

by Dan Lurette

A silhouette of a person in prayer, with their hands clasped and head bowed. A bright, glowing halo surrounds the person's head. In the background, a bright sunburst or starburst of light emanates from the center, casting a warm, golden glow across the scene. The overall background is a gradient of dark to light orange.

Discipleship

Victorious Living in Christ (Vol. 1)

Discipleship Manual: Victorious Living in Christ (Vol. 1)

by Dan Lirette

Contents:

How to be led by God
How to never be deceived
Ways in which God speaks
Know your enemy
Four truths on the grace of God
Are you in danger of falling away?
How to forgive when it seems impossible to forgive
The judgment of believers
The true grace of God in which you stand
The doctrine of repentance
What is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit?
The filling of the Holy Spirit (an interactive study)
Concluding Statement

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1- How to be led by God

Job 37:2-5 “Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth. He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.”

As Believers, we all want to be led and directed by God; however, I admit that this is often much easier said than done! With so much opposing theology, winds of doctrine and of the myriad voices speaking in our ears what are we to do and how are we to know that the direction we're taking is truly the direction that God would have move in? The Scripture gives us several ways to know the Voice of the Lord, and herein I present but a few basic principles in which we can know beyond knowing that we're truly hearing from God:

1- Prayer: Above all else, our direction from God must be borne in prayer; there can be no shortcuts in this aspect.

Paul the Apostle exhorts the Thessalonian Church to “Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thess 5:17). To pray without ceasing means much much more than bowing our heads for a formal time of seeking the Lord; prayer without ceasing implies a constant communion with the Lord from our waking moment to our lying down. Prayer is where we receive our direction for the day, and it's where the Lord most ministers to us.

Thomas Watson said, concerning prayer, “A godly man is a praying man. As soon as grace is poured in, prayer is poured out. Prayer is the soul's traffic with Heaven; God comes down to us by His Spirit, and we go up to Him by prayer.”

J. H. Jowett said concerning prayer, ““I would rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach.”

Oswald Smith said concerning prayer, ““Oh, how few find time for prayer! There is time for everything else, time to sleep and time to eat, time to read the newspaper and the novel, time to visit friends, time for everything else under the sun, but-no time for prayer, the most important of all things, the one great essential!”

Above all others, Jesus gave us a wonderful parable on prayer:

“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:1-8)

We must, as it were, “trouble God” and pray always, not fainting in this spiritual discipline.

One meeting with God is of more infinite value than ten thousand meetings with man and yet how little praying we do!

Prayer:

- * Draws us near to God
- * Draws God near to us
- * Brings us into the Presence of God
- * Gives us the avenue in which to receive forgiveness and cleaning from sin
- * Gives us the avenue in which to petition God for our needs and for the needs of others

Jesus said in John 10:27, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

Interestingly, in Isaiah 10:27 we read, “And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.”

In John 10:27 we read of the Sheep knowing the Voice of Jesus our Shepherd; in Isaiah 10:27 we read of the Anointing of God to set one free.

We then read in Acts 10:38 “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”

Do you see it?

In the stead of prayer we hear the Voice of the Shepherd and it is the Shepherd who is Anointed to set us free!

Oh that we would pray and seek the face of God!

2- Fasting: In fasting will we find a nearness to God that surpasses all of our fleshly desires.

Fasting, by far a difficult spiritual discipline for the majority of us, is one the most most untapped blessings of God to man today. In fasting we deny our flesh and rather focus on God’s Power in us to overcome our own fleshly desires, even for food.

Fasting says, “Lord, I’m going to deny even my belly in order to come into a closeness with You that I would otherwise not experience if it were not for Your Grace calling and enabling me to enter into this time of fasting.”

William Bramwell said that, “there is too much sleep, too much meat and drink, too little fasting and self-denial, too much taking part in the world ... and too little self-examination and prayer.”

John Piper in Hunger for God says, “‘We hunger for You, O God, to come in power.’ It’s a cry with our body, not just our soul: ‘I really mean it, Lord! This much I hunger for You. I want the manifestation of You Yourself more than I want food.’”

Beloved, fasting is not simply the abstinence of food; it’s an avenue which brings a humbling into our hearts as we read in Psalm 35:13 “But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.”

In humility God will speak to us and fasting brings us into the Humility of Christ.

3- Scriptural Meditation: Reading Scripture is one thing, but seeking God for a “word from the Word” is quite another altogether.

The Word of God is our daily bread, and by it we live. “Give us this day our daily bread.” (Matthew 6:11)

“And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” (Luke 4:4)

To neglect to meditate the Word of God and hide deep in our hearts is sin as we read “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” (Psalm 119:11)

The Lord takes so seriously the hiding of His Word in our hearts that He calls it sin to neglect Him in this area; only by the Word of God in our hearts can we know God, Beloved. Many today have devotional times of reading a chapter a day or such things, yet I submit that such is not enough.

While it's commendable that we read a chapter or more a day it's much more profitable to dissect passages of Scripture in context, looking for key principles in which to apply to our own lives and situations.

Reading is not enough; false prophets and the unconverted read the Bible; we must do more than simply read it... we must become one with it.

Ask God in prayer to give you a "word from the Word" and allow the Spirit of God to speak to you in the passage you're at; in this will your reading become meditating on His Word.

4- Obedience: Obedience to the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit is paramount in our hearing from God and being led and directed by Him.

May of us want to hear from God through His Word or from His Spirit or through circumstances, yet we find it difficult to obey Him when He does speak.

Brethren, obedience is a key element in hearing the Voice of God.

If we're harbouring known and wilful sin in our hearts we mustn't expect to hear from God or be led by Him in the sense that "all is well".

Obedience to the clear teaching of Scripture must be our absolute focus as we walk with God.

I'm not speaking here of perfection but of an honest heart before God that says, "Yes, Lord, I'm going to obey You no matter what the cost."

If we find ourselves failing in certain areas then we go over to points 1 and 2 (Prayer and Fasting) to seek the Lord for His Delivering Power.

We must not expect to hear and be led of God in His mighty Blessings if we're unwilling to obey Him in our hearts.

Our desire must be one of loving obedience to the One who has saved us and washed us in His own Blood; if our desire is not to obey we must deny such desires and choose to obey regardless of how we feel.

1 Samuel 15:22 "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

If we're to hear the Voice of the Lord we must resolve now to obey Him the first time He speaks to us; otherwise we'll no longer hear His Voice and be led of Him until we repent and obey the first word from the Word.

5- The Filling of the Holy Spirit: We must maintain a continual and consistent Filling of the Holy Spirit.

In Ephesians 5:18-25 we read "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

We can glean several truths from this passage of Scripture... and whether one is married or not, the principles apply, namely that the Filling of the Holy Spirit leads one into godly humble submission to others and causes a giving of oneself to the same degree as Christ gave Himself for His Bride, the Church of God.

If we're to hear the Voice of God and be led by God, we must maintain the Filling of the Holy Spirit.

We must realize and acknowledge that true humility, thanksgiving, godly submission and a giving of oneself as Christ gave Himself for the Church is borne of the Holy Spirit; this is why it's absolutely essential that we're Filled with the Holy Spirit on a daily basis.

The first words from our mouths when we wake up should be, "Lord, cleanse me from sin in the Blood of Jesus and Fill me afresh with Your Holy Spirit."

Conclusion:

The Lord greatly desires to speak into our hearts and has provided the means for this, namely that we:

- 1- Pray without ceasing
- 2- Deny our flesh by Fasting
- 3- Hide God's Word in our hearts
- 4- Lovingly obey the Word of God
- 5- Be Filled with the holy Spirit daily

This is certainly not an exhaustive list, but a basic summary on how to be led and directed of God and how to hear and know His Voice.

Are you ready to hear His Voice? Are you ready to put these 5 Biblical Principles into consistent practice?

If so, be ready to be challenged by God's leading and directing in your life; this is going to be a very joyous journey for those who will take up the mandate to stop at nothing to be led of God!

Amen!

2- How to never be deceived

Deception is meant to lead us away from obedience to the truth:

Gal 3:1 “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?”

Deuteronomy 11:16 “Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them.”

Deception comes in various ways:

It comes from Seduction

1 Timothy 4:1 “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”

It comes even from those who claim that Jesus is the Christ

Luke 21:8 “And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.”

It comes from counterfeit miracles

Revelation 13:14 “And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.”

It comes from false prophets

Jeremiah 29:8 “For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.”

It comes from flattery

Romans 16:18 “For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”

How to recognize deception in your life:

You speak evil of spiritual authority:

Acts 23:5 “Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.”

You are self-willed

2 Peter 2:10 “But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.”

You speak behind people's backs what you would never say to their face

Proverbs 16:28 “A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.”

You promote yourself

Revelation 2:20 “Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.”

You run to, rather than from, youthful lust

2 Timothy 2:22 “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

You love money

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

You’re a liar

Revelation 21:8 “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

Your friends have anger problems

Proverbs 22:24 “Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go.”

You’re rebellious and refuse to heed spiritual counsel

1 Samuel 15:23 “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.”

You’re filled with fear

2 Timothy 1:7 “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

How to avoid being deceived:

Pray continually

1 Thessalonians 5:17 “Pray without ceasing.”

Hide God’s Word in your heart

Psalms 119:11 “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

Have no fellowship with evil people

1 Corinthians 15:33 “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.”

Don’t use drugs, including alcohol

Proverbs 20:1 “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”

Flee from sin

Romans 7:11 “For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.”

Reject Pride

Obadiah 1:3 “The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?”

Stay under spiritual authority

Hebrews 13:17 “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

Love truth and never lie

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

3- Ways in which God speaks

Common:

The Word of God: 2 Tim 3:16-17 “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.”

Prayer: Jeremiah 33:3 “Ask me and I will tell you remarkable secrets you do not know about things to come.”

Prophecy: 1 Corinthians 14:24-25 “But if all of you are prophesying, and unbelievers or people who don’t understand these things come into your meeting, they will be convicted of sin and judged by what you say. As they listen, their secret thoughts will be exposed, and they will fall to their knees and worship God, declaring, “God is truly here among you.”

Circumstances: Job 1:6-12 “One day the members of the heavenly court came to present themselves before the Lord, and the Accuser, Satan, came with them. “Where have you come from?” the Lord asked Satan. Satan answered the Lord, “I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that’s going on.” Then the Lord asked Satan, “Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil.” Satan replied to the Lord, “Yes, but Job has good reason to fear God. You have always put a wall of protection around him and his home and his property. You have made him prosper in everything he does. Look how rich he is! But reach out and take away everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face!” “All right, you may test him,” the Lord said to Satan. “Do whatever you want with everything he possesses, but don’t harm him physically.” So Satan left the Lord’s presence.”

Less Common:

Dreams: Matthew 1:18-21 “This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her fiancé, was a good man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

Visions: Acts 10:9-13 “The next day as Cornelius’s messengers were nearing the town, Peter went up on the flat roof to pray. It was about noon, and he was hungry. But while a meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw the sky open, and something like a large sheet was let down by its four corners. In the sheet were all sorts of animals, reptiles, and birds. Then a voice said to him, “Get up, Peter; kill and eat them.”

Rare:

Angelic Visitations: Luke 2:8-14 “That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.” Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”

Audibly: 1 Samuel 3:1-10 “Meanwhile, the boy Samuel served the Lord by assisting Eli. Now in those days messages from the Lord were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon. One night Eli, who was almost blind by now, had gone to bed. The lamp of

God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle[a] near the Ark of God. Suddenly the Lord called out, “Samuel!” “Yes?” Samuel replied. “What is it?” He got up and ran to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?” “I didn’t call you,” Eli replied. “Go back to bed.” So he did. Then the Lord called out again, “Samuel!” Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?” “I didn’t call you, my son,” Eli said. “Go back to bed.” Samuel did not yet know the Lord because he had never had a message from the Lord before. So the Lord called a third time, and once more Samuel got up and went to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?” Then Eli realized it was the Lord who was calling the boy. So he said to Samuel, “Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, ‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went back to bed. And the Lord came and called as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel replied, “Speak, your servant is listening.”

4- Know your enemy

Ephesians 6:12 “because we have not the wrestling with blood and flesh, but with the principalities, with the authorities, with the world-rulers of the darkness of this age, with the spiritual things of the evil in the heavenly places

Principality: <1,,746,arche> "beginning, government, rule," is used of supramundane beings who exercise rule, called "principalities

- This word paints demons as ruling in the invisible realm with Governmental precision. Whatever demons do is fully planned and considered; nothing undertaken by a demonic power is done without careful thought. Demons are masters at planning and executing an attack, first studying their enemy completely before sending out their troops to destroy their enemy. It's imperative that we trust fully in the Mind of Christ to know and battle against the plans of the devil against us.

Authorities: <A-1,Noun,1849,exousia> denotes "authority" (from the impersonal verb *exesti*, "it is lawful"). From the meaning of "leave or permission," or liberty of doing as one pleases, it passed to that of "the ability or strength with which one is endued," then to that of the "power of authority," the right to exercise power or "the power of rule or government," the power of one whose will and commands must be obeyed by others

- This word paints demons as having the power to perform what they plan as a Government. In other words, demonic beings have the “right” to exercise their plans against us if we're not surrendered to God and actively resisting the devil. Demons have permission to rule over humans who walk in the flesh – whether lost or saved – as only those who walk in the Spirit, actively, are no longer under the dominion of the enemy. If we're un-surrendered to God in an area of our life, that's the area that the devil has legal right over. Believers who indulge in unclean thoughts, habits and addictions are opening themselves up to be ruled in that area of their lives by demonic power.

Rulers: <3,,2888,kosmokrator> denotes "a ruler of this world" The context ("not against flesh and blood") shows that not earthly potentates are indicated, but spirit powers, who, under the permissive will of God, and in consequence of human sin, exercise satanic and therefore antagonistic authority over the world in its present condition of spiritual darkness and alienation from God.

- This word paints a picture of demons as being constantly in opposition to humans. For example, when a demon tempts you with what appears to be good and satisfying on the outside, the very core nature of the force bringing the temptation is one of absolute and complete and total hatred for you, desiring that you see temptation as something that will not hurt you in the long run but fulfill you in the short term. Demons and all that they offer will never ever be “for” your pleasure ... but always for your spiritual destruction. Temptation, when consistently embraced, becomes bondage. When consistently resisted, it ceases to be a temptation and victory is realized.

Spiritual: <A-1,Adjective,4152,pneumatikos> "always connotes the ideas of invisibility and of power. In the NT it is used as follows: (a) the angelic hosts, lower than God but higher in the scale of being than man in his natural state, are 'spiritual hosts'

- Demons know that they, being spiritual, can only defeat their human opponents if their human opponents walk in their “natural” - or fleshly – state. When a Believer chooses to walk in the flesh or does not understand how to walk in the Spirit and

doesn't seek to know how, demons have the advantage. It is not only important to walk in the Spirit... it's essential if we're to win our spiritual battles. Because all battles we face are spiritual and only spiritual weapons will defeat spiritual beings. Victory can come only by means of absolute and total surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Otherwise, we'll walk in defeat over and over and over again... all the days of our lives. Learning how to walk in the Spirit will ensure our spiritual victory each and every time... without fail!

Heavenly: <A-2,Adjective,2032,epouranios> "heavenly," what pertains to, or is in, heaven (epi, in the sense of "pertaining to," not here, "above")

- This word paints a picture of demons having their origin – and their power and authority – as being “from heaven” or “from above”. It denotes Governmental power or authority over and above the power and authority of humans. It denotes that demons have an advantage over those who are un-submitted to God. It denotes that demons are not “from” here... but from another place with other weapons that humans do not have or use unless they are saved and walk in the Spirit. The Bible says we're seated with Christ in heavenly places and as a result only those who appropriate by faith that promise from God will overcome all the power of the devil

Conclusion:

There are Believers today who walk free in many areas but in other areas they never seem to get the victory. Due to this, they often fail and fall into sin as a lifestyle pattern. They're up one day and down the next; they shout God's praises on Sunday but on Monday they're back to their filth... and they don't know how to get free. The first step is in realizing that they're under the very influence of demons and their own fleshly desires that they constantly give in to. Once they admit that their “habit” or thought pattern is a vile sin against God, then repentance is on the way! Repentance is acknowledging sin and turning from it in both thought, word and deed. Until smoking is seen as destroying God's temple, one will continue to be under demonic power. Until porn is seen as fornication and adultery, freedom will not come. Whatever the issue, demonic power will only be overcome through honest confession and a turning away from it. Jesus isn't looking to harm those in bondage; He desires to heal those in bondage! That can only come, however, when the individual accepts that anything outside of God's will must absolutely be resisted and rejected once and for all... no matter how much it causes the person to suffer. Freedom Avenue comes after one walks down Suffering Lane! If one doesn't accept this, they will “never” experience true godly deliverance.

6- Are you in danger of falling away?

The Bible says in 1 Timothy 4:1 that "the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons." The most frightening aspect of this End Times Falling Away is that those who are falling away do not know it! Could you be one of them? Could you be part of this group of individuals who has given yourself over - without knowing it - to deceptive spirits and teaching that come from demons? Here are 5 characteristics of those who are part of the End Times Falling Away along with 5 Biblical principles to safeguard yourself from falling away:

1- You are in danger of falling away if you have no consistent prayer life:

Jesus Himself had a prayer life where He would daily get alone with the Father...and yet multitudes of Believers today think it legalistic when they're encouraged to take time alone with the Lord. Without a daily, consistent prayer life where you pour your heart out to the Lord and where He pours His heart out to you, it will not be long before you find yourself in a spiritual wasteland. Apart from prayer, we're powerless. Those who pray never stray and those who stray never pray. Learn to pray.

Safeguard:

Choose a time each day to get alone with God. Start off with 60 minutes of alone time with the Lord. Turn off your phone, lock your doors and sit in the Presence of God. Prayer is not a list of things you want; it's a relationship with the Lord. If you're unsure of "how" to pray, simply say, "Lord, I don't know what to say... so I'm going to sit here for the next 1 hour in silence and allow You to speak to my heart".

2- You are in danger of falling away if you are not in the Word:

Believers today talk much about "hearing from God" yet ask them to quote the Written Word and they can't. They want to "hear God's Voice" yet they won't study God's Voice: The Bible. Yes, they'll read it... but they won't study it and digest it. There's a huge difference between reading something and studying something. The Word of God must be our standard; if we don't know the doctrines of the Word of God, we're sitting ducks for all sorts of false teachings. The reason that false prophets can preach hyper grace, the prosperity gospel, etc, is due to them banking on the fact that you won't rightly divide the Word of God.

Safeguard:

Many Christians today attack doctrine as though it's a bad thing. Don't be one of them! Doctrine is essential if we're to know God, His ways and His works. Take time each and every single day to study doctrine. Purchase some doctrinal materials and get started! Meditate on the Word of God and memorize it's passages. Know the doctrine of the Trinity, the Atonement, Pneumatology, etc. I recommend the New Life Version as it includes, at the end of the Scriptures, fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith in easy-to-understand concepts. It was one of the first Bibles I had as a new believer and the resources contained at the end of the Bible were foundational for me. You can purchase [here](#) on Amazon.ca or [here](#) on Amazon.com

- You are in danger of falling away if you are not in fellowship:

Those who attend church once a week and no more are what I like to call "institutional Christians"; they get their one hour in and then go home. These types of individuals are candidates of great deception. Then you have once solid and sold out Christians who decided that fellowship wasn't for them anymore so they stopped attending church, events, outings, prayer meetings, etc. You're in deception and are showing signs of falling away when you treat Christ's Body with such dishonour. If you cannot be in a church among God's People or if you hop from place to place, you're in danger of falling away.

Safeguard:

Seek the Lord on where to attend church and not where to attend church alone; but also what church is your family... because church is a spiritual family! Once He speaks to your heart, get in and hook up! Stay under submission to the authority of your shepherds and serve the brothers and sisters of that fellowship. If you do so, you'll be under spiritual protection. If you don't engage in the life of the church, you're in self deception.

4- You are in danger of falling away if you harbour unforgiveness:

In Matthew 24:10-12, Jesus says, "And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other. And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people. Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold". If you walk in unforgiveness and refuse to love your brothers and sisters and humble yourself, the Lord Jesus Himself tells you that you've turned away from Him and as a result you're now open to false prophets. All of a sudden you'll begin to promote false prophets and false doctrines, not understanding that you're now walking in self deception. Those who refuse to forgive will find themselves in churches and in ministries and supporting people and teachings that they would never have supported if they had walked in forgiveness. Those who refuse to forgive are the children of false prophets.

Safeguard:

People are going to do things and say things that will give you an opportunity to become offended. When something takes place that gives you the opportunity to walk in division, reject the spirit of offence and unforgiveness immediately! Instead, choose by God's Grace to forgive. Forgiveness is not determined by our emotional state; it's determined by a deliberate decision to trust God - regardless of how I feel! - to forgive the one who's attacked me or hurt me.

5- You are in danger of falling away if you practice sin:

Those who dabble in deliberate sin are in danger of falling away. Many who love to practice sin also love the message of hyper grace as it makes them feel secure in their delusion. One evidence that an individual is self deceived is in statements such as "God knows my struggle" while shacking up and fornicating. While it's true we can have struggles with desires, it's a lie to say that we must give in to these struggles. In other words, if you're practising sin and listening to messengers and messages that tell you that "you'll always sin", you're in danger of falling away. Without holiness - Holy Spirit Empowered Holiness! - you will not see the Lord.

Safeguard:

Stay away from any teaching that tells you that you'll always sin; remove yourself from any teaching and teacher who says you're still righteous while practising sin. Sin is a violation of God's commands and His commandments still stand today. Sin promises what only God can provide! It's still a sin to view pornography; it's still a sin to lie, slander and gossip. Seek God to remove your sinful desires and while you're seeking Him, do not engage in what your desires want you to engage in.

Brothers and sisters, there are many false prophets among us who believe and teach that regardless of how we live our lives, we're "under grace". This is a lie and many who are in danger of falling away have bought into this lie. You're called by God to walk in victory, freedom and in the true grace of God. If you will apply the above 5 safeguards to your life, you will never fall away and never be deceived!

7- How to forgive when it seems impossible to forgive

One of the most difficult things one can do is to ...forgive! It's not an easy task to forgive someone who's offended you and/or hurt you, yet you and I are called by God to forgive others. In fact, the Lord's prayer includes forgiving others (Matthew 6:12). In this prayer, Jesus taught us to pray, "Forgive us.. as we forgive them". In other words, in the measure that we forgive, we'll be forgiven. So how then can we walk in forgiveness? How can we manifest genuine forgiveness when it seems impossible? Here are 7 Biblical principles in forgiving others when it seems like it's not even possible to do so:

1- Ask the Father to forgive you for not forgiving others:

The very first step in forgiving someone who's sinned against you is to seek God's forgiveness for your own sin of not forgiving them. To not immediately forgive someone is a sin and only when we confess and forsake the sin of unforgiveness can we then begin to walk on the path of forgiveness ourselves. Being sinned against is a sin against us; not forgiving our offender is a sin against God and them. Understand that you and I cannot possibly walk in God's blessing and favour if we refuse to forgive those who have sinned against us. In repenting of this - changing our minds and turning from unforgiveness - we will immediately be given grace to forgive.

2- Ask the Father to birth in you an unconditional love for the one who's sinned against you:

The next step in forgiving those you can't in and of yourself forgive is to seek God for a heart of love for the one who has sinned against you. Your own human love isn't sufficient; you must have God's agape love for them. Only the Love of the Father can overcome our hearts of revenge and retaliation and feelings of anger and bitterness. The Holy Spirit will plant within you a heart of unconditional love for those who you once couldn't love! Ask the Lord to love through you and He will; He promises it!

3- Understand that forgiveness is an act of the will...not of your feelings:

We often equate forgiveness with feelings but it's not so! Feelings are not the determining factor of forgiveness; the Cross of Christ is the determining factor! Once we've repented of not forgiving and once we've asked the Lord to birth within us an unconditional love for those who have sinned against us, we can be certain that any and all feelings of anger, bitterness and unforgiveness will begin to diminish as the Holy Spirit removes those feelings and replaces them with genuine godly love. Don't look to your feelings to determine whether you've forgiven someone; look to the Cross of Christ and to the choice you've made in forgiving them. The feelings of unforgiveness will leave; this I assure you! God's heart and His feelings for those who have sinned against you will replace your own feelings.

4- Meditate on the fact that you've been forgiven by God of greater sin against Him than than anyone who's sinned against you:

Understand that no one has sinned against you in word, thought or deed in a greater way than how you've sinned against God in word, thought and deed. Before you came to Christ you were lost and living in sin and it was your sin that crucified the Lamb of God. You have sinned against pure Holiness; no one has sinned against you in such a way as you have sinned against the Lord. When we begin to realize and understand the depth of our own sin against God and the limitless depth of His mercy and forgiveness on our lives, we will then see that it's not only east to forgive others, but a joy!

5- Understand that sinners sin... and sinners (AND SAINTS!) will sin against you. It's a part of this fallen world:

Sinners sin. Part of sinning is sinning against others in word, thought and deed. It's certainly no excuse; yet it's a definite reality that people will sin against you. Not sinners only; but also godly saints may sin against you. You must come to accept this as part of this fallen world. You must be ready to be the target of others' evil agendas and wicked motives. There will always be someone who will say something and/or do something to offend you... and you must be ready for this! You will never be immune from having plenty of opportunities to become offended and bitter at others; this is a part of life and you need to come to terms with knowing that someone, at some point in time, is going to say and/or do something to offend you. Being in a fallen world with fallen people... we're not going to escape being sinned against. You must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit - and not to sin! - when you're sinned against. If your focus is on Christ and how much you've been forgiven of, it will be much less difficult to forgive others.

6- Release the one you're holding a grudge against from anything they've done or spoken against you and do something wonderful for them:

Forgiveness means releasing the offender from any anger, bitterness, etc, that you've held against them. It means releasing them from any thoughts of vengeance and retaliation. Often, retaliation from Christians comes in the form of division and ignoring others. When you've determined by God's Grace to forgive those who have sinned against you, release them from any thoughts of getting even, ignoring them or talking bad about them. In fact, call them up and invite them out to dinner! Of course this is not possible in all cases, depending on what they did to you, but as a general rule of thumb, it's always appropriate to make a tangible effort to do something to bless the one who's sinned against you. In doing so, you show the heart of God.

7- Repent publicly of any slander, gossip or evil speech against the one who's sinned against you:

This principle applies if you've talked bad about someone else to others. If someone has sinned against you and you've retaliated by going around exposing their sin or talking bad about them, you need to make it right openly and publicly. Confess openly that not only did they sin against you... but you sinned against them! It takes great humility to repent openly and admit you've sinned in your speech against someone else; so repent of pride, humble yourself and openly confess that you've slandered/gossiped about them. If possible, have them present when you do this. It's not always possible or wise, but in a general sense, it is. You show the heart of God when you humble yourself and openly confess that you've also sinned and are now repenting.

Brothers and sisters, forgiveness is not easy and it's actually not even possible without the Holy Spirit working in our hearts to accomplish forgiveness. In applying these principles to your life - from your heart! - you'll see God working in and through you to bring you into a life where no matter what is said or done against you, you will have the heart of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to forgive and release those who have sinned against you.

8- The judgment of believers

John the Apostle was a close beloved friend of Jesus (John 13:23). This same John, who sat with Jesus and the other disciples at the Last Supper, said in Revelation 1:10-18 the following: “It was the Lord’s Day, and I was worshiping in the Spirit. Suddenly, I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet blast. It said, “Write in a book everything you see, and send it to the seven churches in the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw seven gold lampstands. And standing in the middle of the lampstands was someone like the Son of Man. He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were like flames of fire. His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves. He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth. And his face was like the sun in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, “Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.”

John, who walked with Christ, now falls down like a dead man at the sight of the Risen Lord... and this was a vision! John was terrified. Praise God that Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid!”. he’s for us... not against us!

It’s to this same Risen Jesus that all Believers will stand to be judged. Their Salvation will not be judged but they will indeed be judged for their works; whether good or evil.

2 Corinthians 5:10 “For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.”

Notice that we must “all” stand before Christ “to be judged”. No Believer will escape this judgment; we’ll all stand to receive what we deserve.

This judgment will be a judgment of works; what we have done while in this body on the earth:

In Romans 2:6 we read, “He will judge everyone according to what they have done.” and then in Revelation 22:12 we read, “Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds.”

Many today live as if there’s no eternity; they live their lives the way that “they” want to; doing what “they” want to do, with no eternal focus in mind. God has given to each Believer giftings, talents and abilities and He desires that we invest what He’s given to us:

Luke 19:12-26 “He said, “A nobleman was called away to a distant empire to be crowned king and then return. Before he left, he called together ten of his servants and divided among them ten pounds of silver, saying, ‘Invest this for me while I am gone.’ But his people hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, ‘We do not want him to be our king.’ “After he was crowned king, he returned and called in the servants to whom he had given the money. He wanted to find out what their profits were. The first servant reported, ‘Master, I invested your money and made ten times the original amount!’ ““Well done!’ the king exclaimed. ‘You are a good servant. You have been faithful with the little I entrusted to you, so you will be governor of ten cities as your reward.’ “The next servant reported, ‘Master, I invested your money and made five times the original amount.’ ““Well done!’ the king said. ‘You will be governor over five cities.’ “But the third servant brought back only the original amount of money and said, ‘Master, I hid your money and kept it safe. I was afraid because you are a hard man to deal with, taking what isn’t yours and harvesting crops you didn’t plant.’ ““You wicked servant!’ the king roared. ‘Your own words condemn you. If you knew that I’m a hard man who takes what isn’t mine and harvests crops I didn’t plant, why didn’t you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.’ “Then, turning to the others standing nearby, the king ordered, ‘Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one who has ten pounds.’ ““But, master,’ they said, ‘he already has ten

pounds!’ “Yes,’ the king replied, ‘and to those who use well what they are given, even more will be given. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away.’”

Will we be like the first, second or third servant? Whether like the first or second, we must not be like the third one, keeping what God has given to us to ourselves! Our goal is to see His Kingdom multiplied and that can only take place if we invest what He’s given to us. The question is, what or who do we invest in?

1- We invest in Righteousness: Hosea 10:12 “I said, ‘Plant the good seeds of righteousness, and you will harvest a crop of love. Plow up the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and shower righteousness upon you.’”

By investing in Righteousness, we’re saying that we’re not only going to abstain from evil but we’re also going to cultivate the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Planting seeds of righteousness means that we pray, fast, meditate on the Word, etc; it’s much more than only saying no to sin! It means we plant; we work at cultivating a lifestyle of holiness.

2- We invest in people: Luke 14:12-14 “Then he turned to his host. “When you put on a luncheon or a banquet,” he said, “don’t invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you.”

Notice that we invest – not only in those around us who we know as friends and family, but we also invest in those who are oppressed and who are known as the outcasts of society. In doing so, we store up for ourselves treasures in Heaven: souls!

It may not always be easy to invest in the lives of others and into righteousness, but if we have a focus on the fact that we’ll one day be judged by the Lord Jesus for all we do while on the earth, we can come into an atmosphere of investing in people with enthusiasm:

1 Corinthians 15:58 “So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.”

We can do this because Hebrews 6:10 says, “For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers, as you still do.”

God sees and writes down each time we bless someone with a cup of cold water in the Name of Jesus! He doesn’t forget our works; He takes note of them!

All Believers will have their works tried by fire; some will have no reward and others will:

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 “Because of God’s grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ. Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person’s work has any value. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.”

How then can we know if our good works are going to be rewarded and not be burned up? After all, unless we’re doing God’s work, we’re not doing work of any value... no matter how good it looks before men:

John 5:19-20 “ So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished.”

Notice that Jesus never said or did a single thing unless His Heavenly Father first called Him to say or do it. He relied completely, totally and absolutely on His Heavenly Father to move in and through Him to touch and transform lives. We must do the same; we must rely on the Holy Spirit to do in and through us the Will of God and this comes through prayer:

John 15:7-8, “ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.”

9- The true grace of God in which you stand

When the word "law" is used among Believers, that old "red flag" comes up, as if the "law" is a thing to be avoided. But is this Biblical? No. Before you tune out, bear with me for a moment.

Christ Jesus Himself said in Matthew 5:17 the following: "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose."

Many today misunderstand why Jesus Christ came. They teach that Jesus came to remove the Law; to destroy it; to take it away. Some water that down a bit and say that while the Law is good and has its purpose, Christians should not have to place any focus on the Law of God. This is error! The Law of God stands for all time and eternity and while some modern Grace Teachers will tell you to avoid any and all preaching of God's Law for Christians, the Bible speaks differently on the issue as we will see.

Let me state that Christians are indeed under the law; however, let us define "what" law we're not under and what law we are under.

We're not under the Law of Moses; that is, we're not obligated to the Old Testament's Law, including the 10 commandments, to be made right with God. In fact, a common misunderstanding among Believers today is that the Hebrews of the Old Testament were themselves "under the Mosaic Law" in the sense of having to obey all of it in order to be made right with, and continue to remain right with, God. The Mosaic Law of God was never designed to make one right with God. The Lord knew that no man could keep His Law and hence He gave it to show exactly that; that no one can perfectly obey His Law. His Law was designed to show us that we're condemned because of our sin; it was not designed to remove our sins, just as we read in Galatians 2:16 which says:

"Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law."

So we see that God's Law was not given in order to be saved. The Old Testament Law wasn't set in place so God could save people as we've just read that God's Law does not save. It was given to show us our sinfulness and our need - not for more laws! - but for a New and Living Covenant.

All of that said, the Law of God still stands; it's a direct reflection of the very nature and character of God Himself. It displays His absolute righteousness and demand for total and complete purity of life, both inwardly and outwardly. There is no such thing as the Law of God being done away with in the sense that His Law is no longer binding on us - whether saved or lost. It is; plain and simple. It's still sinful to steal, to covet our neighbour's wife, to bear false witness, etc. His Law still stands; His Law will stand for all of time and eternity.

Let us look now to Romans 7:7 which says, "Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is sinful? Of course not! In fact, it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, "You must not covet."

Notice that the Law of God was given to us so that we could be shown what sin is. Without God's Law, sin would not be defined; thus we conclude from Romans 7:7 that the Law of God is essential in knowing what sin is. Further, in 1 John 3:4 we read these words, "Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God."

The breaking of God's Law is sin. All sin is against God's Law and therefore the Law of God is necessary and essential in our lives in order to know if/when we sin. The Holy Spirit of God uses the Law of God to convict us of wrongdoing. In doing so, He then calls us to repent and trust in Christ for the power to obey the Law... not break it.

In fact, those who break God's laws will one day stand before God and give an account of their practice of sin. Jesus Christ makes it abundantly clear that those who break God's laws will be cast into eternal Hell:

Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.' But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.'

Notice that Jesus is addressing those who were prophesying and casting out demons. It's clear then, from this passage of Scripture, that Jesus was speaking to those who were living in New Covenant Days as people under the Old Covenant were not going around casting out demons and only prophets were prophesying. Thus, we conclude that He sends to Hell those who believed themselves to be saved yet continued to break God's laws, showing that their professed salvation was counterfeit. These people had giftings and good works yet they were law breakers at the same time and Christ states that He did not know them as His own.

Some among us today would suggest that those who preach against sin and uphold the Law of God as good and holy are "living under the Old Covenant". These precious people are deceived! Those who preach against sin and uphold God's Law as binding today are the very ones who indeed know Grace! No, not all do; some are purely legalistic yet the true and genuine Grace Teacher will speak "very much" on God's Law in a way that exalts the Law to its "proper" position in the life of the Believer. Those who avoid the preaching of God's Law and who rarely make mention of sin or who make light of sin by teaching that one can know God while practising sin are preaching a message nowhere found in the New Covenant. One is not under grace while being shackled up and having sex outside of marriage; one is not under grace while committing adultery or walking in offence and unforgiveness. Grace, as we will see, manifests itself in the fact that it brings the Believer into obedience to the Law of God "by the Power of the Holy Spirit". The manifestation that one is not under the Grace of God shows itself in the fact that a life remains unchanged and continues in the practice of sin.

Even under the Old Covenant we see the Grace of God being poured out on Believers. Let's take King David as an example. He committed adultery and committed murder. His prayer of repentance is found in Psalm 51. Notice that David says the following to the Lord in His prayer:

"You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one. You do not want a burnt offering." (verse 16)

Remember, David was under the Old Covenant. When one sinned in the Old Covenant, they had to give an animal sacrifice. For David's sins he should have been stoned. His sins called for death by the Law of God; not an animal sacrifice. While the "Law" called for his death - and rightly so - King David didn't appeal to God's Law; he appealed to God's Grace. Notice what he says in the next verse (17):

"The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God."

King David, under the Old Covenant, knew what grace was and he appealed to God's grace. You see, he couldn't appeal to the Law for the sins he was guilty of because the Law would have killed him! He came to God in brokenness and the Lord forgave him.. apart from any animal sacrifice. His repentance and confession were accepted by God. David didn't break or bypass God's Law in seeking forgiveness; he simply did not appeal to it at all! Rather, he came to God in childlike faith, trusting that the Lord would redeem him and God indeed delivered David from his sins!

This example - and there are other examples of grace in the Old Testament - shows that God indeed poured His Grace out on the truly broken and repentant in the Old Testament. You see, while some sins called for the sinner's death - "by the Law" - God's Grace prevailed to those who sought Him in brokenness "outside" of His Law.

This is the point; that if we seek to be made right with God by His Law, we're doomed! If, however, we seek to be made right with God by His "Grace", then we're sure to find mercy! There's no mercy in the Law; there's only condemnation. Do you want to know why the Law of God required animal sacrifices for sin? It's because those animal sacrifices, while required "by" the Law were not "of" the Law. The animal sacrifices were a type of God's Grace smack dab in the middle of God's Law. Grace and Law were working together under the Old Covenant system. The Law said, "You're guilty!" while the animal sacrifices said, "You're atoned for!". The problem? The blood of bulls and goats only covered sin, so to speak; it didn't remove or set the offender free. This is why there were continual sacrifices under the Old Covenant, because sins were not removed; forgiveness was only "credited" to the sinner until that time when Christ's Holy Blood would be shed once and for all for those who came to Him in repentance and in faith:

Hebrews 10:1-4 "The old system under the law of Moses was only a shadow, a dim preview of the good things to come, not the good things themselves. The sacrifices under that system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship. If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time, and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared. But instead, those sacrifices actually reminded them of their sins year after year. For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."

Hebrews 9:24-28 "For Christ did not enter into a holy place made with human hands, which was only a copy of the true one in heaven. He entered into heaven itself to appear now before God on our behalf. And he did not enter heaven to offer himself again and again, like the high priest here on earth who enters the Most Holy Place year after year with the blood of an animal. If that had been necessary, Christ would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. But now, once for all time, he has appeared at the end of the age to remove sin by his own death as a sacrifice. And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment, so also Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him."

Under the Old Covenant system, if one trusted in the Law rather than the Grace of God to save him, he wasn't all of a sudden saved! The Law could never save, regardless of whether or not one trusted in it. This is the very reason God gave the sacrificial system! If the Law alone could be obeyed perfectly and save us, no shedding of blood would have been necessary, but the opposite is true:

Hebrews 9:22 " In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness."

Notice that "nearly everything was purified with blood". The Old Covenant Law purified no one; it in fact told them how guilty they were and condemned them! This is why blood - a picture of God's Lamb to come - needed to be shed. That's God's Grace!

So just exactly what does Grace do for the Believer?

Titus 2:11-14 "For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God, while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds."

1- For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people:

First, God's Grace brings Salvation to all people! Grace is what makes us right with God; not Law. It's clear from our text that it's the Grace of God that delivers us from sin and spiritual death. Salvation is not only forgiveness of sins; it's deliverance from the

very power of sin itself. Sin is the breaking of God's Law; thus, we conclude that Grace brings us into supernatural Holy Spirit Empowered obedience to the Law of God. In other words, Salvation empowers an individual to stop lying, to stop sleeping around, to stop walking in offence and unforgiveness, etc. At the same time, Grace not only removes our sin and gives us a hatred for sin, but it also produces within us a love for holiness and right living. In other words, we love what God loves and hate what God hates. It's a whole package deal!

2- And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures:

Next, God's Grace is a teacher, teaching us to turn from all outward sin (behaviour) and sinful pleasures (the denial of inward evil desires). Grace deals with the whole person, both inwardly and outwardly. Some so-called "Grace Teachers" today have a repulsion to the preaching of good works; they claim that we shouldn't focus on the fruit of Grace; that it will inevitably come on it's own. If this is true, and it indeed is, then it's certainly not a bad thing to preach good works! If I want to tell a blind person what an apple looks like on the outside since he's been tasting it all of his life, I have to describe it's makeup. In the same way, if an individual is not knowledgeable on good works, should we leave them blind to what good works look like as a result of Grace? No, we should not. We should be preaching and teaching both the root (Grace) and the fruit (Good Works).

3- We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God:

Grace will cause us to see this world as evil and to understand that we're not to be partakers with this world's system of seeing and doing things. It also gives us a desire to live with wisdom - to apply the right choices in any given situation. Then, it teaches us to live in righteousness, which is right standing with God. How does one receive right standing with God? By receiving Grace which will then evidence itself - without exception! - (see point #1 and point #2) by a lifestyle of inner and outer separation from sin. Righteousness means that we have right standing with God... and that's only because of Grace! That's exactly what the Grace of God does; it makes us right with God! We also see that Grace causes us to live in devotion to God. Think about what it means to be devoted. A loving mother is devoted to her children; she'll do anything for them! There's no need she won't attend to because of her infinite and unconditional love for them. Grace causes us to be devoted to God; to bring us into a place where there's absolutely nothing we won't do for Him because of our love for Him! We'll be devoted in all aspects of our lives and regardless of the personal cost we'll remain faithful to Him and to His heart.

4- While we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed:

Grace gives us long term spiritual eyesight! It implants within us a an expectation for Christ to return in all of His glory for us, to take us to Himself! The Law brings fear of death while Grace brings the hope of a future with God Almighty! Those who rarely think of, who are afraid of or who reject the Second Coming of Jesus Christ are most certainly not under Grace. How can they be? God's Grace is evidenced in our lives in various ways, one being a hope for His return. Why does it impart this hope to us? It does so because we're forgiven, we live right, we reject sin and we have nothing to be ashamed of because His Grace has taken us out of darkness and has seated us in heavenly places with Christ Jesus our Lord. He's coming back again and He's coming for a Church which is spotless, free from sin and it's power. He's not coming back for a weak, defeated, sin-filled church. Such a church doesn't belong to Him; He knows only the Church of Grace!

5- He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people:

Why did Jesus Christ give His life for us? It's because He was full of Grace and truth (John 1:14)! That's what Grace does; it gives it's life for the object of it's affection and if Grace is in our lives we'll give our lives for the One who gives us Grace. His Grace frees us from "every" kind of sin. Not some sin.. every sin! Not only has He freed us, He's cleansed us and He's made us His very own people! So we see then that the Grace of God frees us from bondage to sexual sin, from hatred, from adultery, from offence, from division, from jealousy, from...."every" kind of sin. We're then cleansed from the sins that Jesus Christ, because of Grace,

frees us from. What does it mean to be cleansed? Think of a child playing outside all day long. He walks in the house full of mud. His parents put him in the shower and wash away all of the dirt from his body with soap and he comes out clean and smelling good. That's what it means to be cleansed by Jesus Christ. His Grace comes into our lives and removes the stain and stench of sin that we once walked in and we come out clean!

The above is the picture of Grace and what Grace does in and through our lives. While some modern "Grace Teachers" claim that one can be under Grace while still practising sin, we see the exact opposite in the Word of God. Now don't get me wrong! The Word of God nowhere states that it's impossible to sin; a Believer can indeed sin if he or she chooses to. That said, the Believer, because of Grace, doesn't have to sin. The idea that "you'll always sin" is a lie! Grace can cause us to walk in complete, total and absolute victory all the days of our lives on this earth! If, however, a Believer does sin, Grace is available!

1 John 1:9 "But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness."

John the Apostle uses the word "us". He's including himself here; this shows that he's not speaking of non-Believers but rather Christians, those who are saved by Grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). Thus, "if" - not when - a Christian sins, he can be immediately forgiven and cleansed the moment he repents and confesses to the Lord.

Grace is available to and for a Christian who may choose to sin but it's also available to keep the Christian "from" sinning in the first place. Remember, Grace is our teacher; it teaches us to turn away from godless living and sinful pleasures. Sin in a Christian's life is abnormal; it's not something that should or can be seen on a consistent basis. Why? Because while a Christian "can" sin, they will reject sin as the normal course of their lives. Those who continue in sin are not under Grace at all but are lost:

In 1 John 3:7-10 we read, "Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it shows that they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous. But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God. So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the devil. Anyone who does not live righteously and does not love other believers does not belong to God."

Notice the words "when people keep on sinning". The Apostle John here is clearly differentiating between a Christian who commits sin and a so-called Christian who continues in sin. There's a huge difference! The Christian who commits a sin will immediately be convicted and repent; a so-called Christian who continues to live in and practice sin is of the devil; he or she is a counterfeit and is in fact lost. They may believe, feel and be fully convinced that even though they are living in sin that they are saved, yet we see the exact opposite here in 1 John 3.

In Romans 6, Paul the Apostle deals a death blow to the idea that one can walk in and live in Grace and yet continue to practice sin:

Romans 6:1-4 "Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives."

The one who is truly in the Grace of God doesn't continue in sin. In fact, how can he? Paul then says in verse 14 of the same chapter, "Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace."

Grace empowers the Believer to live under the Law.... but not the Old Law! We're empowered to live under a New Law:

Romans 8:1-4 "So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit."

In verse 2, both words translated as power in the Greek is "law". I'm quoting from the New Living Translation as it's my preferred Bible. Look the passage up in other translations and you will see the word "law". We're under the "law" of the Spirit of God. Is this law different from the Old Covenant Law? Yes, in that the Old Covenant Law could not save us; it lacked the Power of Grace and therefore we were chained to the power of sin and death. The requirement of the law was total obedience without ever breaking one law of God from birth to death and only Christ could accomplish this for you and I. Because He perfectly obeyed and fulfilled the requirements of God's Law, we now have full and complete access to God's Grace for our every temptation, trial, testing and tribulation! We now have access to God's Grace for empowerment to obey the Lord and continue to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

When we're truly under the Grace of God, the 10 Commandments will no longer be a burden to us but a joy; they'll no longer be something we come against as "legalism" but rather we'll delight in God's Law just as the Apostle Paul did:

Romans 7:22 "I love God's law with all my heart."

Paul the Apostle, the greatest Grace Teacher who ever lived outside of Jesus Christ, didn't come against God's Law as being "done away with"! On the contrary, he was in love with God's Law... with "all" of his heart! Why? Why was the Apostle in love with the Law of God? The answer is simple; it's because Grace wrote God's Law in his heart just as Grace writes the Law of God in the hearts of all genuine Born Again Believers in Christ:

Hebrews 10:16-18 "And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. For he says, "This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." Then he says, "I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds." And when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices."

Notice what it says! It says that "this" is the New Covenant; that God will write His Laws in our hearts! Some modern Grace Teachers today are saying the opposite, that Grace and the Law are incompatible; yet here we see that the Grace Covenant is manifested in God's Laws being written in our hearts. Notice it doesn't say God's Law (singular) but rather God's Laws (plural). What laws are being spoken of here? Not some of God's Laws but clearly all of the moral law which is fulfilled by loving God with all that we are and loving our neighbour as ourselves:

Mark 12:28-31 "One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."

When we truly love God with all that we are and when we truly love our neighbour as ourselves, we'll naturally live in a way that does no wrong to the Lord or to others; thus, we'll automatically be keeping all of God's Laws, not because we're trying really hard but rather because we're empowered by Grace to love!

Romans 13:8-10 "Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbour, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law. For the commandments say, "You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet." These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbour as yourself." Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law."

Note what Grace does; it causes us to walk in God's Love which in turn causes us to obey God's laws. So we see that the law of God is not done away with but rather it still stands as the measuring stick of whether or not we're truly walking in Grace. We're no longer under the Law - the Old Covenant Law - but are now under the New Covenant Law of Love. This New Law of Love is manifested, according to Romans 13:8-10 in a way that empowers us to love others so that we fulfill the Old Covenant Law; not do away with it.

Grace is the enabling Power of God within the Believer to walk free from sin and to love others. The very fruit of Grace is that we are no longer those who walk in sin. In Matthew 7:15-20 we read these words:

"Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions."

Notice that Jesus did not say we can identify people by their Facebook posts, sermons or theology! He tells us plainly that people are identified "by their actions"; that is, how they live. If an individual is not walking in Grace then that individual will not love others and will, as a result, break the laws of God which will manifest itself in how they live their lives.

For example, if a man truly loves his wife, he won't commit adultery, lust after other women or indulge in pornography. If the husband verbally tells her that he loves her and yet walks in adultery, he's deceived and the truth is not in him. Another example would be a professing Believer who walks in offence towards another person. If a professing Christian harbours anger and bitterness against another person with no intention to forgive and walk in love, continuing to remain offended, they clearly break the Law of Love and unless they repent they will die spiritually.

Jesus said that we can "know" a person by their fruit; that is, by their actions. Some modern Grace Teachers bypass this spiritual principle and claim that one can still be under the Grace of God while their actions prove otherwise; thus, the modern Grace Teacher hardens the counterfeit Christian against turning from sin and coming into real genuine Grace.

Love! The Grace of God empowers us to love God and to love others. Because of this empowerment, we naturally keep God's Laws. Why? Because Grace produces fruit which is outside of the realm of Law yet which keeps the Law:

Galatians 5:22 says "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!"

You see, the Law of God, while good, holy, righteous and to be loved with all of hearts because it reflects the very nature and character of God Himself, cannot produce any fruit in us! In fact, it tells us how sinful we are! The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, produces in us fruit which is outside of the realm of God's Law but which agrees with God's Law. That's what Grace does; it empowers us to walk in the Spirit and produce fruit that loves God and loves our neighbour, thus fulfilling God's laws.

We then read in Galatians 5:24-25 the following:

"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives."

Isn't that amazing news?! Those who "belong" to Jesus have had their old lives nailed to the Cross; they're now under a New and Living Law; the Law of Life!

The error that many make today is that they don't look to Grace for empowerment, freedom and cleansing; they look to the Law of Moses... and that's spiritually deadly!

In the book of Galatians we see Paul the Apostle writing to the Galatian church about looking to the Law to be made right with God:

Galatians 3:1-7 "Oh, foolish Galatians! Who has cast an evil spell on you? For the meaning of Jesus Christ's death was made as clear to you as if you had seen a picture of his death on the cross. Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by obeying the law of Moses? Of course not! You received the Spirit because you believed the message you heard about Christ. How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? Have you experienced so much for nothing? Surely it was not in vain, was it? I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ. In the same way, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God."

Notice the words, "why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?". There are those among us today who began their lives in Christ by faith - as this is the only way one "can" be saved! After some time, someone "cast an evil spell" on them and they were then influenced - to seek to be made holy by the Law. It doesn't work! In fact, not only does it not work, it does the opposite of what one desires; it causes a Believer to fall from Grace and be cut off from Christ!

Galatians 5:1-4 "So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law. Listen! I, Paul, tell you this: If you are counting on circumcision to make you right with God, then Christ will be of no benefit to you. I'll say it again. If you are trying to find favor with God by being circumcised, you must obey every regulation in the whole law of Moses. For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace."

Those who look to the Law to be made right with God in fact come under the curse of God! Why? Because they're no longer turning to Jesus by faith for His Grace; now they are turning to the Law and self effort to be made holy. They've turned from His shed Blood at Calvary and are now looking to self and their own power to keep the Law. The thing is, no one has any power to obey the Law of God! Obedience to the Law comes by Grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone!

Galatians 3:10-12 "But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the commands that are written in God's Book of the Law." So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life." This way of faith is very different from the way of law, which says, "It is through obeying the law that a person has life."

So here's the tricky part! The Law of God serves as a reflection of whether or not one is truly in Grace because if one is truly in Grace - as we have seen - they'll not break God's Laws. Because of this, some will inevitably look to their performance to see if they're keeping God's Laws and it's at that point that they begin the slippery slope downward in to legalism!

We're called - not to look to the Law of God - but rather to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! If we continue to look to Jesus and trust in His Grace, we'll needn't look to our own performance to see if we're truly saved. Why? Because if we look to Jesus Christ alone and trust in Him alone to make us holy, our lives "will" be holy!

Hebrews 12:1-4 "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin."

Notice in verse 2 that we remain sin free how? By keeping our eyes on the Law? No!:

"We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith."

By keeping our eyes on Jesus, we're given grace to throw off sin and run the race with endurance. Jesus Christ is the One who initiates and perfects our faith; not Law or self effort to keep the Law. Christ alone is our Salvation from sin and from sin's power. His Grace is the empowering force that causes our lives to remain sin-free as opposed to sin-filled!

In Hebrews 14:16 we read: " So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most. "

[Jason Ashe](#) rightly said in his teaching on Grace that, "it is through an everyday life of humility and cross bearing that we draw near to the throne of grace, so that in that time of need, grace automatically comes. As we walk continually in the way of humility we are drawing near to the throne of grace everyday, so when something happens that we need an abundance of grace for, it is immediately given from the hand of the father to His humble children."

Running to the Law of God for help will only disappoint us; the Law has no power to help us... it only condemns us! Not because the Law is bad; but because men are bad! The Law is good and holy and it serves it's purpose and that purpose is to damn the one who not under Grace and to be a reflection of holiness for the one who is under Grace. The Law damns the lost and confirms the saved but only Christ imparts Grace!

We're called to run to the Throne of Grace when we're faced with temptations and struggles and in doing so we're promised by God that we'll receive His mercy and His empowering grace for whatever it is we're in need of. Not law but grace!

In closing, I want to encourage you today to love the Law of God with all of your heart just as the Apostle Paul did... but run only to the Throne of Grace just as it was also Paul the Apostle who instructed us to do that. I want to provoke you to look to Jesus Christ alone for your help and not to your own self effort; not to the Law of God; not to a made up list of do's and dont's!

In James 4:6 we read that "He gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

If you'll humble yourself and come to God through Jesus Christ, the Lord promises to not only give you grace but to give it generously!

Do you struggle with a besetting sin; a bondage? Look to Christ! Do you need power to overcome? Look to Christ! Are you in need of forgiveness? Look to Christ! Are you longing for God's Presence and Power in your life and ministry? Look to Christ!

1 Peter 5:12 "Stand firm in this grace."

I want to conclude with a final quote from Brother Jason Ashe:

"When I was younger, my grandfather and I would get water from a spring. We would catch water running over a cliff while we stood at the bottom with a bucket. It's one of my favourite childhood memories because seemed like that water never stopped.

If we had one bucket, we could fill it up with water. If we had five, we could fill them up with water. God's grace is like that. Always available, anytime, in any circumstance. If we are humble and lowly we will receive it whenever we need it."

10- The doctrine of repentance

Repentance; it's a word which, for some, brings up images of "turn or burn!" placards. For others, it means forgiveness. Still, for others it means to stop doing sinful things in one's behaviour. But just what is repentance... from a Biblical standpoint?

First we need to define the word repentance itself. The Greek word for repentance is "metanoeo" and means to change one's mind or purpose; to turn away from sin. (Source: [Vine's Greek Dictionary](#))

Repentance, then, is to have a change of heart and behaviour concerning sin; it's to turn away from sin in one's heart which then translates into one's conduct. One cannot repent in his or her heart and remain unchanged in the way that they live; it's impossible! The idea that a person can be "saved on the inside" yet live in and practice sin on the outside is nowhere to be found in the pages of the Scripture as we will see.

Repentance is so important and so essential that Jesus said concerning it:

Luke 13:1-5 "About this time Jesus was informed that Pilate had murdered some people from Galilee as they were offering sacrifices at the Temple. "Do you think those Galileans were worse sinners than all the other people from Galilee?" Jesus asked. "Is that why they suffered? Not at all! And you will perish, too, unless you repent of your sins and turn to God. And what about the eighteen people who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them? Were they the worst sinners in Jerusalem? No, and I tell you again that unless you repent, you will perish, too."

Without repentance, according to Jesus Christ Himself, a person will be forever lost. We're saved by Grace through faith... but repentance is the key that unlocks the door to faith which in turn unlocks the door to Grace! Without it, the door remains closed and salvation is not obtained. The idea that repentance can be bypassed in the process of Salvation as well as sanctification is foreign to the New Covenant. Repentance is not merely a one time act that secures our place in Heaven; it must be a lifelong attitude of heart. This, and this alone, is true Biblical repentance.

Not only is repentance required in order to unlock the door of faith which then unlocks the door to Grace but repentance itself is a gift given by God to undeserving sinners.

In 2 Timothy 2:25 we read, "correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth" (ESV).

So we see that repentance is granted by God. When something is given freely by a good, loving, holy and perfect God, it would do the recipient well not to reject the gift given. Amen?

Now some may be thinking, "How can I know if God has granted me genuine repentance?". The answer lies in this:

True repentance, Biblically defined, is to hate the thing you once loved. People stop sin all the time ... yet haven't repented in a Biblical sense - at least not fully repented. They stop sinning in their behaviour because they fear God's judgment; they don't actually hate the sin they were practising. For example, a person can stop watching pornography because he fears that God will cut him off; but that's the wrong motivation! If he doesn't hate the sexual sin itself then he hasn't repented. To stop outward sin while still loving it inwardly is self deception. Many will stand before God on Judgment Day who stopped sin outwardly but who continued to love it inwardly and they'll not be received into His Presence. Genuine repentance then is to hate what is evil and love what is good which will translate into a passionate joy to please the Lord and your lifestyle actions will reflect that inner change of heart granted to you by God.

While the judgment of God can lead a person to genuinely repent, they must never stay in that frame of mind. Instead, they must move from a fear of judgment to a love for God and a hatred of sin.

In fact, Jesus spoke of repenting in one's behaviour but still being full of sin on the inside. Let's look at Matthew 23:27 where He said:

Matthew 23:27 "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity."

Repentance, according to Jesus, was to be clean on the inside - in one's heart. If our actions look good before men yet inwardly we're full of lust, pride, offence and other heart attitudes that God hates, then we haven't repented!

Don't get me wrong or misunderstand what I'm saying. We struggle; there's no doubt about this. Struggling against sin and temptation are a normal part of the Christian Life. Why? Because we now have a new nature; a nature that seeks to please God and obey Him in all things. If, however, we take pleasure in and love sin then we show that we've not repented.

How many professing Christians are among us who don't sin outwardly but on the inside they refuse to forgive those who have harmed them? How many do we have among us who inwardly lust after others or walk in bitterness and offence? These people may look beautiful on the outside, but according to Jesus they're filled with dead men's bones on the inside.

Brothers and sisters, God commands - in the New Covenant - that everyone everywhere turns from sin in their heart and in their actions:

"God overlooked people's ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him" (Acts 17:30)

There are some who are being convicted by the Holy Spirit continually over the way they live their lives either inwardly, outwardly or both ... and they continue to refuse to repent. These individuals, if they continue in their resisting the Holy Spirit, will find themselves unable to repent just as Esau was unable to repent at a certain point:

Hebrews 12:16-17 "Make sure that no one is immoral or godless like Esau, who traded his birthright as the firstborn son for a single meal. You know that afterward, when he wanted his father's blessing, he was rejected. It was too late for repentance, even though he begged with bitter tears."

If a person is being called by God to repent and yet chooses to live a godless life after the Holy Spirit has been convicting him continually, a point of "no return" will indeed come to that individual, as we see in the text above, where it is no longer even possible to repent. God withdraws His free gift of repentance from those who reject it over and over and over again. Some ask, "What point is it that that takes place?" and the answer is, "No one knows; only God knows". Thus, we must not delay in repenting and walking in a lifestyle of repentance.

You see, most oftentimes we think of repentance as turning from some outward form of sin yet outward forms of sin are but fruits of what's going on on the inside of our hearts.

Repentance must begin in our hearts where evil dwells:

In Matthew 15:19-20, Jesus says, "For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander. These are what defile you. Eating with unwashed hands will never defile you."

Sin is a heart issue; the outward actions are the manifestations of what's on the inside of us. If repentance doesn't get to the heart (to the root) then repenting of the outward actions (the fruit) will not do us any eternal good. We may look good in front of others but God sees the heart and knows what's really going on!

Yes, repentance means that we change our actions but it also means and always - without exception - includes the fact that we repent inwardly; that we change our mind and purpose concerning sin. If we do not repent from the heart then we have not

truly repented. We may know the Bible inside and out; we may attend the best church in the church; we may pray several times a day and fast twice a week. If we have not repented from the heart then these religious exercises will profit us nothing!

This then, brings us to the question of "how" we're to respond when the Lord calls us to repent. What are we to do when the Lord calls us to turn from sin inwardly and outwardly?

First, we're to humble ourselves in the Presence of God.

James 4:6 says, "But he gives us even more grace to stand against such evil desires. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but favours the humble."

Notice that God gives grace to stand against evil desires. Who does He give His grace to? The humble. The proud are left without His grace and thus they continue to sin. The evidence that one is not walking in the grace of God is that they are walking in sin!

Next, we're to confess our heart attitudes to God, that we do have a grudge against so and so or that we are full of lust. Whatever the heart attitude, we're to bring it to the Cross of Christ and confess it to the Lord. We do not only confess filthy actions and filthy thoughts; we confess that our hearts are wicked, evil and vile! Only then will the root of the issue - our heart! - be transformed by grace through faith. When we repent in this way, we repent in a way that invites the Lord to move on our behalf. This is the type of repentance that doesn't need to be repented of. There's a sorrow that comes with sin that makes a person feel emotionally bad for how they live and for what they think in their hearts, but it's not a genuine sorrow; it's false and deceptive!

2 Corinthians 7:10 "For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death."

In verse 11 of the same chapter, Paul the Apostle stated, " Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation, such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness to punish wrong. You showed that you have done everything necessary to make things right."

Notice what godly sorrow produced? Genuine repentance! What did this repentance do? It produced godly fruit in their lives; it resulted in their changing their ways and being passionate for the things of the Kingdom of God!

Is your life like that? Have you repented from the heart? Is your inner life pure? Do you hate sin and love righteousness? Do you live a lifestyle of repentance where you're passionate about the things of the Kingdom of God? Is your entire being saturated with honouring and submitting to the Will of the Lord for your life? Do you long for the day that you see Jesus face to face; a day in which temptation will no longer know your name? This, dear friend, is real repentance!

Next and again, we're to repent toward God. This means that we're to repent with God in view. We're not to repent for others, to be seen by them. We're not to repent because we fear Hell or God's wrath. Yes, Hell and God's wrath await those who refuse to repent yet our motivation must be repentance toward God because we love God and hate sin. True repentance means turning from sin in our hearts and actions and then turning towards God and having faith in Jesus Christ:

Acts 20:21 "I have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike--the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus."

Repenting from sin and turning towards God implies a change of direction. That's how we're to respond when the Holy Spirit convicts our hearts of sin. We're to repent - turn from that sin in our heart and in our actions - and run towards the Cross. We say, "Yes, Lord! I've sinned and I turn from it in my heart by Your Grace that enables me! I run to the Cross for forgiveness; cleanse me, wash me and restore me again, oh Lord!".

While it was stated earlier that our motivation to repent should not be fearing God's wrath and Hell, it's nonetheless true that when we repent we're running away from God's wrath and Hell:

Mathew 3:5-10 "People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize, he denounced them. "You brood of snakes!" he exclaimed. "Who warned you to flee God's coming wrath? Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. Even now the ax of God's judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire."

Responding to the conviction of the Holy Spirit when He speaks to our hearts not only causes us to receive God's grace to stand against evil desires, it automatically removes us from God's wrath and from an eternity in Hell. Notice that John the Baptist said, "Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God". Repentance will always be shown by the way we live, yet it's work is performed deep within our hearts as we say "Yes!" to the Lord.

Will we still have temptations? We will. Will we struggle against sin and evil desires? Absolutely. This is why repentance is so important! When we walk in a spirit of repentance, we're always saying, "Yes!" to the Lord and "No!" to sin. By walking in a spirit of repentance, we will always be in obedience to the Lord; not out of fear of Hell but rather out of a love for God and His Holiness.

Have you messed up and sinned? Has the devil whispered lies to you that you've "crossed the line"? You can lay those sins down today and forever silence those lies by repenting. The fact that you repent and turn from sin in your heart and in your actions proves that you've not crossed the line! The devil is a liar and that will be evidenced the moment you turn to God in repentance. I want to encourage you, whoever you are who's reading this, to bow humbly before the Lord and pour your heart out to Him, asking Him and thanking Him for His precious and wonderful gift of repentance in your life. Call out to the Name of Jesus and cry out for mercy; in doing so, God will pour out on your life a spirit of repentance that no devil, no sin and no temptation can ever overcome!

11- What is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit?

The statement, "God forgives all sin" is not Biblical. While God does forgive sin, there's one specific sin, if committed, that he will not forgive. This sin is called the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. This is also referred to as the unpardonable sin. If an individual commits this sin, there is no forgiveness... ever. The Scripture says this very very plainly. Just what "is" this sin, what does it look like and how do we as Christians ensure that we never ever commit it?

Before I even begin, let me say from the outset that because of the very nature of this teaching, there are going to be those who read it and due to their own spirit of condemnation that they walk in, they'll think, "This is me! I'm lost forever!". The devil will play on their minds and twist the very passages of Scripture to do so.. just as he did to Eve in the Garden! You who struggle in this area of satan whispering that you've "crossed the line", know this: If you're honest with your sin and bondage and seek to walk in freedom - genuinely seek freedom! - you are not in the category of being a blasphemer. In fact, you are on your way to deliverance! Christians struggle and many are in bondage to sin and are seeking the freedom of Christ in their lives. This article is referring to those who love their sin, enjoy their sin and are hypocrites; it's these that are in danger of damnation and it's to these that the Scripture cries out against.

There are various ideas among Believers today on what the Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is. Some hold that it cannot be committed by genuine Believers while others hold that it can. There are also different views on "how" it's committed. I want to take some time in this article to look into this topic and dig into the Word of God for my own position on this matter.

First, we must define the word blasphemy as it relates to the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. The word blasphemy means "to blaspheme, rail at or revile," is used (a) in a general way, of any contumelious speech, reviling, calumniating, railing at, etc, as of those who railed at Christ, (b) of those who speak contemptuously of God or of sacred things, "rail at," 2 Pet. 2:10; Jude 1:8,10; "railing," "slanderosly reported," "be evil spoken of," "speak evil of," "being defamed" (Vine's Greek Expository Dictionary)

So we see first of all that to blaspheme the Holy Spirit is to defame Him and His word; it's to revile Him and to speak slanderously against Him. This is certainly not limited to verbal speech but most certainly includes our lifestyle.

We now ask: Is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit an instant occurrence or a progressive one?

1- Progressive: "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." (Mark 3:29)

2- Instant: "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven." (Luke 12:10)

I submit that in order to finally and eternally commit the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, one must constantly, continually and progressively insult the Holy Spirit to such a degree that at some point - known only to God - one crosses a line whereby God no longer offers redemption.

I believe with all of my heart that God has made it very very difficult to blaspheme the Holy Spirit; His grace and mercy are so deep and so inviting to those in need of cleansing, forgiveness and freedom that it would take constant deliberate attacks against the working of the Holy Spirit in order to come to such a place as to blaspheme Him. Nonetheless, the Scripture does present such a thing as a reality for us.

What are some things that lead to the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit?

1- Resisting the Holy Spirit is the first step towards blaspheming Him. In Acts 7:51 we read "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye".

When we resist the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, we're in great danger. To resist means to fight against. If we resist the Holy Spirit and His convicting work in our hearts, we will then grieve Him.

2- Grieving the Holy Spirit means to cause Him deep sorrow. In Ephesians 4:30 we read "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption".

In resisting the Holy Spirit, we then provoke Him to become grieved at our decision of fighting against His work in our lives. Vine's Greek Expository Dictionary states concerning the word grieve the following: "to cause pain, or grief, to distress, grieve". When we resist the Holy Spirit we cause Him pain and distress which then leads to quenching His work in our lives:

3- Quenching the Holy Spirit means to put out His work in our lives. In 1 Thessalonians 5:19 we read "Quench not the Spirit."

Quenching the Holy Spirit can be compared to putting out a fire. The moment you throw water on a fire... that fire goes out. In the same way, if we resist and grieve the Holy Spirit through deliberate and continual disobedience in our heart attitudes and in our lifestyles, we're telling Him to stop doing His work in our lives; that we're not going to submit to His convicting power.

Is it possible for a Christian to blaspheme the Holy Spirit? Are there examples of anyone in the Scriptures who were in covenant with God who were later cut off from covenant, never to be offered redemption again? Yes. One example we will look at is Esau. This is recorded in Hebrews 12:15-17 which says, "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

Esau's birthright under the Old Covenant is a type and shadow of our birthright - Salvation - in the New Covenant. According to GotQuestions, we read concerning the birthright: "A birthright was an honor given to the firstborn, bestowing "head of household" status and the right to inherit his father's estate. The son with the birthright would receive a double portion of whatever was passed down (see Deuteronomy 21:17)." (source [here](#))

Esau, according to the writer of Hebrews, gave up his birthright to his brother due to his carnal appetite for food. Amazing! Yet how many today are selling their birthright in Christ for their carnal desires for pornography, slander, gossip, unforgiveness, etc? How many today are shouting "Victory!" when behind closed doors there's a double life being lived; a life of fornication, bitterness and profaneness concerning the Holy things of God?

According to the text in Hebrews, we must be ever cautious not to allow bitterness to take root in our hearts as this is the very first step in selling our birthright and potentially blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Look at the progression in the text. Bitterness leads to defilement which then leads to fornication and profaneness.

Finally, concerning Esau, notice the statement "he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

Esau understood and realized what a horrible sin he had committed ... but only after the fact! It was now too late and he was rejected.. though he plead and plead and plead! In modern times, Esau would be at the front of the altar, weeping ... but he would be rejected! Why? Not because God is not gracious, compassionate and merciful but rather because Esau was profane and treated his birthright as though it were something not of eternal value! He wanted his immediate hunger met and sold his birthright as a result. What does it look like to be a blasphemer of the Holy Spirit? In Romans 1 we get a clear and frightening picture in Romans 1:26-32 when we read " For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

Notice the words "God gave them up". In many circles, it's taught that "God never gives up" yet this passage, in the New Testament, says the exact opposite. Now "why" did God give these people up? Verse 25 of the same chapter tells us: "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."

Notice the words "Changed the truth of God into a lie". There was a dishonesty in the hearts of these people. They changed the truth of God into a lie and therefore the Lord rejected them. The result? The words " Being filled with all unrighteousness..."

When we live lives of dishonesty and hypocrisy; when we stand before men and pretend we're holy when in secret we enjoy fornication, pride, backbiting, slander, gossip, etc (all the things listed in Romans 1), then we're in danger of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Those who proclaim victory or who shout they want to be free when they in fact continue to indulge in sexual sin, bitterness, etc, are hypocrites and unless they stop resisting the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, a point will come where there is no more forgiveness offered. This is not because God does not want to redeem people... but because hypocrites are the ones who show, by their heart attitudes and actions, that they themselves do not want forgiveness and freedom from sin and it's power. They speak much about wanting to be free... yet their lives tell a different story.

Now, don't get me wrong! There are believers who struggle and who are in bondage... yet they're honest about it! They don't play the hypocrite card; they're open about their struggles and not only with their words... but their hearts hate the very sin and bondage that they're enslaved to. The difference between them and the one in danger of blaspheming the Holy Spirit is that they're honest while the other is not. There's a longing and a cry for freedom in their hearts while the ones who resist the Holy Spirit, grieve Him and quench Him have no tangible intent to allow God to transform them. They "say" it with their mouths and may even weep... but there's a dishonesty in such people.

Lastly, how can we ensure that we will never begin down the path to the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? Here are 5 biblical principles to walk in on a consistent daily basis:

1- Daily Prayer: In Acts 3:1 we read "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

Prayer - daily prayer - will release God's Presence in your life and keep your heart soft. You'll sense the gentle leading of the Holy Spirit as you walk with God.

2- Daily repentance: In Luke 9:23 we read, "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

Repentance must be daily; we must come before God on a daily basis and crucify, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, our selfish desires and carnal ambitions. We must say "No!" to sin and "Yes!" to holiness. If we do sin, we must immediately repent and forsake that sin!

3- Constant cleansing: In 2 Corinthians 7:1 we read, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Scripture is clear: Whatever and whoever influences us to sin, we must remove from our lives. It doesn't matter what it is... if it influences us to sin, we must get it out and never look back!

4- Submission to godly leadership: In Hebrews 13:17 we read " Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

Godly leadership ... they "watch over your soul". When a godly leader sees danger ahead, we would be foolish not to take heed. The Lord has set in the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers for our spiritual growth and maturity in Christ.

5- Humility and brokenness: In James 4:6-7 we read "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." and then in Psalm 51:17 we read " The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Humility and brokenness are to be our heart attitudes. We're never to rise up against others or rail against others; we're to wash one another's feet and pray for those who use us and misuse us. We must have an ever growing dependence on God for all things!

Backsliding isn't the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit but it "can" be... one thing for sure is that for Christians it's the first step in committing the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Don't listen to any minister, ministry or message that is light on sin and backsliding; don't allow yourself to be deceived by those who see sin as nothing big. Rather, hate sin, despise sin and love God and His

Word. Let us never fall away and turn from Christ, thus endangering ourselves. In walking in the principles listed above, the Holy Spirit will continually bring us closer and closer to Christ Jesus where our hearts remain soft and sensitive to Him.

12- The filling of the Holy Spirit (an interactive study)

Point 1: The Filling of the Holy Spirit is distinct from Salvation

The Disciples first received the Holy Spirit at Salvation after the resurrection of Jesus yet prior to His ascension into Heaven:

John 20:22 “And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”

Reflection: Some believe that this was a prophetic action by Jesus where He was prophesying that on the Day of Pentecost the Disciples would be Filled with the Holy Spirit. The Greek language does not indicate such a view but in fact the opposite. In short, the Disciples did receive the Spirit in them (the Indwelling) for regenerative purposes (Salvation). According to the Life in the Spirit study Bible, the following commentary is given on this verse: “The phrase, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost' establishes that the Spirit, at that historical moment in time, entered and began to live in the disciples. The verb form for 'receive' is aorist imperative (Gk labete, from the word lambane), denoting a single act of reception. The Holy Spirit was given to regenerate them, to make them new creatures in Christ...” (Page 1646 of the Life in the Spirit study Bible). Please take a few moments to write down in your own words what it means to be a new creature in Christ:

The same Disciples received the Holy Spirit a second time on the day of Pentecost:

Acts 2:1-4 “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Question: Have you received the Holy Spirit a second time, just as the disciples did? If so, please write below how that happened and what took place. If this has not yet happened, please write below your desire to be filled and why you want to be filled:

c) Biblical examples of a Second Reception of the Holy Spirit:

Acts 8:14-17 “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”

Acts 9:1-6; 17 “And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do...And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.”

Point 2: The Filling of the Holy Spirit is a Promise to each Born Again Believer:

Luke 24:49 “And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

Acts 1:8 “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Question: If you have received the Filling of the Spirit already, are you willing to receive a fresh filling again, even at the conclusion of this study? . If you have not yet received the filling of the Holy Spirit, are you willing to “tarry” and allow God to fill every area of your life, even at the end of this study? .

Point 3: The Filling of the Holy Spirit is a command to each Born Again Believer

Ephesians 5:18 “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”

Question: The statement, “be” filled is a positive command, directing you to “be” filled. God doesn't want us to say we “were” filled or “will be” filled; instead, He asks that we “be” filled in the here and now. The Holy Spirit seeks to constantly bring the Presence and Power of Jesus into our lives so that we're not only Born Again but also powerful witnesses of the Good News, with signs, wonders and miracles following. Many today wrongly believe that once you are filled with the Spirit that “that's it”. How wrong to believe this! God desires to fill you every moment of every day! Are you willing to surrender yourself at the end of this study to the ongoing, present, powerful and never ending filling of the Holy Spirit?

Point 4: What it looked like when the Filling of the Holy Spirit was first given to the Early Church:

Acts 2:1-4 “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

- 1- The Disciples were in _____ accord and in one place
- 2- They experienced a _____ from heaven as of a _____
- 3- It filled the _____ place where they were sitting
- 4- There appeared cloven tongues _____ fire
- 5- It _____ each of them
- 6- They were all _____
- 7- And began to _____ as the Spirit gave them utterance

Acts 10:44-48 “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.”

Being filled with the Holy Spirit is called a g___. Do people earn gifts? _____. Because receiving the filling of the Holy Spirit is called and is a gift, the Gift Giver, our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ the Son of God, are more than willing to fill you with the Holy Spirit! Describe what it felt like the first time someone gave you a gift that you knew was given to you in love and without condition:

Acts 19:1-6 "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

Question: In addition to speaking in tongues, what other manifestation took place in the above passage?
_____. This shows that speaking in tongues, while it may be one of the manifestations of being filled with the Spirit, is not the exclusive (only) gift that He gives when filling His people with His Holy Spirit. The Lord can manifest His Spirit through you in any manifestation of His Gifts that He so desires or no outward

manifestation of a particular gift but rather power, presence, etc. In short, God is God and He alone is the One who decides what manifestation will or will not take place when He fills one of His children with the Holy Spirit. What a tragedy to limit the unlimited God to one gift! Are you willing to trust God to decide how He will fill you with His Spirit?: _____.

Point 5: As we submit to the Lord on a daily basis, The Filling of the Holy Spirit initially received will daily manifest itself in the following: (not exhaustive)

Power to Witness:

Acts 1:8 “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Question: Have you ever saw someone share the Gospel and they seemed to have no power or life in their presentation?: _____. Have you ever seen someone share the Gospel and you knew that the person sharing had a power with God that was clearly evident?: _____. The Filling of the Spirit gives power to see people come under conviction of sin as the Gospel is proclaimed.

Boldness:

Acts 4:31 “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness”

Question: Notice that “they” had prayed. Churches that come together to pray will be filled with the Spirit if they come together with great expectation! When this happens, you will speak the Word of God with _____. Does your church come together and pray often? _____. If so, describe a time that God fell by His Spirit in your service and the impact it had on your life:

Praise and Worship:

Ephesians 5:19 “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”

Question: Have you ever sang in the Spirit, either in tongues or in your own language? If yes, describe the experience. If no, will you surrender your tongue to the Lord for this purpose?:

Thanksgiving:

Ephesians 5:20 “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Interactive: Explain a time when everything around you seemed to be against you and yet you knew that you knew that God was in control and you had peace and were thankful:

Godly Submission to one another in the Fear of God:

Ephesians 5: 21 “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”

Interactive: The difference between submission and control is that submission is voluntary while control is by force. True Biblical submission is in the _____ of ____ and not the fear of man. Being filled the Holy Spirit will cause you to submit to your leaders as well as brothers and sisters in the church even when your own desires want them to submit to you. Submissive humility is the mark of a Spirit filled Believer.

a) Family Unity:

Ephesians 5:22-25 “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”

Interactive: For those of you who are married, in particular wives, submission to your husband is not in doing any wicked things or ungodly things asked of you, but instead a Spirit filled woman is one who submits by praying for, helping, supporting and coming alongside of her husband. Husbands want to believe they're "worthy" of your submission but we often they fall short; it's at this time that your godly submission is needed most.

Point 6: How to be Filled with the Holy Spirit

a) Forsake and Confess all known sin:

Psalm 66:18 "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

Reflection: Take 10 minutes to sit quietly before the Lord and ask Him for cleansing from all known sin and un-surrender in your life.

b) Believe that God delights in your asking Him for the Filling of His Holy Spirit:

Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Reflection: Don't try to "get more faith" or "work up" your faith; God uses faith the size of a tiny mustard seed... not much is needed! Take 5 minutes as a group to begin to thank the Lord for the promise of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

c) Ask, believing and knowing that it is the Father's Good Will and Pleasure to Fill you with His Holy Spirit:

Luke 11:11-13 "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Reflection: Will God give to you anything at all other than what He promises? No! Therefore, you can be confident that God is for you and not against you! He WANTS to fill you with the Holy Spirit.

d) Receive the promise of God to Fill you with His Holy Spirit by Faith:

Luke 11:9-10 "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Prayer: Whether you've received the Filling of the Holy Spirit in the past or have not yet received the Filling, take time now to call on the Lord Jesus to fill you with His Spirit, asking Him to not only Fill you but to reveal to you how to be Filled with His Spirit on a moment by moment basis in a never ending flow of His Presence and Power.

Concluding Statement

My prayer is that you, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, have gone through each discipleship study contained in this manual. I believe that in doing so – and in applying the Biblical principles contained herein – that your life will grow ever so closer to the Lordship of Jesus. My sincere desire for each person who has gone through this manual is that they would grow in spiritual maturity, holiness, love and discernment.

In Him,
Dan Lirette