); and all are to glorify Jesus Christ.

The Definition of Spiritual Gifts.

1. Twenty gifts are mentioned (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4; 1 Pet. 4:11). Some of these gifts were temporary and ceased with the early Church (1 Cor. 13:8–10; Heb. 2:1–4).
2. Each believer receives a spiritual gift at salvation to enable him in his own area of service (1 Cor. 12:7, 11; Eph. 4:7–16).
3. Though the believer may fail to utilize his gift, he cannot lose the possession of that gift (Rom. 11:29).
4. The spiritual gift is identified by growth (Eph. 4:12), developed by spirituality and preparation (2 Tim. 1:6), and is exercised out of love for Christ and His Body (1 Cor. 13:1–3; Eph. 4:15–16).
5. Spiritual gifts must be distinguished from personal talents. Where talents are natural, gifts are supernatural.

6. It is important for the believer to seek to identify and function in his gift, for it defines the plan of God for his life and is the basis by which he will be judged for reward (1 Cor. 3:10–15; 9:17).
7. Faithful exercise of our spiritual gift makes our life a *“living sacrifice”* (Rom. 12:1–2), displaying the measure of God’s grace to us (Eph. 4:7–8), and the measure of our faith in Christ (Rom. 12:3–8).

SPIRITUAL REST

1. **True rest of soul and spirit is found only in God’s presence.**
Exo. 33:14, *“And He said, ‘My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.’”*
2. **Rest cannot be found in escape from your troubles.**
Psalms 55:6, *“I said, ‘Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest.’”*
3. **Spiritual rest is impossible for those who will not believe.**
Isa. 30:15, *“For thus the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said, ‘In repentance and rest you will be saved, in quietness and trust is your strength,’ But you were not willing.”*

4. **Rest for the soul is found when we believe God.**

Heb. 4:1, 3a, *“Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it ... for we who have believed enter that rest ...”*

5. **Jesus Christ invites the world to find rest in Him.**

Mat. 11:28–29, *“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.”*

6. **The rest God gives is eternal in nature.**

Rev. 14:12–13, *“Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, ‘Write, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!”’ ‘Yes.’ says the Spirit, ‘so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.’”*

7. **For those who reject Christ, there is eternal unrest of soul.**

Rev. 14:11, *“And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night ...”*

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS AND FOLLOW HIM

Mat. 16:24, “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’”

The Four Points of the Cross

1. **Redemption**

As we face the cross, the left arm points to the past. Redemption means “to purchase from slavery for a price.” On the cross, Jesus paid for our sins (2 Cor. 5:21), provided the gift of salvation (Rom. 3:21–24), and forgiveness of all our sins (Col. 1:14).

2. **Propitiation**

This word means “satisfaction” and refers to God’s righteous penalty for sin being satisfied. God is satisfied with Christ’s death in our place (Rom. 3:25), and this sacrifice is sufficient for the whole world (1 John 2:2, 1 John 4:10). This is the arm of the cross pointing upward to God.

3. **Reconciliation**

Here we have the right arm of the cross pointing forward. To be reconciled means “restored to a right relationship.” When we trust Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, we are “*reconciled*” to God (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor.

5:20). By faith, we can move forward in a right relationship to God.

4. **Justification**

Here, we have a word from the ancient legal system meaning “declared righteous.” This is not the same as being “declared innocent.” We all have sinned (Rom. 3:23), and we all deserve the penalty (Rom. 6:23). But we are “declared righteous” on the basis of someone else (Jesus) paying the debt in our place (2 Cor. 5:21). He willingly took our sin upon Himself so that we, by faith in Him, can share His righteousness (Rom. 3:22; Phil. 3:9).

Taking Up the Cross (Heb. 10:19–25)

The author speaks in Heb. 10:19–21 to the believer in Jesus Christ who is the possessor of three great spiritual realities. First, “*we have confidence to enter the holy place.*” We can “*draw near with confidence to the throne of grace*” (Heb. 4:16) in prayer. We can do this because, secondly, we have “*a new and living way,*” which the Lord Jesus inaugurated by His death and resurrection. Finally, we have “*a great [high] priest,*” and this is Jesus our Savior. It is on the basis of these three realities that we are enabled to “take up our cross.”

1. **Priesthood** (Heb. 10:22)
The words “*draw near*” are an idiom for priestly service. The priest was first washed in a bath, then daily sprinkled clean for service (Exo. 30:19–20; Lev. 16:4, 24; *cf.*, John 13:10; 1 John 1:9). We are washed in salvation, and cleansed by daily confession to God. In our service, we fulfill the upward arm of the cross in serving as spiritual priests of God (1 Pet. 2:5, 9; *cf.*, Rom. 12:1–2; Heb. 13:15–17).
2. **Ambassadorship** (Heb. 10:23)
Every believer is also an ambassador of Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:18–20). As such, we are a witness to the world of His power to save from sin and death (Acts 1:8; 2:32). By offering salvation to men, we fulfill the left, or redemption, side of the cross.
3. **Ministry** (Heb. 10:24)
Every believer has a spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:4–7) and is to use it to edify other believers (Eph. 4:12–16). As a minister to others, we fulfill the right arm, or the reconciliation, side of the cross.
4. **Discipleship** (Heb. 10:25)
Here we fulfill the downward side of the cross—our discipleship. As one justified by

God, we are to live by faith (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:30). The local church is our classroom for discipleship training.

THE WAY OF SALVATION

1. The Need of Mankind

The Bible teaches that all men are born in Adam and under the condemnation of his sin (Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:22). Because all men are born with a sin nature (Psalm 51:5), all have sinned against God (Rom. 3:10, 23), and the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). The penalty of Adam's sin is first spiritual death (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12), followed by physical death. Because we are born in Adam, we are born under condemnation from God.

2. The Provision of God's Love

As Creator, God loves His creation. However, His love cannot overrule His righteousness and justice (Psalm 89:14). Therefore, God (in love) sent His Son Jesus Christ to take our place and to be judged on the cross, to remove the penalty for our sins (John 3:16; Eph. 2:4–8; Rom. 5:8). On the cross, Jesus became our substitute, bore our penalty, and removed our condemnation (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:4–6). When the penalty for our sins was paid, He cried out,

“It is finished!” (John 19:30). He had satisfied God’s righteousness in His life (Mat. 5:17) and His justice in His death (Rom. 8:33–35).

3. **The Gift Must be Received**

The Bible clearly stresses that salvation cannot be earned or worked for (Rom. 4:4–5; 11:6; Titus 3:5). Eternal life is a gift of God to all who will receive it (John 10:28–29; Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8–9). The only way this gift can be received is by faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior of men (Acts 16:31; John 1:12; 3:16–19, 36; Rom. 4:3, 23–24; 5:1). Any attempt to work for or earn salvation is incompatible with God’s gracious gift and a denial of the all-sufficiency of the work of Christ on the cross.

4. **The Assurance of Eternal Security**

The work of salvation is a “once-for-all” gift. Jesus said that once we are cleansed before God, we need not repeat it (John 13:10). We are kept by His power (1 Pet. 1:5), not our own, and nothing can snatch us from Him (John 10:28–29) nor sever us from His love (Rom. 8:31–39). Our assurance of spending eternity in Heaven is an absolute certainty based on the Word of God (1 John 5:10–13). We are, in fact, already seated with Christ in Heaven in God’s eyes (Col. 3:1–4).

5. **The New Creature in Christ**

At the moment of salvation, we become a “*new creature*” in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

There are five divine works that achieve this: The baptism of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), regeneration (Titus 3:5), the indwelling of the Spirit (Rom. 8:9), spiritual gifting (1 Cor. 12:7), and the sealing ministry of God’s Spirit (Eph. 1:13–14; 4:30).

THE WAY TO BE SALT AND LIGHT

The Blessing of Salvation (Mat. 5:3)

“*Blessed are the poor in spirit ...*” No man comes to Christ for salvation and eternal life until he recognizes his own spiritually bankrupt condition.

“*... for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*” Those who come to Christ in all their weakness, sinfulness, guilt, and corruption take possession of the kingdom of Heaven by faith alone!

The Blessing of Suffering (Mat. 5:4)

“*Blessed are those who mourn ...*” Job said that “*man is born for trouble*” (Job 5:7). For those who are Christ’s, each pain and grief reveals more of His presence and power.

“*... for they shall be comforted.*” Endure patiently your sufferings; let them teach you of the

“Man of sorrows ... acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53:3).

The Blessing of Humility (Mat. 5:5)

“Blessed are the gentle ...” This word in the original language means “humility, meekness.” The Greeks spoke of a well-trained war horse as “meek.” Meekness is not weakness!

“... for they shall inherit the earth.” The portion of your inheritance will be in proportion to your submission to the Spirit of God in this life.

The Blessing of Spiritual Desire (Mat. 5:6)

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness ...” Craving for the “life of God” cannot be satisfied with the details of this life. The Word of God is their bread and drink daily.

“... for they shall be satisfied.” Who is there of this world’s children that has ever found contentment? Those truly hungry see only the food, not the condition of the plate, and the supply of the “Living Bread” is never exhausted.

The Blessing of Grace in Action (Mat. 5:7)

“Blessed are the merciful ...” Mercy is God’s grace in action. Christ was compelled by mercy to go to the cross on our behalf. Mercy both feels and seeks to remove the suffering of others. It says, “I am my brother’s keeper.”

“... for they shall receive mercy.” Put God’s grace into action toward others, and you will find God will multiply His mercy to you.

The Blessing of Single-Mindedness (Mat. 5:8)

“*Blessed are the pure in heart ...*” This “purity” is the result of a life having one purpose. Paul said, “[this] *one thing I do*” (Phil. 3:13).

“... for they shall see God.” When we are no longer double-minded (James 1:8), the eyes of faith see “*Him who is invisible*” (Heb. 11:27) and “*we see Jesus*” (Heb. 2:9; 12:2).

The Blessing of Witnessing (Mat. 5:9)

“*Blessed are the peacemakers ...*” In the Bible, “peace” speaks of being reconciled to God. “*Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God*” (Rom. 5:1).

“... for they shall be called sons of God.” Nothing so identifies us with the family of God as bringing others into it.

The Blessing of Persecution (Mat. 5:10–12; 2 Tim. 3:12)

“*Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness ...*” What greater evidence that we “*are not of this world*” than the hatred it has for God’s children?

“... for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
Notice that the Beatitudes end as they begin, with the present possession of the kingdom of Heaven.
“Our citizenship is in heaven” (Phil. 3:20).

THE WORK OF CHRIST

Christ’s work on the cross is described by four key words:

1. **Substitution:** Jesus Christ bore the penalty for our sins.
Isa. 53:5, “*He was pierced through for our transgressions ...*”
Rom. 5:8, “... while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
1 Pet. 2:24, “*And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness ...*”
2. **Propitiation:** The death of Christ satisfies completely God’s righteous demands. The wrath of God toward sin is appeased. This is the Godward aspect of Christ’s work on the cross.
1 John 2:2, “*And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.*”
Rom. 3:24b–25, “*Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith.*”

3. **Redemption:** Christ, through His death, purchased and set free by a ransom price those who are enslaved to sin. This is the manward aspect of Christ's work on the cross.

1 Tim. 2:5–6, *“For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all ...”*

Eph. 1:7, *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our transgressions, according to the riches of His grace.”*

4. **Reconciliation:** Christ's death removes the state of hostility between God and man so that peace may be established.

Rom. 5:10–11, *“For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son ...”*

2 Cor. 5:18–20, *“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ ...”*

**May the Lord be your shield
as you stand firm in the fight for truth
and for the souls of men!**



BASIC TRAINING BIBLE MINISTRIES

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