

THE TRUSTWORTHY WORD

Volume 1 - Christianity Questions,
Prayer and Fasting

Dr. Jonathan Carl

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The Trustworthy Word:

Volume 1 - Christianity Questions, Prayer and Fasting

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I am so thankful to God for His strength and truth in Jesus! I love and am so grateful for my amazing wife Brittney and her loving, tireless support. Together we are blessed with some amazing daughters in Sophia, Lydia, Alia, and Mia!

Our church family at South Fork has been incredible in their encouragement :) *Thank you all for putting up with my many hours of studying & writing for this work!*

Ephesians 6:10–12 (ESV) “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

FOUR HELPFUL WEBSITES

Here are four websites that I publish with free resources that you may find helpful:

www.TrustworthyWord.com

TRUSTWORTHY WORD

Titus 1:9 “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.” (ESV)

Trustworthy Word was born out of a desire to equip churches with free, downloadable handouts as a resource for biblical teaching on various topics. We wanted to see the people of God think deeply about the Word of God and realize the implications that come about as a result.

One of the great things that we have seen happen though is that members of our church (South Fork Baptist Church in Hodgenville, KY) have begun to use the site as a mobile resource when they are sharing the gospel or having bible-centered conversations.

Trustworthy Word has become a digital filing cabinet where with a few taps of the finger, we can quickly locate helpful resources both for our own spiritual growth and to engage those with whom we are having Christ focused conversations.

Our hope is that you too will find Trustworthy Word as a digital discipleship and evangelism resource you can

utilize in moments when you have your phone, tablet, or computer with you. You may enjoy using some of the free handouts to help guide your small group into a deeper walk with Jesus in Bible study. With just a few clicks we hope you begin to think deeply about the Word of God and see how that impacts your life.

www.Bible.video “The Video Bible”

@TheVideoBibleChannel



Bible.Video

“Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.” - 1 Timothy 4:13

Did someone read to you growing up? Did that time impact you? Help you? Grow you? Comfort you?

We feel that reading the Bible visually and audibly to one another is important and helpful too! What a joy it is to see print Bibles reaching the ends of the earth (through amazing groups like the Gideons and The International Bible Society and especially www.NetBible.com).

How incredible it is that translations are made (Wycliffe) and digitally distributed (Bible.com and BibleStudyTools.com) all over the world! In the past few decades, audio Bibles have also become numerous and more accessible through wonderful ministries like Faith Comes By Hearing.

Unfortunately, there isn't much of a presence currently of someone visually reading the Bible to another. We hope to help provide this through the “The Video Bible”!

We feel this is a needed resource for evangelism and discipleship and we pray that it will be extremely effective! The biblical origins of both visually watching someone read and listening simultaneously is important to how we process and respond to the Word.

We hope to have the opportunity to help get complete bible translations free into the ears, eyes, minds, and souls of millions more over the years ahead via video.

www.SpiritualWarfare.blog



Ephesians 6:10–12 (ESV) “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

Life is hard. Life is full of struggles and suffering. We need the reminder that our primary battles are not physical, financial, emotional, or mental, but spiritual. We ultimately are in an ongoing spiritual battle.

What is “spiritual warfare”? Spiritual warfare, based on Ephesians 6:12, is “the battle of the followers of Christ against the unseen spiritual forces of evil.”

This resource is designed to help you find God’s answers about the battle of the followers of Christ

against the unseen spiritual forces of evil.

Visit our website to find freedom and victory in your daily battles through Christ’s finished work on the cross. Share our free resources with others to help them as well!



Ephesians 2:8–9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (ESV)

What does the Catholic Church really believe? Many people have their opinions, experiences, or second-hand information on Catholic beliefs but a true understanding of the Catholic faith is found in its *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The Catholic Blog simply presents portions of the Catholic Catechism with relevant Bible verses and introspective questions to consider. This free resource will help you on your journey to consider the beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church and examine for yourself, through tough questions, whether The Catechism of the Catholic Church is biblically valid and trustworthy.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is a substantial document of significant history and tradition. If you have yet to read it, I encourage you to read it in its entirety. This guide should be a helpful start and reference! As you consider the “essential and fundamental contents of Catholic doctrine” (CCC, 11), I hope you will be like the Bereans of Acts 17:11 who always put the Bible first to test what they were learning.

The Bereans are described as “noble” after hearing the teaching of the Apostle Paul for two reasons:

- 1) getting into the Bible with “eagerness”
- 2) testing the teaching of the Apostle Paul in light of Scriptures to verify his truthfulness

Similarly, may we evaluate what we see in The Catechism of the Catholic Church in the light of the Bible to “see if these things were so.”

Acts 17:11 “Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” (ESV)

A 3 Part Approach: Here is the approach you will find to this Bible study.

1) Interesting highlights and quotes - Due to the massive volume of writings in The Catechism of the Catholic Church, I have picked quotes from the text that I think you will find most useful and fascinating.

2) Relevant Scriptures - Likewise, I selected passages of Scripture that I thought particularly helpful in evaluating and understanding the Catholic teachings. Both The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Bible passages should be considered in their original context and setting. There are many more possible Catholic teachings and Biblical passages to consider but I hope this is a helpful start to your studies.

3) Helpful Questions - I have chosen not to insert opinions and assertions but instead propose tough questions that help us to think critically for ourselves about what we are reading.

My end goal and hope is that we all follow God’s directive to us in 2 Corinthians 13:5 to “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!” (ESV). May we all have the joy of an eternity in the presence of Jesus!

Here are the top 10 Catholic questions answered in this book with biblical answers:

1. What is the Catechism of the Catholic Church?
2. What is Sin According to the Catholic Catechism? Do Different

Sins Need Different Sacrifices?

3. Does Salvation Come through Catholic Mass? Does Giving Money to Church Help Us?

4. Is Catholic Baptism Necessary for Salvation? What about Confirmation?

5. Is Catholic Eucharist Necessary for Salvation? What about Penance?

6. Was Mary Always Saved? Did Mary Never Sin? Is Mary the Cause of Salvation? Was Mary a Virgin Her Entire Life? Did Jesus Have Any Brothers? Is It True that Mary Never Died? Did Mary Ascend to Heaven?

7. Are Images of Jesus, Mary, Saints, or Angels Helpful or Harmful? Do Relics & Rosaries have Power?

8. Should We Pray to Mary and Saints? Is it OK to Pray to Angels?

9. Will I Go to Purgatory? Do Indulgences Help Us?

10. Can Marriages Be Annulled? What about Catholic Divorce and Remarriage?

Whether you are Catholic, considering Catholicism, or just curious to understand the Catholic Church better, this Bible study will be a great help to you. Download *A Biblical Study of The Catechism of the Catholic Church* free at www.Catholic.blog

INTRODUCTION

Titus 1:9 “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.” (ESV)

Volume 1- Christianity Questions, Prayer and Fasting is a work based on the most common questions I have encountered as a pastor about being a Christian. My heart is not to offer human wisdom or experience, but to help you search the Scriptures for answers to what the Bible says about...becoming a Christian, testing the genuineness of one's faith, evidence for Jesus, how to study the Bible, Heaven, Hell, end times, prayer and fasting ideas, biblical health, and more. May this book help you to clearly hear, believe, and obey God's voice on some of the most challenging issues you have faced in the battles of life.

This *Trustworthy Word* series is different than many books that you might read. The vast majority of the content is Bible verses and references. This approach, with lots of bullet points, is intentional in order to help you clearly hear and see God's truths and not merely human opinion. May this work be a helpful resource for your study of God's Word. May it help you increase in your love and awe of your Savior. If you aren't yet a follower of Christ, may the Lord save you through the reading of His Word throughout it!

The source of these writings has been from my own studies, counseling with church members, and sermons. These subjects have arisen from some of the most important

conversations that I have had in pastoral ministry for over a decade. I hope and pray that this work serves as a tool for the Lord to use in helping His children through His Spirit and Word.

Ultimately, I have written this for the Lord. He has grown me so much through the years and I pray that this work is faithful to honor and glorify Him. I have also always told my wife and daughters that I wrote this for them as well. I love them so much and if they were the only ones to read this, then I would count it a success!

I do hope that this is a useful Bible study resource for many around the world. I have made these chapters, videos, and the book (and other books too) in its entirety, freely downloadable and accessible at www.TrustworthyWord.com. It has been a joy of mine to see so many souls find Scriptural counsel online at Trustworthy Word over the years and I pray that it continues to aid many more until the Lord returns!

In Christ,
Jonathan Carl

Revelation 22:14 "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates." (ESV)

CHRISTIANITY QUESTIONS

HOW CAN I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

1. Understand and believe that God is the Creator of the Universe

God created us and has authority over us.

- Colossians 1:16-17 "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."
- Hebrews 11:3 "By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible."

We will give an answer for our lives.

- Hebrews 9:27 "And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment"
- Hebrews 4:13 "And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

2. Acknowledge and confess your sinfulness

God's Commandments are His perfect standard of Holiness.

- Romans 3:19-20 "Now we know that whatever the law says

it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin."

- Romans 3:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"
- James 2:10 "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it."

Admit that you are not good. Turn away from you sin and turn towards Christ.

- Psalm 32:5 "I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,' and you forgave the iniquity of my sin."
- Romans 3:10-12 "None is righteous, no, not one; [11] no one understands; no one seeks for God. [12] All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."
- 1 John 1:9-10 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [10] If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

3. Believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave

Realize that Salvation is by Faith (trusting in Jesus, loving and valuing Him more than anyone or anything) and not by works.

- Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast."
- Mark 12:28-31 "And one of the scribes came up and heard

them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, 'Which commandment is the most important of all?' [29] Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. [30] And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' [31] The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Affirm that Jesus is God and is the Only Way of Salvation. Salvation is not possible by obedience in Judaism, not through Mohammed's revelation of Allah (Islam), not through Buddhism or Hinduism, not by good works, and not through Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormonism. Salvation is only available through Jesus.

- John 14:6 "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"
- Acts 4:12 "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
- 1 John 2:23 "No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also."

4. Call out to Jesus in prayer to be in charge of your life

Publicly place your trust and faith in Him.

- Acts 16:30-31 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" [31] And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."
- Romans 10:9-10 "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. [10] For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."
- Romans 10:13 "For 'everyone who calls on the name of the

Lord will be saved."

Submit and yield to His Lordship. Let Him be in control of your life.

- Acts 2:37-38 "Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' [38] And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
- Matthew 16:24-26 "Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. [25] For whoever would save his life (1) will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. [26] For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?'"

Now What? If you have chosen to believe that Jesus Christ is God, died on the cross, and rose from the grave and have truly yielded control of your life to Him, you are a Christian and follower of Jesus. *Here is what to do next...*

Walk with Jesus in Fellowship with Other Believers

1. Proclaim Christ's Lordship over your life through Baptism

Acts 2:38 "And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

See "What does the Bible say about Baptism?" on TrustworthyWord.com

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-baptism

2. Read your Bible to grow in your knowledge and love of Christ

See "How to Study the Bible?" on TrustworthyWord.com

- www.trustworthyword.com/how-to-study-the-bible

3. *Pray consistently and daily to relate more with Jesus*

See “What Does the Bible Say God is Like?” and “What Does the Bible Say about Christian Identity?” on TrustworthyWord.com

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-god-is-like
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-christian-identity

4. *Connect with a biblically faithful church family*

Hebrews 10:25-26 "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

See “What Does the Bible Say about Church Membership?” on TrustworthyWord.com

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-church-membership

5. *Speak and Demonstrate God's Love*

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

See “What Does the Bible Say about Love?” on TrustworthyWord.com

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-love

6. *Listen to and Obey God's Commands*

Hebrews 10:26-27 "For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries."

1 Peter 1:15-16 "but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, 'You shall be

holy, for I am holy."

See “What Does the Bible Say about Sin?” and “What Does the Bible Say about Sanctification?” on TrustworthyWord.com

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sin
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sanctification

COMMON OBJECTIONS TO THE GOSPEL

- **What about people who've never heard about Jesus? Will they go to Hell?**

What about other religions: Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and tribal religions? A person doesn't go to Hell for failing to hear the Gospel, they go to hell for failing to obey God's law. Consider if a man jumped out of a plane without a parachute. He doesn't die primarily because he doesn't have a parachute. The reason he dies is because he violates the law of gravity...which brings him to his death. If a person dies without Christ, it is because he has transgressed the law of God...ignorance is not excuse. If we really care about those who have not heard about Jesus, we need to first come to Christ, and take His name, the only name which offers hope of salvation....to the ends of the earth.

- **My god is a god of love and forgiveness who doesn't send someone to hell.**

This is an example of idolatry...a violation of the 2nd commandment. Crafting a god of our own imagination, in our own image, or a god we are comfortable with. We cannot separate God's justice from God's love. He does judge the wicked and the immoral by their transgression of the law, and their sentence is eternal death and suffering in a very real Hell. This same God, we learn from Romans 5:8, loved us so much, that while we were still rebels and enemies, sent His son to die for us.

- **Why is there so much suffering?**

We all go through suffering. All of us have been hurt by the sinfulness of others, the consequences of living in a fallen world, and by our own sinfulness. We need to have faith in God, knowing and trusting that He is in control, and that His good plan includes an eternal rescue from sin, suffering, and death. It is good to ask these deep questions, I would recommend www.gotquestions.org to dig deeply into this and similar tough questions. Ultimately God sent this message here today to help save you from eternal suffering. This is God's love.

- **I'm already saved.**

God tells us to test ourselves to see if we are in the faith. Have our lives changed? Do we desire to hear God's voice through the Bible? Are we obedient to God's commands? Do we see the fruits of God's Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) in our lives? (Galatians 5:22-24) Or do we see the works of the flesh in our lives (sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these)? (Galatians 5:19-21) Do we desperately seek Him in prayer? Do we see righteousness being produced by God in our lives? Are we quick to forgive? Do we love others?

SEE "How Can I Be Sure I Am a Christian?" on TrustworthyWord.com

• www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian
When you see a doctor and you are sick, what does he do? He assesses the symptoms, shoots straight with you, and tells you about your disease and any possible cures. The Bible clearly speaks to any symptoms of ongoing, unrepentant sin in our lives. Matthew 7:21 "I never knew you." Test yourselves.

- **I don't believe in God.**

Just because we don't believe something doesn't make it disappear. Put on a blindfold and stand in front of a large truck

on a highway, saying I don't believe the truck exists. I know there is no such thing as an atheist. No such thing as an atheist at 25,000 ft in crazy turbulence. Look at a painting, do you say, look what coincidentally formed by chance over a ridiculously long period of time? No. You see a painting; you know there is a painter. You see a building; you know there is a builder. You see the Creation and you know there is a Creator.

- **I don't believe the Bible is God's Word.**

You are right the Bible was written by men. When you write a letter, do you write, or does the pen? Men are God's instruments to write the Bible. The Bible is the most accurate piece of literature in all of history...scientifically, historically, prophetically, archaeologically, and documentary or manuscript evidence. Find an error. We've searched. We can't find any.

- **I confess my sins and say I'm sorry all the time.**

Consider civil law. If someone is guilty of a serious crime, when they come to trial, if they just say "I'm sorry" to the judge, do you think he'll just let her go? That's not fair. Only a corrupt or unrighteous judge would let a guilty person free without a penalty. The law has been broken. Justice demands a punishment. We can't just say we are sorry. We can't be "good enough" to overcome our crimes. We need Jesus to pay for the penalty for our sin.

- **I've lied, but that doesn't make me a bad person.**

On moral issues...it only takes one commission of a crime to be labeled a criminal. One murder = a murderer. One lie = liar. One theft = a thief. One lust = adulterer. It is human nature to trivialize sin, but sin is serious. God tells us in James 2:10 that anyone who is guilty of one sin is guilty of all sin.

- **Christianity is narrow-minded.**

The Bible is clear that there is only one way. Jesus says in John 14:6, "I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me." In Acts 4:12 we learn that there is only one "name under heaven given among men by which we

must be saved." I you don't have the Son, don't have the Father. You're right, without Jesus, no hope for your transgression of the law. Jesus has the power to forgive sins...He openly offers that exclusive path to salvation to all who hear...would you reject Him? Put your faith in Him?

- **I don't agree with you.**

No one knows when they will face death. Did you know that 150,000 people die every 24 hours? That is not a scare tactic, that is reality. And after death there is guaranteed judgment. Jesus speaks of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man who is in Hell becomes desperate to tell his family about Jesus. Read Romans 2:4 – We plead with you to realize you are storing up wrath for yourself for the day of judgment...don't presume upon God's patience and kindness. Get right with the Lord. Consider our motives...we just want you to know and love Jesus and find eternal life. Paul in Romans 9 explains that he wishes he could sacrifice his own salvation for the salvation of someone else...but it doesn't work that way. You must decide.

THE BOTTOM LINE? There is no good objection for failing to follow Christ as your Lord. Do you have a good reason for putting Him off any longer?

Check out these resources for more answers!

- needgod.com
- gotquestions.org
- "Evidence for Jesus" on TrustworthyWord.com
www.trustworthyword.com/evidence-for-jesus

HOW CAN I BE SURE I AM A CHRISTIAN?

“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?— unless indeed you fail to meet the test!” (2 Corinthians 13:5, ESV)

1. Did a work start in you? if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)

2. Have you experienced God's Spirit in you? In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

3. Is there fruit of God's Spirit growing in you? (*Read the book of 1 John*)

1. Do you enjoy having fellowship w/Christ & Christians? (1 John 1:3)
2. Would people say you walk in the light or darkness? (1 John 1:6-7)
3. Do you admit and confess your sin? (1 John 1:8)
4. Are you obedient to God's Word? (1 John 2:3-5)

5. Does your life indicate you love God or the world? (1 John 2:15)
6. Is your life characterized by "doing what is right"? (1 John 2:29)
7. Do you seek to maintain a pure life? (1 John 3:3)
8. Do you see a decreasing pattern of sin in your life? (1 John 3:5-6)
[i.e., not continuing in sin as a way of life, not a total absence of sin.]
9. Do you demonstrate love for other Christians? (1 John 3:14)
10. Do you "walk the walk," vs just "talking the talk"? (1 John 3:18-19)
11. Do you maintain a clear conscience? (1 John 3:21)
12. Do you experience victory in your Christian walk? (1 John 5:4)

4. Do you endure in the faith? They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. (1 John 2:19)

Works of the Flesh vs. Fruits of the Spirit:

What best describes you?

The "works of the flesh" are evidence for unbelief and an eternity in Hell.

The "fruit of the Spirit" evidences God's saving work and eternity with Christ. (Galatians 5:16-24)

[19] Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, [20] idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, [21] envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

[22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,

patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. [24] And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Parable of the Sower:

What category of “soil” best describes your response to the good news about Jesus?

(Matthew 13:19-23 ESV)

1. [19] When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.
2. [20] As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, [21] yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.
3. [22] As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

Only the fourth (“good”) soil below describes a genuine Christian.

4. [23] As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.” (ESV)

Do You See These Three Characteristics in Your Life?

The Book of 1 John Helps Us to See Characteristics of Truly Converted and Saved Souls.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God

that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)

1. Obedience to God's Commands?

- If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. (1 John 1:6)
- Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. (1 John 2:4-6)
- If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination. (Proverbs 28:9)
- No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. (1 John 3:6)
- By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:10)
- For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3)

2. Forgiveness?

- Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. (1 John 2:9)
- For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matt 6:14-15)

3. Love?

- If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)
- No one who denies the Son has the Father. (1 John 2:23)
- But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:8)

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8)

EVIDENCE FOR JESUS

INTERNAL EVIDENCE (inside the Bible)

Attests to Jesus' Deity, Existence & Death

Scriptural Consistency, Prophetic Claims, Eyewitness Accounts, Internal Consistency, Corroborating & Circumstantial Evidence
Archaeological Congruence & Evidence, Scientific Evidence,
Jesus' Claims of Deity, Disciples Claims of Deity Jesus Predicts
His Death & Resurrection – Mk 8:31-33, 9:30-32; Mt 20:17-19

Prophecies and Fulfillment of Christ

1. Offspring of a Woman – Genesis 3:15, Luke 2:7, Revelation 12:5
2. Offspring of Abraham – Genesis 18:18, Acts 3:25, Matthew 1:1, Luke 3:34
3. Offspring of Isaac – Genesis 17:19, Matthew 1:2, Luke 3:34
4. Offspring of Jacob – Numbers 24:17, Genesis 28:14, Luke 3:34, Matthew 1:2
5. Descended from the Tribe of Judah – Genesis 49:10, Luke 3:33, Matthew 1:2-3
6. Heir to the Throne of David – Isaiah 9:7, 11:1-5, 2 Samuel 7:13, Jeremiah 23:5, Matt 1:1,6, Luke 1:32-33
7. Born in Bethlehem – Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1, Luke 2:4-7
8. Time of Birth – Daniel 9:25, Luke 2:1-2, 2:3-7
9. Born of a Virgin – Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:26-35
10. Slaughter of Infants – Jeremiah 31:15, Matthew 2:16-18
11. Escape into Egypt – Hosea 11:1, Matthew 2:14-15
12. A PROPHET, LIKE MOSES – Deuteronomy 18:15, John

- 1:45, 16:15, Acts 3:19-26
13. Ministry in Galilee – Isaiah 9:1-2, Matthew 4:12-16
14. Priest Like Melchizedek – Psalm 110:4, Zechariah 6:12-13, Hebrews 6:20, 5:5-6, 7:15-17
15. Rejected by Jews – Isaiah 53:3, Psalm 2:2, John 1:11, 5:43, Luke 4:29, 17:25
16. Characteristics – Isaiah 11:2, Psalm 45:7, Luke 2:52, 4:18
17. Triumphal Entry – Zechariah 9:9, Isaiah 62:11, John 12:13-14, Matthew 21:1-11
18. Betrayed by a Friend – Psalm 41:9, Mark 14:10
19. Sold for 30 Pieces of Silver, Potter's Field – Zechariah 11:12-13, Matthew 26:15, 27:6-7
20. Judas' Position Replaced – Psalm 109:7, Acts 1:18-20
21. False Witnesses' Accused Him – Psalm 27:12, Matthew 26:60-61
22. Silent When Accused – Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 26:62-63
23. Struck and Spit Upon – Isaiah 50:6, Mark 14:65
24. Hated Without Cause – Psalm 69:4, John 15:23
25. Suffered Vicariously – Isaiah 53:4, Matthew 8:16-17
26. Hands and Feet Pierced – Psalm 22:16, John 20:27
27. Crucified With Sinners – Isaiah 53:12, Matthew 27:38
28. Mocked and Insulted – Psalm 22:6-8, Matthew 27:39-40
29. Given Gall and Vinegar – Psalm 69:21, John 19:29
30. Hears Prophetic Words Used As Mockery – Psalm 22:8, Matthew 27:43
31. Prays for His Enemies – Psalm 109:4, Luke 23:34
32. Side Pierced – Zechariah 12:10, John 19:34
33. Soldiers Cast Lots for His Clothes – Psalm 22:18, Matthew 15:24
34. Not a Bone to Be Broken – Psalm 34:20, John 19:33
35. Buried With the Rich – Isaiah 53:9, Matthew 27:57-60
36. Resurrection – Psalm 16:10, Matthew 28:9
37. Ascension into Heaven – Psalm 68:18, Luke 24:50

Do you know the odds of Jesus fulfilling just 8 prophecies? It is 1 in 10 to the 17th power (1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000).

[illegible]

Consider the odds for all 300+ prophecies
([www.accordingtothescriptures.org/
prophecy/353prophecies.html](http://www.accordingtothescriptures.org/prophecy/353prophecies.html))

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God.

That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell.

You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

- C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

“The Bible was written over a span of 1500 years by forty different human authors in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek), on hundreds of subjects. And yet there is one consistent, non-contradictory theme that runs through it all: *God’s redemption of humankind.*” Hank Hanegraaff in “Bible Reliability”

www.equip.org/articles/bible-reliability-m-a-p-s-to-guide-you-through-bible-reliability/

Is Jesus Really God's Son?

Whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit. (Proverbs 12:17 ESV)

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. (1 Corinthians 15:19 ESV)

but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, (1 Peter 3:15 ESV)

- Baptism – Mark 1:9-11
- I AM Statements – Mark 14:62, John 4:26, 8:58, 18:6, Exodus 3:14, Isaiah 4:45
- Immanuel – Matthew 1:23
- See God – Matthew 5:8
- Seen Me, Seen Father – John 14:7
- Image of the Invisible God – John 1, Col 1:15-16
- Father and I Are One – John 10:30
- Alpha and Omega, Beginning and the End – Revelation 1:8, 22:20
- Making Self Equal with God – John 5:18
- Shares God's Glory – John 17:5-6
- He Is the New Temple – John 2:18-19
- He Is the Law Giver – Matthew 5-7
- Great High Priest – Hebrews 4:14

Was Jesus More Than Just a Good Man?

1. Virgin Birth – Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:26-35
2. Fulfillment of Prophecies – Ps 22, Isaiah 53:1-12
3. Angels Worship Him – Hebrews 1:6

4. Reception of Worship – John 9:38, 20:28
5. Transfiguration – Matthew 17:1-13
6. Claim of Disciples – John 20:28-29 – Thomas
7. Without Sin – Hebrews 4:15
8. Forgives Sin – John 9:2-6
9. Raising Others from the Dead – John 11:1-46
10. Resurrection and Ascension – Mt 28:1-15, Acts 1:4-11, Luke 23 & 24

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE (outside the Bible)

Attests to Jesus' Deity, Existence & Death

Manuscript & Bibliographical Evidence, Eyewitness Accounts, Corroborating & Circumstantial Evidence, Archaeological Evidence, & Scientific Evidence
Below quotes from: Paul Maier in *Did Jesus Really Exist?* & *Joseph and Josephus* www.4truth.net, also: *The Case for the Real Jesus* by: Lee Strobel

“there is more evidence that Jesus of Nazareth certainly lived than for most famous figures of the ancient past” Paul L. Maier, The Russell H. Seibert Professor of Ancient History, Western Michigan University

The Manuscript & Bibliographical Evidence: Ancient Works vs. Bible

Author	Work	Date Written	Earliest Manuscript s	Time Gap	Number of Manuscript s
Homer	<i>Iliad</i>	800 BC	c. 400 BC	400	1,757
Herodotus	<i>History</i>	480–425 BC	10th C	1,350	109
Sophocles	Plays	496–406 BC	3rd C BC	100–200	193
Plato	Tetralogies	400 BC	895	1,300	210
Caesar	<i>Gallie Wars</i>	100–44 BC	9th C	950	251
Livy	<i>History of Rome</i>	59 BC–AD 17	Early 5th C	400	150
Tacitus	<i>Annals</i>	AD 100	1st half: 850, 2nd: 1050 (AD 1100)	750–950	2 + 31 15 th C
Pliny, the Elder	<i>Natural History</i>	AD 49–79	5th C fragment: 1; Rem. 14–15th C	400 (750)	200
Thucydides	<i>History</i>	460–400 BC	3rd C BC (AD 900)	200 (1,350)	96
Demosthenes	Speeches	300 BC	Some fragments from 1 C. BC. (AD 1100)	1,100+ (1,400)	340
New Testament		AD 50–100	AD 130 (or less)	40	5,795

NOTE: This does not even show the Old Testament manuscript evidence (Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Massoretic, etc) or the thousands of other New Testament manuscripts available in other languages and ancient time periods (24,000+ total NT manuscripts, 5795 Greek mss, 8,000–10,000 Latin mss, 8,000 Ethiopic, Slavic & Armenian).
www.equip.org/articles/the-bibliographical-test-updated/#christian-books-2
www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/bib-docu.html

“We have more than 14,000 manuscripts and fragments of the Old Testament of three main types: (a) approximately 10,000 from the Cairo Geniza (storeroom) find of 1897, dating back as far as about AD. 800; (b) about 190 from the Dead Sea Scrolls find of 1947–1955, the oldest dating back to 250–200 B.C.; and (c) at least 4,314 assorted other copies. The short time between the original Old Testament manuscripts (completed around 400 B.C.) and the first extensive copies (about 250 B.C.) — coupled with the more than 14,000 copies that have been discovered — ensures the trustworthiness of the Old Testament text. The earliest quoted verses (Num. 6:24–26) date from 800–700 B.C.”
www.equip.org/articles/bible-reliability-m-a-p-s-to-guide-you-through-bible-reliability

“The interval, then, between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.” - Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Bible and Archaeology*, former director and principal librarian of the British Museum

CHRISTIAN HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Early Church Fathers (ccel.org) all of the early church pastors

and leaders establish consistency of the message and personal testimony and witness of the apostles and disciples of Christ

Justin Martyr (early Christian convert): “Born of pagan parents around A.D. 100 in Nablus (between Judea and Galilee), Justin tried and abandoned various philosophical schools until he found in Christianity the one true teaching. As a native of the Holy Land, Justin mentions sites associated with Jesus, such as the Bethlehem grotto in which he was born, and even such details as Jesus working as an apprentice carpenter in the shop of his foster father Joseph, where they specialized in producing such agricultural implements as yokes for oxen and plows.” (Paul Maier from <http://www.4truth.net>)

JEWISH HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Sacred Jewish Writings spell Jesus’ name accurately in Amaraic (the spoken language of the day, “Yeshua Hannotzri”—Joshua (Jesus) of Nazareth), writing of his arrest warrant in the *Mishna* (earliest collection of writings in the *Talmud*) “He shall be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and lured Israel to apostasy. Anyone who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf. Anyone who knows where he is, let him declare it to the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.”

The Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin 43a) “confirms Jesus’ crucifixion on the eve of Passover and the accusations against Christ of practicing sorcery and encouraging Jewish apostasy.”

Jewish History: Flavius Josephus a famous Jewish historian mentions “Jesus who is called the Christ” twice in his *Jewish Antiquities*. In the second of these, he tells of the death of Jesus’ half-brother James the Just of Jerusalem (20:200). In the longest first-century non-biblical reference to Christ,

Josephus writes: “At this time there was a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die.

But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have reported wonders. And the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has not disappeared to this day.” (18:63)

SECULAR HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Cornelius Tacitus, “one of the most reliable source historians of first-century Rome, wrote in his *Annals* a year-by-year account of events in the Roman Empire under the early Caesars. Among the highlights that he reports for the year A.D. 64 was the great fire of Rome. People blamed the emperor Nero for this conflagration since it happened ‘on his watch,’ but in order to save himself, Nero switched the blame to ‘the Christians,’ which is the first time they appear in secular history. Careful historian that he was, Tacitus then explains who ‘the Christians’ were: ‘Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus’ (15:44). He then goes on to report the horrors that were inflicted on the Christians in what became their first Roman persecution.”

“Tacitus, it should be emphasized, was not some Christian historian who was trying to prove that Jesus Christ really lived, but a pagan who despised Christians as a ‘disease,’ a term he uses later in the passage. Had Jesus never even existed, he would have been the first to expose that pathetic phantom on whom such cultists placed their trust. Were no other references to Jesus available, this passage alone would have been sufficient to establish his historicity. Skeptics realize this, and so have tried every imaginable means to discredit this passage—but to no avail. Manuscript analysis and computer studies have never found any reason to call this sentence into question, nor its context.”

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus also recorded events of the first

century in his famous *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*. He, too, regarded the Christians as a sect "professing a new and mischievous religious belief" (Nero 16) and doubtless cited "Chrestus" (Claudius 25).

Pliny the Younger "was the Roman governor of Bithynia—today, the northwestern corner of Turkey—and about the year 110 he wrote the emperor Trajan (98-117 A.D.), asking what to do about the Christians, a 'wretched cult' whom he mentions eight times in his letter. Christ himself is cited three times, the most famous instance referring to Christians '...who met on a fixed day to chant verses alternately among themselves in honor of Christ, as if to a god...' (Letter No. 96). Trajan's response, interestingly enough, suggests that Christians not be hunted out. (Ibid., No. 97). But again, if Christ were only a mythical character, these hostile sources would have been the first to emblazon that fact in derision."

Below references are from: www.gotquestions.org/did-Jesus-exist.html

Julius Africanus "quotes the historian *Thallus* in a discussion of the darkness which followed the crucifixion of Christ (Extant Writings, 18)."

Lucian of Samosata "was a second-century Greek writer who admits that Jesus was worshiped by Christians, introduced new teachings, and was crucified for them. He said that Jesus' teachings included the brotherhood of believers, the importance of conversion, and the importance of denying other gods. Christians lived according to Jesus' laws, believed themselves to be immortal, and were characterized by contempt for death, voluntary self-devotion, and renunciation of material goods."

Mara Bar-Serapion "confirms that Jesus was thought to be a wise and virtuous man, was considered by many to be the king of Israel, was put to death by the Jews, and lived on in the teachings of His followers."

"Then we have all the **Gnostic writings** (The Gospel of Truth, The Apocryphon of John, The Gospel of Thomas, The Treatise on Resurrection, etc.) that all mention Jesus. ... In fact, **we can almost reconstruct the gospel just from early non-Christian sources**: Jesus was called the Christ (Josephus), did "magic," led Israel into new teachings, and was hanged on Passover for them (Babylonian Talmud) in Judea (Tacitus), but claimed to be God and would return (Eliezar), which his followers believed, worshiping Him as God (Pliny the Younger)."

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

www.bibleplaces.com – photographs & descriptions of archaeological sites that evidence and corroborate the Bible
www.blog.bibleplaces.com – ongoing discoveries and archaeological updates

"TOP TEN BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY DISCOVERIES"

from the Biblical Archeology Society by James Brashler, Jane Cahill West, Ze'ev Meshel, John Monson, Hershel Shanks, Suzanne F. Singer, Lawrence E. Stager, James F. Strange
 (Available from <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/free-ebooks/>)

- The Nag Hammadi Library - Codices Shed New Light on Early Christian History
- The New 'Ain Dara Temple: Closest Solomonic Parallel
- The Tel Dan ("David") Stela
- Mona Lisa of the Galilee
- "Yahweh and His Asherah" The Kuntillet 'Ajrud Ostraca
- St. Peter's House: Has the House Where Jesus Stayed in Capernaum Been Found?
- The Siloam Pool: Where Jesus Cured the Blind Man
- Ashkelon's Arched Gate: When Canaanites and Philistines Ruled Ashkelon
- Jerusalem's Stepped-Stone Structure: Jerusalem in David and Solomon's Time

- Jerusalem's Babylonian Siege Tower: Remains of the Babylonian Siege

More Amazing Archaeological Discoveries

A Common Flood Story, The Code of Hammurabi, The Nuzi Tablets, The Existence of Hittites, The Merneptah Stele, Biblical Cities Attested Archaeologically, Shishak's Invasion of Judah, The Moabite Stone, Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, Burial Plaque of King Uzziah, Hezekiah's Siloam Tunnel Inscription, The Sennacherib Prism, The Cylinder of Cyrus the Great
(Available from: <http://www.equip.org/articles/biblical-archaeology-factual-evidence-to-support-the-historicity-of-the-bible/>)

RESOURCES FOR FUTURE STUDY

What does God say through the Bible?

www.gotquestions.org – almost 400,000 answers to life, spiritual, and Bible questions.

Is Christianity True?

- *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist* – by Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, shows how there is more evidence for Christianity than evolution/naturalism
- *The Case for Christ* – by Lee Strobel – simply explains much of the evidence for Christianity
- *Scientific Facts in the Bible: 100 Reasons to Believe the Bible is Supernatural in Origin* by Ray Comfort
- *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell

Creation vs. Evolution

- www.evolutionvsgod.com – A 38-minute video, with over 1.7 million views, of interviews with atheist professors and scholars concerning their beliefs in evolution.
- www.answersingenesis.org - Provides answers to questions about the Bible regarding issues such as creation, evolution, science, and the age of the earth

- www.reasons.org - explains scientific discoveries and shows how they continue to evidence the truthfulness of Scripture
- *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion & Naturalism* by Alvin Plantinga

Archaeological Evidence

www.bibleplaces.com – www.blog.bibleplaces.com
- www.biblicalarchaeology.org/free-ebooks

Comparison of Christianity with other World Religions

www.4truth.net – A reasoned approach to Christianity

Additional Resources

- *Life's Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy* by Ronald H. Nash
- *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics* by William Lane Craig
- *Reasons for Faith: Making a Case for the Christian Faith* Norman L. Geisler and Chad V. Meister

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

For helpful resources, download one of our free books like *Week by Week Bible Reading* at www.trustworthyword.com/free-books

10 Reasons to Read and Study the Bible

1. **Encounter God** - The Bible is where we meet God and hear His voice and truth!
2. **Know God** - We don't just seek to know about God, but to relate to and grow in love for Him.
3. **Glorify God** - We desire to grow in holiness and imitation of Christ in order to honor God.
4. **Experience God's Past Work** - We learn from God's revealed historical work among humanity.
5. **Understand God's Present Work** - We hear how God desires to work in & through us today.
6. **Look Forward to God's Future Work** - We trust in His promised future return and work.
7. **Protect from Satan's Attacks** - We remember our real enemy in Satan, his demons, the world, and our flesh and are reminded that His truth is a spiritual weapon of offense and defense.
8. **Share True Hope with Others** - We evangelistically speak God's hope, love, and Gospel truth.
9. **Live Life According to God's Wisdom** - We submit to

our Father's loving instruction for life

10. **Obedience** - God has commanded us to listen and obey His voice through the Bible.

10 Ways to Read the Bible

As you seek to read the Bible, ensure to prioritize time to take the Bible for study and meditation: understanding, absorbing, internalizing, memorizing, and applying the Scriptures.

1. **Through the Bible** - Read the whole Bible from beginning to end or in some other order!
 - Try about esvbible.org/resources/reading/ or www.biblestudytools.com/bible-reading-plan/
2. **New Testament** - If you read a chapter per weekday, you can read the whole Bible in a year
3. **Proverbs** - There are 31 Proverbs, so seek to read the one corresponding to the calendar day (i.e. read Proverbs 17 on the 17th day of the month, Proverbs 18 on 18th day of the month, etc.).
4. **Psalms** - There are 150 Psalms, so choose a Psalm each day to help guide your prayers (i.e. on the 17th day of the month select either Psalm 17, 47, 77, 107, or 137 to read and instruct you in prayer).
 - See Don Whitney's *Praying the Bible*
5. **Read slowly through Romans** - Go deeper and digest and study theology.
 - Use a resource like Wayne Grudem's *Christian Beliefs* or *Systematic Theology* to help you!
6. **Pick a single Bible book to read** - John: learn the basics of Jesus' life and death. James: know and apply God's wisdom. 1 John: ensure you are a believer.
7. **Subscribe to a faithful devotional aid to compliment**

your Bible reading

- Try www.biblestudytools.com/devotionals
- 8. **Study a character. Search and read wherever their name appears.**
- Check out *The Baker Encyclopedia of Bible People*
- 9. **Study a place. Search and read wherever that place is mentioned.**
- Check out www.bibleplaces.com/sites for some incredible descriptions and pictures!
- 10. **Study a topic. Search and learn about what God teaches about key issues.** Check out GotQuestions.org

Where did the Bible come from? What is the Bible?

The Bible was spoken and revealed from God into the hearts of men that the Scriptures might be written and shared among God's children. Some of these writings are historical descriptions, prophetic writings, poetry and songs, wisdom, and letters. Although written by the hands of men, these writings were not written by the will of man, but were inspired and given by the power and will of God's Spirit. The Bible is the specific revelation by God about Himself, His work, and His plan for all of humanity so that we may love, trust, and obey Him. The whole Bible is breathed out by God, to make His people wise for salvation and to equip His people to lovingly teach, train, correct, and confront with God's truths (2 Timothy 3:10-17)

"And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1:19-21

"For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." 2 Peter 1:16

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deuteronomy 29:29

Can we expect more books to be discovered or added to the Bible?

No. God has clearly spoken in the Scriptures and across early church history such that the current collection of recognized biblical books (canon) is complete. This process of recognizing the words of God comes through the recognition of the authorship as a biblical prophets or apostle, the self-attestation of the book within the Scriptures themselves, and their continuity with other books of the Bible.

Does the Bible have errors?

The original writings (autographs) have no errors at all. The ancient copies (manuscripts) we possess have small differences between them. These differences have primarily arisen from those who were copying and translating them. These differences have been recognized, described and corrected via a modern-day comparison of the thousands of manuscripts to produce reliable Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) compilations that have been reliably translated into many languages. None of the manuscript differences affect or speak to major theological issues but are most commonly mere grammatical issues. Comprehensive resources are available to explain the process of translation and decisions made concerning the compilation of manuscripts.

Is the Bible trustworthy?

Yes. The Bible shows its own trustworthiness through its self-attestation in the lives of believers and its internal consistency over thousands of years at the hands of many writers. The

Bible is clearly seen to be the most accurate book in all of human history through archaeological, historical, scientific, and documentary evidence. The biblical content clearly reveals that its author is God Himself. The Bible has the most and best manuscript evidence, seen in its thousands of copies that were written soon after its original writing and discovered in a multiplicity of geographic locations. No literary work in all of human history is comparable to the trustworthiness of the Bible.

"He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it." Titus 1:9

"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account." Hebrews 4:12-13

"The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces." Psalm 119:72

Is the KJV the best translation?

The King James Version (KJV) of the Bible is a good translation of the Bible. When it was written only a few manuscripts had been discovered, which limited the scope and accuracy of its translation. Since its translation hundreds of years ago, many additional archaeological discoveries have been made which provided thousands of more trustworthy manuscripts in the twentieth century. Many modern day translations have been written since the KJV translation, providing plenty of accurate biblical translations. Many people prefer the KJV because of their personal familiarity with it. Many others struggle with the KJV since it uses Old English, a language that is antiquated, no longer spoken, and difficult for many modern day English

speakers to understand.

Many teachers give the false impression that the KJV is the only accurate Bible to be used. This is a touchy issue, one which must be handled with great care and humility. Such teachers may have genuine motives in preventing any corruption of the Biblical translations, but such opinions are often rooted in human pride and personal ignorance of the translation process and manuscript evidence. Those who prefer the KJV have the joy of continuing in their freedom of this preference but must humbly encourage and accept the fact that many prefer translations based on a more comprehensive collection of biblical manuscripts and translated into the common languages of the day.

Suggested book: *The King James Only Controversy* by James White

Why are there so many translations?

When translating the Bible, the translators must make decisions to translate either literally with a word for word approach (formal) or with a thought for thought approach (dynamic equivalence). These two approaches are both accurate and helpful. Some writings are written with more simple wording to recognize the differences in literary capabilities of different people and communities.

There are also other translations based upon a paraphrase approach. The paraphrase approach is when the Biblical text is not translated but is instead summarized and restated. Although such an approach may be helpful for children's Bibles and chronological Bible storying, it is not a good approach for maturing and literate Christians.

The English language is blessed to have many translations, but some languages possess only one translation. Many languages have yet to have the Bible translated. Although the multiple translations are extremely beneficial, we must recognize and be aware that there are translations that make unhelpful and

heretical changes to the meaning of the biblical text.

There are modern translations that have removed gender specific language (NIV), removed references to Christ's deity (Jehovah's Witnesses' New World Translation), added books to the Bible (Catholicism), or subjugated the Bible to other books and authorities (Catholicism and Mormonism).

"Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son." 2 John 1:9

Which translation is the best?

Assuming the translation is faithful to the biblical text, the best translation is the one that you can easily read and understand. As some grow in their reading and comprehension abilities, they may find that more formal translations are most helpful to them in the process of study.

Are devotional guides and books ok?

Devotional guides and books can be helpful for Christians as an aid and tool to enhancing their personal study of God's Word. Devotional guides and books can also be a dangerous impediment to spiritual growth if Christians never grow in their own abilities to study Scripture. True Christians seek to mature and should never be content with solely a second hand experience with God as related through others. The Bible is clearly understood (perspicuity of the Bible), which means that it is intelligible through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. If you struggle with your own personal and direct study of God's Word, pray to God and seek help from others in order to enhance and increase your ability to hear God's voice through the study of His Word.

How can I go about reading more of the Bible?

Make a plan. Make time. Be intentional. The reading of God's Word is essential for spiritual growth. The best plan is the one in which you will be able to follow. It could be as simple as picking

a Bible book and reading through it one day at a time. It could involve a goal like reading through the entire New Testament in a year by reading one chapter per weekday. Many books, Bibles, and apps have a plan for reading through the entire Bible in a year. We tend to prioritize that which we find valuable. Prioritize and make time for the reading of God's Word, it is of infinite value.

"the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb." Psalm 19:9-10

Is the New Testament more important than the Old Testament?

What is their relationship?

All of Scripture is valuable and trustworthy. The Bible is one big story, not two separate sections (Hebrews 1:1-2, 2 Timothy 3:14-17). God speaks not only through his prophets, but also through the life of Christ. The expression that "the New is in the Old concealed and the Old is in the New revealed" helps us to understand this relationship. We need to give equal attention to the study of both the Old Testament and New Testament for "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." James 1:17

"Therefore I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold. Therefore I consider all your precepts to be right; I hate every false way." Psalm 119:127-128

How can I understand the meaning of the Bible?

The best way to understand the Bible is to spend time in it. Study Bibles, commentaries, and online resources (GotQuestions.org, BibleStudyTools.com, and BibleHub.com). Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself, and seek answers to, as you

discover the meaning of the Scriptures:

- Who is writing this?
- Who is it being written to?
- What type of writing is this?
- What does the Scripture mean?
- What do we learn about God?
- What do we learn about God's work?
- What do we learn about ourselves?
- Why does this passage matter?
- How do I need to respond to and apply these truths to my life? (Is there a sin to avoid, a command to obey, an example to follow, a prayer to offer, a truth to remember, an attitude to change, or a teaching to share?)

What does it mean to meditate on God's Word?

Meditation on God's Word is the filling up of one's heart and mind with the truths of God. As these truths are internalized, we are to spend more time in mental contemplation and processing over His truth in order to grow in our faith and to share our faith with others. Meditation happens when we read, listen to, pray over, learn, think, speak, write, and share about God's truths.

"Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." Joshua 1:7-8

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Romans 12:2

How can I share and speak God's truths lovingly to others?

Memorizing the Scripture is the best way to prepare to share God's truths. We should pray to God for opportunities and courage to witness. When we pray according to His will we know he hears and answers us (1 John 5:14-15), and we know it is His will that we be His witnesses (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8). The more we meditate, study, and memorize God's Word, the more our hearts and lips will naturally and courageously bear witness to the glory and goodness of God.

We must remember that we have a responsibility to warn others of God's coming judgment (Ezekiel 3:17-19 & 33:7-9). When we share the Gospel we ought to communicate the truths concerning God as Creator (Colossians 1:16-17, Hebrews 4:13, 9:27), mankind's sinful rebellion (Romans 3:23), Christ's sacrifice and gift (Romans 6:23), and our need to respond to God as our Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9). The Gospel must be clearly spoken from our lips but also must be faithfully lived out in our lives, marriages, families, and workplaces (Ephesians 5 & 6).

Here are three great online resources to learn how to share your faith:

- ***The Way of the Master*** (Ray Comfort) www.livingwaters.com
[our personal favorite!]
- *Share Jesus without Fear* (William Fay)
www.sharejesuswithoutfear.com
- *Steps to Peace with God* (Billy Graham) www.peacewithgod.net

Many people fear the questions that may arise when witnessing, but it is ok to answer that "I do not know, but will find out." A great resource for discovering God's answers to difficult questions is **www.gotquestions.org**. Finally we must always remember that our calling is not simply to make converts, but to make disciples, connecting believers into church fellowships where they can grow in their love and knowledge of God.

How can I recognize false teachers and false prophets?

The best way to recognize false teachers is to listen to their teachings and watch their lives (Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18:15-22, Matthew 12:33-37, Galatians 1:8-9, 2 Peter 2, Jude 1:1-10, 2 John 1:9, James 3:1). If their teachings and lives do not line up with Scriptural truths, they may be false teachers, false prophets, or immature believers who do not need to be teaching or leading.

"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction." 2 Peter 2:1

"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:8-9

Steps to Studying the Bible

- **Pray** before Studying the Bible - ask God to open your mind and heart to His truths
- **Read** the Bible - follow a plan, be disciplined, seek accountability, use an audio bible such as found from faithcomesbyhearing.com ("Bible.is" as an app)
- **Listen** to Faithful Teachings - commit to regularly listen to your pastor's and others' teachings while diligently checking the Scripture to ensure what they say is true (Acts 17:11).
- **Study** the Bible - slowly and intentionally dig deep into the Scriptures
- **Meditate** on the Bible - remove distractions and seek the work of the Spirit for your understanding and application of these truths in your life
- **Pray** through the Bible - use the Scriptures to guide your prayer. The Psalms are the best for this, but you can pray as the Lord leads for conviction and turning from sin as well as

for the increased maturity in Christ

- **Memorize** the Bible - write, speak out loud, draw, use games, acronyms, songs, and repetition, recite portions of verses and progress to the whole verse, keep accountability to your memorization goals
- **Teach** the Bible - find someone to mentor and teach, learning how to study the Bible, in teaching you will learn and grow most rapidly
- **Evangelize** with the Bible - the Bible is meant to be shared, focus on Gospel presentation passages to use in witnessing
- **Pray** for God to remind and deepen you into the truths of God, asking Him to help you to obey His Word

Passages Emphasizing the Importance of the Study of the Bible

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. - 2 Timothy 2:15

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. - Isaiah 55:10-11

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. - John 5:39-40

Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?" - Mark 12:24

You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim

in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra - which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. 12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:10-17

Command and teach these things. 12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. - 1 Timothy 4:11-16

Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. - James 1:21-25

take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, - Ephesians 6:17

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. - Revelation 22:18-19

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. - Hebrews 4:12-13

If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, 4 he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. - 1 Timothy 6:3-5

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. - Hebrews 1:1-2

10 TIPS FOR BETTER BIBLE STUDY

"Half our fears arise from neglect of the Bible." Charles H. Spurgeon

1. Pick a Plan

Ever hear the expression, "a goal without a plan is just a wish"? If you want to draw closer to the Lord through the Bible you've got to make a plan that is "SMART" or 1)Specific, 2)Measurable, 3)Achievable, 4)Realistic, and 5)Timely

2. Be Realistic, Keep It Simple

Consider your past and present situations as you evaluate your goals for the future!

3. Set a Time

Are you a morning person or an evening person? Do you need to wake up earlier or block off a particular time of day a little better?

4. Pick, Prepare, & Protect a Place

Where is a spot (chair, room, car) where you avoid distractions while being focused on reading or hearing God's Word?

5. Make Reminders

What will help you to remember daily? Leaving your Bible or devotional out in a particular spot? Sticky note? Dry eraser on the mirror or fridge? Phone app notification? Repeating calendar event?

6. Keep Track of Your Progress

Use a bookmark, check off a reading plan, use a chart to see what you've accomplished!

7. Have a Catch-Up Plan, Readjust If Necessary

Block off time (evening, weekend, a day per month) to pick up when you inevitably miss a reading or day. Find yourself getting too far behind, adjust your goals to be more realistic and achievable or stretch out your goal's end date.

8. Create Accountability

Aim for the same goal with a child, spouse, friend, or family member. Share your goal and progress or setbacks online or with others for encouragement. Confess your failures or struggles to receive wisdom or prayer.

9. Use Tools for the Journey

Whether it is highlighters, gel pens, or a commentary, concordance, atlas, or app - find practical resources that make your journey more enjoyable and profitable.

10. Celebrate Small Wins Along the Way

Make celebratory steps and incentives as you keep up for a month, finish a book, or complete your next chapter. Make an end of the year prize that you look forward to using a small reward!

"The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts." George Mueller

HOW TO DOWNLOAD AND USE THE GIDEON APP

What is the Gideon Bible App? The Gideon Bible App (www.gideons.bible.is) offers mobile access to Scripture in a multitude of languages including text and dramatized Audio Bibles so you can read and listen to the Bible in your own language.

Why is a Bible App so important and essential? Mobile digital time (phones, tablets, watches, etc.) is significantly higher than those who use desktop/laptop computers for accessing the internet. 80% of all internet users own a smartphone. Mobile device users access digital media 89% of the time through apps, not through websites, using mobile apps for over an hour per day.

How can I download the Gideon Bible App? Go to iTunes or Google Play via your mobile device and search “Gideon Bible App”

How can I change the language of the Bible? What languages are available? When you initially open the app, click on the “languages” or “country” tab in the top-center of the screen and select one of the 1,100+ available languages. You can also access this from the default page by clicking on “Bibles.”

How can I look up a specific Bible book, chapter, or verse? The

easiest way is once you have selected your Bible translation, click on the top center bible book and chapter reference (i.e., “Genesis 1” is the default) and scroll to select the book and chapter. Once you are in the correct book and chapter, you can scroll to select the desired verse or passage. There is also a search bar in the left menu within which you can type the specific verse address.

How can I bookmark or highlight a specific Bible verse or passage? How can I share a specific Bible verse or passage? Press and hold on the desired verse to select the verse or passage you desire. Then select the left red bookmark, yellow highlighter, notebook, or sharing tool

How can I take notes in my Bible app? How can I sync my Bible bookmarks, highlights, and notes? In order to take notes in your Bible app you will need to sign up for an account and log in. Once you have an established account your data will be synced on any logged in platform you use.

How can I search for a particular passage, word or theme in the Bible? Hit the three horizontal line button in the upper left corner to pull open the left menu. In the upper left search bar (next to the magnifying glass) you can type in the passage, word or theme you desire to search.

How can I listen to the Bible? Under the Bible selection, hit the play button (sideways triangle) to play the current text. From the same toolbar you can download (downward pointed arrow), advance or rewind (sideways pointed double triangle) the chapter.

How can I read or listen to the Bible offline? Select “Downloads” from the left side of your screen and select the particular Bible language and translation you want to download for offline use. You then will select to download the “Text” (Old Testament or New Testament in its entirety) or “Audio (selecting the specific book or chapters you want to download). You will need a free account to download the text for offline use. You can click “Edit”

in the upper right-hand corner to delete any audio files that you have downloaded (to save memory).

What is the link on “Help in Time of Need” for? This is a topical index of Bible verses that you will find greatly helpful in discovering God’s truths for every time and season of life.

What is the link on “Help with Life Problems” for? This is a selection of common temptations and sins so that you can find God’s truths concerning His will in your life.

What is the link on “Decision” for? Select “Decision” for a biblical Gospel presentation, opportunity to respond, encouragement for church involvement, and biblical assurance for new believers.

What is the link on “Character” for? Select “Character” for a topical presentation of Bible verses concerning the character God seeks for believers to model in their lives as a Gospel witness.

How can I share the Gideon Bible App? Click the “Share the App” feature to select how you would like to share the app (text, email, WhatsApp, social media, AirDrop, etc.)

What is the link on “Settings” for? This area allows you to change the Bible translation you are using, the text size, theme, and font, account setup/login, and some informational links.

What is the link on “Donate” for? The Gideons provide this Bible app free of charge and have distributed over 2 billion Bibles through the generous donations of Christians all over the world.

Who is The Gideons International? The Gideons International (gideons.org) is a non-profit ministry that is dedicated to getting God’s word to everyone, everywhere.

Who is Faith Comes by Hearing? Faith Comes By Hearing (www.faithcomesbyhearing.com) is the world leader in Bible recordings, seeking to provide free audio and text access to God’s

Word in every language available.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. [5] You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. [6] And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. [7] You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. [8] You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. [9] You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

TOP ONE YEAR BIBLES

“It takes a whole Bible to make a whole Christian.” ~ Alistair Begg

The YouVersion Bible App – www.youversion.com

Installed on over 500 million devices, has numerous reading plans, translations, and audio bibles.

Faith Comes by Hearing Bible App -www.bible.is

The best audio Bible app and website available for free listening to the Bible.

The One Year Bible – by Tyndale House Publishers

One of the most popular approaches to reading the entire Bible in a year. A digital version can be found in the YouVersion Bible app as well. Various translations are available as well.

The One Year Bible Companion – by Tyndale House Publishers

This companion book offers answers to some of the most common questions that come along with your daily readings.

The One Year Chronological Bible – by Tyndale House Publishers

This chronological approach helpfully guides you through parallel passages in a smooth, easy-to-use format. If you’ve never read the Bible chronologically this is the easiest way to start.

Reading God’s Story: A Chronological Daily Bible and Reader’s Guide to the Bible: A Chronological Bible Reading Plan – by George Guthrie

A 52-week chronological Bible coupled with a commentary guide and small group discussion questions.

“The Bible was not given for our information but for our transformation. ... Read the Bible, read the Bible! Let no religious book take its place. Through all my perplexities and distresses, I seldom read any other book, and I as rarely felt the want of any other.” ~ Dwight Lyman Moody

TOP CHILDREN'S BIBLES

The Beginner's Bible: Timeless Children's Stories

One of the most popular story Bibles for younger children.

The Big Picture Story Bible – by David R. Helm and Gail Schoonmaker

Beautiful illustrations for young children.

Bible Storybook from The Bible App & YouVersion

Excellent for toddlers through early elementary. Images connect well with the free interactive Bible app that young children will love.

The One Year Children's Bible – by Rhona Davies

Perfect for elementary school age children and a wonderful length for family devotional time. One for every day of the year.

Foundations for Kids: A 260-day Bible Reading Plan for Kids - by Robby Gallaty

A workbook-style approach that engages elementary school age children well as they journey through each of the 260 chapters of the New Testament.

It's All About Jesus Bible Storybook (padded): 100 Bible Stories (One Big Story)

100 of the most important stories of the Bible with a free interactive app. Great for elementary school age and family devotional times.

The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name – by Sally Lloyd-Jones

A good fit for older element through high school (and helpful for adults too) to piece together the 44 most important stories of the Bible in a simple and flowing format.

The One Year Children's Bible for Kids – Challenge Edition – by Tyndale Publishers

Perfect for middle and high school students. Requires about one page a day of reading that takes readers through the most biblical significant passages.

Cornerstones - 200 Questions & Answers to Learn Truth – by Brian Dembowczyk

A simple question and answer format to the most important truths of the Christian faith. Great for all ages. A more in-depth parent guide is available that would be a good fit for a year-long small group study.

WHAT BIBLE VERSES ARE GOOD FOR CHRISTIANS TO MEMORIZE?

TOP GOSPEL VERSES

The Good News of Jesus is important for Christians for us to daily remember for our identity in and gratitude towards God. Through it we enjoy the goodness of God & prepare ourselves for Gospel-sharing!

GOD'S GLORY

- Psalms 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." (ESV)

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

- Mark 12:30 "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

MAN'S SIN

- Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
- Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

CHRIST'S LOVE

- John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."
- Romans 5:8 "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY

- John 14:6 "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
- Acts 4:12 "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
- 1 John 2:23 "No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also."

OUR SALVATION

- Romans 10:9 "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."
- 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

ETERNAL LIFE

- 1 John 5:12-13 "Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life."
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

MORE AT: www.trustworthyword.com/what-bible-verses-are-good-to-memorize-for-evangelism

More Helpful Verses for Common Life Issues and Struggles:

Addictions: 1 Corinthians 6:12 "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything."

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-addictions

Dating: Proverbs 12:4 "A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones."

- www.trustworthyword.com/dating

Depression: "Mark 14:35-36 "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

- www.trustworthyword.com/depression and www.trustworthyword.com/suicide
- www.trustworthyword.com/mental-health

Fear: Hebrews 13:6 So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

- www.trustworthyword.com/enemies and www.trustworthyword.com/risk

Forgiveness: Colossians 3:13 "bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."

- www.trustworthyword.com/forgiveness

Heaven: John 14:3 "I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-heaven

Hell: Revelation 20:15 "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-hell

Identity: Romans 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation

for those who are in Christ Jesus."

- Romans 8:31 "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-christian-identity

Love: John 13:34 "As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-love

Lustful Temptations: Matthew 5:28 "everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

- Hebrews 13:4 "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."
- 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 "Flee from sexual immorality...your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."
- www.trustworthyword.com/sexual-health
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sexual-sin
- www.trustworthyword.com/protect-from-porn
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-homosexuality

Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage: Ephesians 5:33 "However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband." 1 Corinthians 7:1 2-15

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-marriage-roles
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-divorce-and-remarriage

Money: Hebrews 13:5 "Keep your life free from love of money,

and be content with what you have, for he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'

- Acts 20:35 "by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-money

Physical, Emotional, and Relational Health: 1 Corinthians 6:20 "So glorify God in your body."

- 1 Timothy 4:8 "bodily training is of some value"
- www.trustworthyword.com/biblical-health

Politics: 1 Timothy 2:1-2 "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way."

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-voting-and-politics

Prayer & Fasting: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

- www.trustworthyword.com/prayer-fasting

Sin: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? ... And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sin
- www.trustworthyword.com/human-sin

Suffering, Death, & Life: Romans 8:18 "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

- Hebrews 9:27 "it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment"
- Philippians 1:21 "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-suffering-worry-death-life-and-heaven

Work & Retirement: Ephesians 6:7 "rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man"

- Ephesians 5:15-17 "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."
- www.trustworthyword.com/work-place-health
- www.trustworthyword.com/retirement-health

Worry: Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life"

- Philippians 4:5-7 "The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-worry

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SIN?

Understanding Our Sin through the Ten Commandments

Commandments #1-4 - Love the Lord

And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" [29] Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. [30] And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' (Mark 12:28-30 ESV)

New Testament Listings of Sin Identities

Romans 1:26-32 · 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 · Galatians 5:19-21 · 1 Timothy 1:9-11 · Revelation 21:8

"the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so." (Romans 8:7)

1. "You shall have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:3)

- They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)

- drunkards ... revilers (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV)
- the faithless, the detestable (Revelation 21:8 ESV)
- drunkenness (Galatians 5:19-21 ESV)

2. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. [5] You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, [6] but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments." (Exodus 20:4-6)

- haters of God, insolent ... inventors of evil ... ruthless. (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)
- idolaters (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV)
- cowardly ... sorcerers, idolaters (Revelation 21:8 ESV)
- idolatry, sorcery (Galatians 5:19-21 ESV)

3. "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain." (Exodus 20:7)

- Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' [34] But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, [35] or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. [36] And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. [37] Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil. (Matthew 5:33-37 ESV)
- And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, [9] but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. [10] And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

(Luke 12:8-10 ESV)

- haughty, boastful (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)

4. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. [9] Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, [10] but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. [11] For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” (Exodus 20:8-11)

- You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:15 ESV)
- Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. [17] These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. (Colossians 2:16-17 ESV)
- for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. [11] Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. (Hebrews 4:10-11 ESV)
- foolish, faithless, heartless (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)

Commandments #5-10 - Love Others as Yourself

The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ (Mark 12:31 ESV)

5. “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.” (Exodus 20:12)

- disobedient to parents (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)
- for those who strike their fathers and mothers (1 Timothy 1:9-11 ESV)

6. “You shall not murder.” (Exodus 20:13)

- You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ [22] But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. (Matthew 5:21-22 ESV)
- malice. ... murder, strife ... maliciousness. (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)
- enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions (Galatians 5:19-21 ESV)
- for murderers (1 Timothy 1:9-11 ESV)
- murderers (Revelation 21:8 ESV)

7. “You shall not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14)

- You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ [28] But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28 ESV)
- It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ [32] But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. (Matthew 5:31-32 ESV)
- For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; [27] and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. [28] And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

(Romans 1:26-28 ESV)

- sexually immoral ... nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV)
- sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality ... orgies, and things like these. (Galatians 5:19-21 ESV)
- the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, (1 Timothy 1:9-11 ESV)
- the sexually immoral (Revelation 21:8 ESV)

8. **"You shall not steal." (Exodus 20:15)**

- nor thieves, nor the greedy ... swindlers (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV)

9. **"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (Exodus 20:16)**

- deceit ... They are gossips, slanderers (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)
- enslavers, liars, perjurers, (1 Timothy 1:9-11 ESV)
- all liars (Revelation 21:8 ESV)

10. **"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's." (Exodus 20:17)**

- covetousness ... They are full of envy ... (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)
- envy (Galatians 5:19-21 ESV)

Judgment Is Sure: Seek Christ's Atonement

- And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment (Hebrews 9:27 ESV)
- As it is written: 'There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹²All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even

one.'" (Romans 3:10-12 ESV)

- Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)
- Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? ... And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV)
- Now the works of the flesh are evident ... I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21 ESV)
- understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane ... and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, [11] in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted (1 Timothy 1:9-11 ESV)
- their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death. (Revelation 21:8 ESV)

"if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. [10] For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved." (Romans 10:9-10 ESV)

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT HEAVEN?

Who goes to Heaven? 5 scriptures to read: (the most thorough distinction between believers and non-believers is found in 1 John)

1. Romans 10:9-10 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. [10] For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
2. Romans 10:13-17 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” [14] How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? [15] And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” [16] But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” [17] So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
3. Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

4. John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
5. Revelation 21:27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

What Happens When A True Follower Of Christ Dies?

7 Amazing Promises For The Christian In Heaven

1. Your soul is carried by angels into God's presence and paradise for all eternity. (Luke 16:22, 2 Corinthians 5:6-8, 1 Thessalonians 4:17, Luke 23:43, Revelation 21:3, 22:3-4).
2. You are declared righteous and freely forgiven under God's judgment and justice. (Hebrews 9:27-28, Romans 14:10-12, Revelation 20:11-12; 21:6-7, 27)
3. You will be transformed and given a glorious, powerful, and spiritual resurrection body but yet be able to consciously think, feel, speak, see, and remember. (1 Corinthians 15:42-44, Philippians 3:20-21, Luke 16:19-31, Revelation 6:9-11; 21:9-27)
4. You will enter into an amazing service to and worship of God's majesty and glory alongside angels and recognizable believers from all people groups. (John 17:24, Matthew 17:1-5, Luke 16:19-31, Revelation 7:9, 13-17)
5. You will never be suffering, ashamed, sad, grieved, hungry, thirsty, in pain, or die again. (Isaiah 25:8, Luke 20:36, Revelation 7:13-17; 21:4)

6. You will experience a place of eternal rest which is far better than anything you could experience on earth. (John 14:2-3, Philippians 1:23, Revelation 14:13)

7. You will receive an eternal reward, inheritance, prize that can never be removed. (Daniel 12:13, Colossians 3:23-24, 1 Corinthians 9:25)

Here are just a few of those promises to see for yourself!

Luke 23:43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

Philippians 1:23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far

Hebrews 9:27-28 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Romans 14:10-12 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; 11 for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Where does my spirit/soul go when I die? When do I go to Heaven?

Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

John 14:2-3 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

2 Corinthians 5:1-9 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

What about 1 Thessalonians 4?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1 Corinthians 15:51-55 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable,

and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

What about New Jerusalem? Revelation 21, Isaiah 65:17-25, Daniel 7-12

Will I recognize my loved ones in Heaven? Mount of Transfiguration (Moses & Elijah, Matthew 17), Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), Multitude of Many Nations (Revelation 7)

MORE BIBLICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF HEAVEN

Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables

him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Matthew 6:20-21 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Revelation 21:3-4 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Revelation 7:9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding

palm branches in their hands.

Revelation 7:13-17 Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes--who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Luke 20:36 and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.

Luke 23:43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

John 14:2-3 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

John 17:24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

Philippians 1:23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far

1 Thessalonians 4:17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

Colossians 3:23-24 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is

the Lord Christ you are serving.

Daniel 12:13 "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

1 Corinthians 9:25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

Isaiah 25:8 he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.

Revelation 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT HELL?

Is Hell real? What is it like? Who goes there? Hell is a place of real, eternal, conscious torment under the righteous judgment of God. It is mentioned over 160 times in the Bible, describing a place of real, ongoing punishment. Over 170,000 people die every 24 hours, and one's eternity, whether in Heaven or Hell, is essential to consider. If you do not believe, trust in, and love Jesus Christ, we pray that God uses these truths to warn you of His holy wrath and justice so that He might stir you repent of your sin and trust in Christ. If you are a biblical, born-again Christian, may the Lord use these truths to produce in you a passion for evangelism and missions and to deepen in you a gratitude for His mercy grace!

Why do people go to Hell? God is righteous, holy and morally perfect. He has revealed Himself to all of Creation. People go to Hell because they have rebelled against God, dishonored God, and disobeyed His law (Romans 1:18-23; 2:15-16). Mankind has no excuse. Humanity has demonstrated a willingness and choice to ignore God (James 1:13-16). Since they have violated the law in their rebellion, punishment and justice must be given (Romans 3:10,23, 5:12, 6:23; John 3:18).

What about people who have never heard about Jesus and the Gospel? Will they go to Hell? God tells us in Acts 4:12 that

there is only one name by which we may obtain salvation, the name of Jesus. He also explains in John 14:6 that none can come to God the Father except through Jesus. We also learn in 1 John 2:23 that confession of the Son (Jesus) is required to have a relationship with the Father. A most powerful passage concerning evangelism comes in Romans 10 where Paul shares his desire for his unbelieving friends to come to faith, acknowledging that:

“For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’” (Romans 10:13-15 ESV)

Whenever we realize that people who have not heard and confessed Jesus as Lord are still under God’s wrath and headed towards Hell, we must be motivated to go and preach the Gospel. The best question is not, “Why do people who have never heard about Jesus go to Hell?” but rather “Why have we not told everyone about Jesus?”

Common Objection: “I don’t believe in Hell” or “My god is a god of love who wouldn’t send someone to Hell.” Making up a god of your own imagination is idolatry and a violation of God’s second commandment (Exodus 20:4-6). Just because you have your own opinion about Hell and God doesn’t make your opinion valid or true. You could go stand blindfolded in the midst of a highway with a big rig barreling your way proclaiming “I don’t believe in 18 wheelers” but it would not change the reality of your impending fate. Trust the Creator of the universe. He is who He says He is. God is real. Heaven is real. Hell is real. The Bible is the most accurate book in all of history and God clearly, patiently, and lovingly warns us about Hell so that we might repent and turn to Him and thus experience

everlasting life instead of everlasting death and destruction.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:9 ESV)

God ... desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:3-4)

What are some of the Biblical descriptions of Hell?

1. Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth (Matthew 24:51)
2. Eternal Separation from God (2 Thessalonians 1:9)
3. Forever Destruction and Punishment (2 Thessalonians 1:9, Matthew 25:46)
4. Never-ending Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Torment (Revelation 14:10-11)
5. Conscious Pain, Thirst, Sorrow (Luke 16:19-31)
6. Under God’s Wrath and Fury (John 3:36, Romans 2:8-9)
7. Constant Fire (Matthew 3:12, Mark 9:43-48, Luke 3:17, Jude 7)
8. Undying Worms (Mark 9:48)
9. Utter Darkness (Jude 13)
10. Shame and Contempt (Daniel 12:2)
11. Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:10, 14-15; 21:8)
12. Second Death (Revelation 21:8)
13. Destination for the Devil and Demons (Matthew 25:41)
14. No rest (Revelation 14:11)

Don’t just take our word for it...read some of the below Bible passages yourself...

- Romans 1:20-21 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. [21] For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish

hearts were darkened.

- Matthew 25:41, 46 Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ... And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.
- Mark 9:43-48 And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. [45] And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. [47] And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, [48] 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'
- 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels [8] in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. [9] They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might
- Daniel 12:2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.
- Revelation 14:10-11 he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. [11] And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night...
- Revelation 20:10, 14-15 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. ...[14] Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake

of fire. [15] And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

- Revelation 21:8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.
- John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.
- 2 John 1:9 Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God.
- 1 John 2:23 No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.
- Romans 2:15-16 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them [16] on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.
- Luke 16:19-31 There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. [20] And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, [21] who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. [22] The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, [23] and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. [24] And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.' [25] But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. [26] And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order

that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' [27] And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house—[28] for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' [29] But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' [30] And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' [31] He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'

We do not like discussing Hell because it is an overwhelming reality, but we can't help but speak where God has so clearly spoken. Our hope in considering your eternity or the eternity of others is that you might more passionately and lovingly consider, believe, and share the truths of Christ.

Check out NeedGod.com for more information!

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT CHRISTMAS?

What is Christmas? Christmas is a Christian day of celebration (December 25th) in honor of the birth of Jesus Christ. This event is significant to Christians as it is when God the Father sent His Son Jesus Christ in the flesh (incarnation), to reveal Himself and pay the price of our sin.

What is the true meaning of Christmas? Christmas for many people is a time of family gatherings, feasting, gift-giving, and traditional memory making. While these things themselves are good, the true meaning of Christmas is focused on the birth and appearance of Jesus Christ. We must be careful not to get distracted away from Jesus in the midst of the busyness of the Christmas season.

Why did Jesus say He was born? Jesus explains that "for this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice" (John 18:37 ESV). Jesus was born to show us who He is, to teach us the truth about God, to provide a way of salvation through His sinless life, sacrificial death, and powerful resurrection.

What happened on Christmas day? The day of Jesus' birth was unusual in both its humility and majesty. Jesus was born

in Bethlehem, the city of David, due to the Roman census/registration, but ultimately as a fulfillment of prophecy (Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1-6, Luke 2:1-5). Mary gave birth to Jesus in a stable, wrapped in cloth, and laid to rest in an animal feeding trough (Luke 1:6-8). Simultaneous with Jesus' humble birth was a magnificent and supernatural announcement by the angel of the Lord to shepherds (Luke 2:8-20) along with a multitude of angels proclaiming "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:14 ESV)

What happened after Jesus' birth? After Jesus was born, he went through Jewish ceremonial traditions (Luke 2:21-38). His encounter with Simeon and Anna in the temple further evidenced that he was the way of "salvation" and "redemption." After Jesus' birth, wise men traveled from the east, following a star, to meet and worship Jesus. At this point Jesus was residing in a house, not at a stable, and the wise men made valuable offerings of gold, frankincense and myrrh, further attesting to Jesus' divine nature (Matthew 2:1-12). Because of the wise men's testimony of Jesus' fulfillment of prophecy, King Herod sought to murder Jesus by killing all of the young children in Bethlehem. Thankfully, God has warned Mary and Joseph to flee to Egypt with Jesus where they remained until the death of King Herod. Once the angel of the Lord told Joseph, they returned to Nazareth as another fulfillment of Scripture (Matthew 2:13-23, Luke 2:39-40)

Was Christmas really on December 25th? Although there are some very good historical reasons for the date of December 25th, ultimately we do not know the exact date of Jesus' birth. The most important details about Jesus' birth are given within the biblical accounts. Since the specific date is not shared, it is not a crucial issue of the Christian faith.

Where did all of the Christmas traditions come from? Christmas traditions and practices vary over time and culture. Some have significant connections in trying to create helpful

celebrations that correlate with Christian truths, others simply arise from familial and cultural norms.

Should Christians celebrate Christmas? God warns Christians not to argue about particular days of celebration (Colossians 2:16-17), but that when making daily decisions in life we are reminded that in "whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). We are also warned that "whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Although the Bible does not prescribe the regular, ceremonial remembrance of Jesus' birth (as it does with Jesus' death, burial and resurrection through the Lord's Supper, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34), Christians should daily celebrate Jesus in their drawing near to Him. In addition to our daily celebration of Christ, Christians have the freedom to celebrate Jesus' birth on Christmas as well if it builds up their faith (1 Corinthians 10:23).

"Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. [17] These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ." (Colossians 2:16-17 ESV)

Why did Jesus have to be both God and human? Although this concept of Jesus being simultaneously human and deity (God) is difficult to grasp, it is a biblical and essential fact. Jesus' birth "under the law" allows the redemption, or purchase, of mankind from under the law. Only a perfect human (Jesus) would be capable and sufficient to keep and fulfill the law. Jesus' incarnation (coming in the flesh) allows a way for humans to be adopted as God's forever children.

Jesus' incarnation also allowed for his shedding of blood and death because "under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." (Hebrews 9:22) Unfortunately, the blood of animals is insufficient to atone for sin (Hebrews 10:4), so only the shed blood of a perfect God-man could provide a way of salvation.

Jesus' incarnation allowed him to sympathize with our temptations and trials, yet Jesus remained perfect, holy, and without sin (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus came in the flesh to show and teach us the Truth: that Jesus and God the Father are one (John 10:30, 14:8-11) and that Jesus is the only way of salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). World religions and cults teach that salvation can be found by good works, by being "good enough." The reality is that only Jesus, the God-man, is perfect and able to provide a way for salvation.

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12 ESV)

Why is Christmas so important? Jesus is not simply the "reason for the season," He is the reason for life and for living. It is our hope and prayer that through this resource you discover or deepen in the love of Christ this Christmas!

What are the prophecies about Christmas? The prophecies about Jesus' birth and life are numerous, but here are a few:

- 1. Offspring of a Woman** – Genesis 3:15, Luke 2:7, Revelation 12:5
- 2. Offspring of Abraham** – Genesis 18:18, Acts 3:25, Matthew 1:1, Luke 3:34
- 3. Offspring of Isaac** – Genesis 17:19, Matthew 1:2, Luke 3:34

4. Offspring of Jacob – Numbers 24:17, Genesis 28:14, Luke 3:34, Matthew 1:2

5. Descended from the Tribe of Judah – Genesis 49:10, Luke 3:33, Matthew 1:2-3

6. Heir to the Throne of David – Isaiah 9:7, 11:1-5, 2 Sam 7:13, Jer 23:5, Matt 1:1,6, Luke 1:32-33

7. Born in Bethlehem – Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1, Luke 2:4-7

8. Time of Birth – Daniel 9:25, Luke 2:1-2, 2:3-7

9. Born of a Virgin – Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:26-35

10. Slaughter of Infants – Jeremiah 31:15, Matthew 2:16-18

11. Escape into Egypt – Hosea 11:1, Matthew 2:14-15

How did Mary become pregnant with Jesus? The angel Gabriel (who has already announced the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah and Elizabeth, Luke 1:5-24, 1:57-80) was sent by God to Nazareth to tell Mary that although she was a virgin, she would be pregnant with Jesus (Luke 1:26-56). Gabriel said "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. [31] And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. [32] He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, [33] and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:30-33 ESV)

Mary did not understand how this could be, but Gabriel assured her that "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. [36] And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. [37] For nothing will be impossible with God." (Luke 1:35-37 ESV) Joseph was also told by an angel (Matthew 1:18-25) that "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21 ESV)

Mary's response to this amazing news? True Faith. "And Mary said, 'Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.'" (Luke 1:38) Upon sharing the news with her relative Elizabeth, Mary rejoiced and sang! (Luke 1:39-56) May we all sing and celebrate in a similar manner over the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus!

What should I do about Christmas?

BELOW are some helpful answers...

Look To Jesus And Find Joy In Christ

And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "**Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:9-14 ESV)

The Joy In Christ Test:

ASK YOURSELF - *Is your heart cold or hardened towards God?*

- Formal & routine worship. Going through the motions.
- Boredom or carelessness towards church and fellowship.
- No desire to talk about spiritual things.
- Bondage to sin: knowing a practice is sinful, but not caring enough to put an end to it.

- Out of control anger in thoughts, words, or actions.
- Selfish or critical attitude.
- Little interest or action in studying God's Word.
- Lack of desire for prayer. Seeing prayer as a duty.
- No interest or boredom in seeing people come to know Christ
- Sacrificially giving of your time, talents, or treasures. Feeling like you "have to" instead of "get to."
- Little desire to become more holy (sanctification). A decreasing conscience about sinfulness.
- Praying almost exclusively for yourself.
- Caring about the offense of others more than the offense of God.
- Faking it. Not being real, genuine, and open about your life.

Three Steps To Joy In Christ...

1. Repent and Draw Near to the Christ Child (James 4:8-10) Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. [9] Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. [10] Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

2. Believe in and know the Christ Child (Mark 9:22-24) "But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." [23] And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible for one who believes." [24] Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

3. Delight in the Christ Child (Romans 7:21-25) So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. [22] **For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,** [23] but

I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. [24] Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? [25] Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Rediscover The Gift Of Christmas

(Isaiah 7:14 & Isaiah 9:6-7 ESV)

He Is Immanuel – God With Us

Isaiah 7:14 therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Is God with you? Do you know it? Do you feel it? Are you sure?

No? Fix it. Do Something. Stop Waiting. Seek Him.

(Deut. 4:29) you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Yes? Live it. Be Encouraged. Draw Closer. You Are Not Alone.

(James 4:8) Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

He Is Your Wonderful Counselor *Where do you go for advice? Answers? Solutions?*

(Isaiah 9:6) For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor

He Is Mighty God *Whose strength do you trust in? Seek Out? Act In? Daily?*

(2 Corinthians 12:10) For when I am weak, then I am strong.

He Is Everlasting Father *Where Is Your Focus? On Yourself? On Others? On World?*

Past, Present or Future? Temporary or eternal?

(Hebrews 13:8) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday & today & forever.

He Is Prince of Peace

What is your source of peace? Contentment? Stability? Hope?

(Isaiah 9:7) Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

5 Gifts Of Christ This Christmas:

Let His Names Live In Your Life!

- Draw Near Immanuel – Read, Hear, Obey His Bible
- Go to Christ with Your Problems – Speak in Prayer
- Rely on Mighty God – Be Weak & Dependent
- Look to Everlasting Father – Turn Your Attention
- Rest in the Prince of Peace – Hope in His Plan

Remember That Jesus Is The Ultimate Gift

(Matthew 1 & 2, Luke 1 & 2 ESV)

7 Truths About Gifts

1. **Gifts are Purposed** "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence

of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news." Luke 1:19

2. Gifts are Planned The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Matthew 1:1, 17

3. Gifts are Promised All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). Matt 1:22-23

4. Gifts are Surprising And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy-the Son of God." Luke 1:34-35

5. Gifts are Expressive and Relational "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

- "he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Luke 1:33

6. Gifts are Loving "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" Luke 1:28

- "For nothing will be impossible with God." Luke 1:37

7. Gifts are Free "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" Luke 2:14

- And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her." Luke 1:38

7 Practices With Gifts

1. Anticipate the Gift They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: 6 "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" (Matthew 2:5-6)

2. Seek the Gift Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." (Matthew 2:1-2)

- After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. (Matthew 2:9)

3. Rejoice in the Gift When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. (Matt 2:10)

4. Enjoy the Gift And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. (Matthew 2:11)

5. Appreciate the Gift Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2:11)

6. Use the Gift And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. Matthew 2:12

7. Share the Gift But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT EASTER?

What is Easter? Easter is a Christian holiday that is dedicated towards the celebration of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. In America and other places, this holiday has been transformed in recent history into a commercialized day that is focused on by many towards candy, gifts, egg-hunting games, the Easter bunny, and family gatherings.

What is the true meaning of Easter? The true meaning of Easter is a celebration of Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross and resurrection from the grave in order to provide a way of salvation through the forgiving of sin.

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

Why did Jesus come to die? Jesus came to live out and show His truth and love. Jesus explains that "For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37). Jesus' death is a sacrifice in order to bring those who believe into a right relationship with God. "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). There is no access to God in Heaven without Jesus' death and resurrection.

What happened on Easter? What happened after Jesus' resurrection? The Friday before Easter, Jesus was falsely accused, tortured, and executed by crucifixion (a slow method of killing by hanging, impaled with nails on wooden beams). After Jesus' death, He was buried, and three days later, on Easter, Jesus was resurrected to life. He then physically appeared to hundreds of people, showing His power and wisdom before ascending back into Heaven (John 18-21 & 1 Corinthians 15).

What is the Lenten season all about? Do Christians have to celebrate it? The Bible nowhere commands Christians to celebrate Lent. For those who choose to celebrate Lent, it is designed as a 40-day period of dedicated towards fasting and repentance leading into Easter. Its purpose is to prepare and remind Christians of the celebration of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Where did all of the Easter traditions come from? Should Christians celebrate Easter? Many of the Easter traditions originated in cultural traditions of the past. God warns Christians not to argue about particular days of celebration (Colossians 2:16-17), but that when making daily decisions in life, we are reminded that in "whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). We are also warned that "whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). The Bible does call Christians to a regular, ceremonial remembrance of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection through the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-34), but not necessarily through an Easter holiday. Christians should daily celebrate Jesus in their drawing near to Him. Christians have the freedom to celebrate Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection on Easter as well if it builds up their faith (1 Corinthians 10:23).

- "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ." (Colossians 2:16-17)

Why did Jesus have to be both God and human? Although this concept of Jesus being simultaneously human and deity (God) is difficult to grasp, it is a biblical and essential fact. Jesus' birth "under the law" allows the redemption, or purchase, of mankind from under the law (God's perfect standard). Only a perfect human (Jesus) would be capable and sufficient to keep and fulfill the law. Jesus' incarnation (coming in the flesh) and sacrificial, substitutionary death allows a way for humans to be adopted as God's forever children through the paying of the penalty for sin. Jesus' incarnation also allowed for his shedding of blood and death because "under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (Hebrews 9:22). Unfortunately, the blood of animals is insufficient to sacrificially atone for sin (Hebrews 10:4), so only the shed blood of a perfect God-man could provide a way of salvation.

Jesus' incarnation allowed him to sympathize with our temptations and trials, yet Jesus remained perfect, holy, and without sin (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus came in the flesh to show and teach us the Truth: that Jesus and God the Father are one (John 10:30, 14:8-11) and that Jesus is the only way of salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). World religions and cults teach that salvation can be found by good works or by being "good enough." The reality is that only Jesus, the God-man, is perfect and able to provide a way for salvation.

- But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)
- For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)
- And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts

4:12 ESV)

Why is Easter so important? Jesus is not simply the "reason for the season," He is the reason for life and for living. It is our hope and prayer that you deepen in the love of Christ this Easter!

What are the prophecies about Easter? The prophecies about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection are numerous, but here are a few:

1. **Triumphal Entry** – Zechariah 9:9, Isaiah 62:11, John 12:13-14, Matthew 21:1-11
2. **Betrayed by a Friend** – Psalm 41:9, Mark 14:10
3. **Sold for 30 Pieces of Silver, Potter's Field** – Zechariah 11:12-13, Matthew 26:15, 27:6-7
4. **Judas' Position Replaced** – Psalm 109:7, Acts 1:18-20
5. **False Witnesses' Accused Him** – Psalm 27:12, Matthew 26:60-61
6. **Silent When Accused** – Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 26:62-63
7. **Struck and Spit Upon** – Isaiah 50:6, Mark 14:65
8. **Hated Without Cause** – Psalm 69:4, John 15:23
9. **Suffered Vicariously** – Isaiah 53:4, Matthew 8:16-17
10. **Hands and Feet Pierced** – Psalm 22:16, John 20:27
11. **Crucified with Sinners** – Isaiah 53:12, Matthew 27:38
12. **Mocked and Insulted** – Psalm 22:6-8, Matthew 27:39-40
13. **Given Gall and Vinegar** – Psalm 69:21, John 19:29
14. **Hears Prophetic Words Used as Mockery** – Psalm 22:8, Matthew 27:43
15. **Prays for His Enemies** – Psalm 109:4, Luke 23:34
16. **Side Pierced** – Zechariah 12:10, John 19:34
17. **Soldiers Cast Lots for His Clothes** – Psalm 22:18, Matthew 15:24
18. **Not a Bone to Be Broken** – Psalm 34:20, John 19:33
19. **Buried with the Rich** – Isaiah 53:9, Matthew 27:57-60
20. **Resurrection** – Psalm 16:10, Matthew 28:9
21. **Ascension into Heaven** – Psalm 68:18, Luke 24:50

Check out this helpful resource: *The Case for Easter* by Lee Strobel

Easter Week - What Happened, Day By Day

If you have ever wondered what happened during each day of Easter week, I hope that you find this summary helpful. Be sure to look up and read the verses to see how amazing Jesus is!

Palm Sunday - On a Sunday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus' presence "stirred up" the whole city of Jerusalem as He was worshiped with the words "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:8-11). May we worship Jesus today!

Monday - On a Monday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His crucifixion and resurrection, "all the people were hanging on his words" (Luke 19:48). May we do the same today!

Tuesday - On a Tuesday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His crucifixion and resurrection, many nonbelievers sought to entrap and trick Jesus. Upon hearing Jesus' truth-filled answers and divine wisdom, His enemies "marveled" (Matthew 22:22) and the crowds were "astonished" (Matthew 22:33). May we marvel at and be astonished by our wondrous Jesus!

Wednesday - On a Wednesday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His crucifixion and resurrection, His enemies came against Him for His death, but crowds came to Him for His words of life! (Luke 21:37-22:2). May we come to Jesus for life today!

Thursday - On a Thursday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His crucifixion and resurrection, Judas betrayed

Jesus and His other disciples disappointed Him. May we "watch and pray that" we likewise "do not enter into temptation" (Matthew 26:41).

Good Friday - On a Friday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus was crucified, He proclaimed "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). May we daily repent of our ignorant and willful sin against our Savior and hear His promise to true believers that "you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

Saturday - On a Saturday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His resurrection, nonbelievers sought to deny Jesus' deity and to stop His fame (Matthew 27:62-66), but no-one and no-thing could prevent Jesus' resurrection. May we rejoice that nothing can "separate us from the love of Christ" (Romans 8:35).

Easter Sunday - On a Sunday, almost 2,000 years ago, after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, people who encountered the resurrected Jesus felt their "hearts burn within" them while Jesus talked with them and opened the Scriptures to them (Luke 24:32). May Jesus open our hearts, minds, and spirits to celebrate His presence with us through His Spirit and His Word! "The Lord has risen indeed!" (Luke 24:34) May we long for the day when He returns, but until that day, may we be worshipping Him "with great joy" and "continually...blessing God" (Luke 24:52).

Jesus' Final Words From The Cross

1st Word from the Cross - Luke 23:34 "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

2nd Word from the Cross - Luke 23:43 "Today you will be with me in paradise"

3rd Word from the Cross - John 19:26-27 "Jesus saw His own mother, and the disciple standing near whom He loved. He said

to His mother, Woman, behold your son.' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother.'"

4th Word from the Cross - Mark 15:34 "And at the ninth hour, Jesus shouted in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Elon, lama sabachthani?' which is translated, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

5th Word from the Cross - John 19:28 "He said, 'I thirst.'"

6th Word from the Cross - Luke 23:46 "Speaking in a loud voice, Jesus said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

7th Word from the Cross - John 19:30 "Jesus said, 'It is finished.'"

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT LOVE?

1 John 4:8-11

"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

Mark 12:28-31

"One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

²⁹"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. ³¹The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.'"

Ephesians 5:1-2

"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

Romans 5:8

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 8:38-39

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

John 13:34

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

1 Corinthians 13:1-8

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. ⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸Love never fails."

Galatians 5:22-24

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

1 John 4:10

"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us

and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

One Anothers

"The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Mark 12:31

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

Admonish one another - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16)

Bear one another's burdens - Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

Bear with one another - Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2)

Build up one another - Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. (Romans 14:19)

Care for one another - . . . so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. (1 Corinthians 12:25)

Comfort one another - Therefore encourage each other with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

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

Be Devoted to one another - Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. (Romans 12:10a)

Encourage one another - Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Forgive one another - Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

(Ephesians 4:32)

Greet one another - Greet one another with a holy kiss. (Romans 16:16)

Be Honest with one another - Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices . . . (Colossians 3:9)

Honor one another - Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10b)

Be Hospitable to one another - Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. (1 Peter 4:9)

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

Love one another - Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another . . . (Romans 13:8)

Members one of another - So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. (Romans 12:5)

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

Be of the Same Mind with one another - May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus . . . (Romans 15:5)

Serve one another - You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. (Galatians 5:13)

Spur one another on - And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. (Hebrews 10:24)

Submit to one another - Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Ephesians 5:21)

10 Truths about Love from Proverbs

1. **The World Offers False Love.** "Come, let us take our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with

love." (Proverbs 7:18 ESV)

2. **Watch Out for a Love of Laziness & Ignorance.** "How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?" (Proverbs 1:22)
3. **Love the Wisdom of God.** "Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you." (Proverbs 4:6)
4. **Love in Marriage Is an Amazing Gift, Don't Waste It.** "Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth ... be intoxicated always in her love." (Proverbs 5:18-19)
5. **God's Love Requires a Loving Response.** "I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me." (Proverbs 8:17)
6. **Hatred of God's Wisdom = A Love of Death.** "but he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me love death." (Proverbs 8:36)
7. **God Cares for Those Who Love His Wisdom.** "granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries." (Proverbs 8:21)
8. **Wise Friends Love Wise Friends.** "Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you." (Proverbs 9:8)
9. **Love Covers Sin.** "Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses." (Proverbs 10:12)
10. **Forgiving and Forgetting Is an Act of Love.** "Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends." (Proverbs 17:9)

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE END TIMES?

20 Things Jesus Wants to Tell You About the End Times (Matthew 24 & 25)

Jesus' disciples asked Him about His second coming and the end times. They wanted to know when it would happen and what signs to expect. Here are 20 of the most important truths Jesus gives us about the end times. Are you ready for His return?

The Question - What Is the Timing & What Are the Signs of Jesus' Return?

Matthew 24:3-5 "As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?'"

1. People Will Try to Convince You They Are Jesus or Prophets From God- They Will Deceive Many

- Matthew 24:4, 11, 23-26 "And Jesus answered them, 'See that no one leads you astray. [5] For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. ... [11] And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ... [23] Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. [24] For false

christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. [25] See, I have told you beforehand. [26] So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it."

- 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 "Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, [2] not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. [3] Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, [4] who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. [5] Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? [6] And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. [7] For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. [8] And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. [9] The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, [10] and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. [11] Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, [12] in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
- Revelation 13 - The Beast

2. There Will Be Many Wars, Famines, Widespread Disease, & Earthquakes to Precede Jesus' Return

- Matthew 24:6-7 "And you will hear of wars and rumors of

wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. [7] For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.”

- Luke 21:10–11 “Then he said to them, ‘Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. [11] There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.’”

3. Expect a Long, Difficult, Painful Season of Suffering Before Jesus Comes

Matthew 24:8 “All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.”

4. Faithful Christians Will Suffer, Endure Hatred, and Be Killed But Will Endure to the End

- Matthew 24:9, 13 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. ...But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”
- Matthew 10:21–23 “Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, [22] and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. [23] When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”

5. Faithless, Nominal “Christians” Will Turn From Christ & Turn Against One Another

Matthew 24:10, 12 “And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. ... [12] And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.”

6. Everyone Will Hear of Jesus, Submit to & Honor Him, & Be Held Accountable for Their Lives

Matthew 24:14 “And this gospel of the kingdom will be

proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

- Isaiah 45:23 “By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.”
- 1 Corinthians 15:24–28 “Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. [25] For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. [26] The last enemy to be destroyed is death. [27] For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. [28] When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.”
- Philippians 2:9–11 “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
- Romans 14:11–12 “for it is written, ‘As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.’ [12] So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.”
- Revelation 5:13 “And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!’”

7. Daniel’s Prophecies Fulfilled - Temple’s Destruction & Desecration with the Image of the Antichrist (The Abomination of Desolation)

- Matthew 24:15–20 “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), [16] then let those who

are in Judea flee to the mountains. [17] Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, [18] and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. [19] And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! [20] Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath."

- Daniel 9:26-27 "Desolations are decreed. [27] And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."

8. Unprecedented Suffering

Matthew 24:21-22 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. [22] And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short."

9. Impossible to Miss - Visible to All

- Matthew 24:27-28, 30 "For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. [28] Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. ... [30] Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."
- Acts 1:11 "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

10. Sun, Moon, & Stars Darkened

Matthew 24:29-31 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken."

11. Faithful Christians Will Be Gathered Together From Across the World

- Matthew 24:31 "And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."
- 1 Corinthians 15 - The Resurrection of the Dead
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 - The Coming of the Lord

12. The Suffering Has Begun - The Kingdom Is Already Here But Not Yet Fulfilled

- Matthew 24:32-34 "'From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. [33] So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. [34] Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place."
- Matthew 3:2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

13. The World & Skies Will Change - But God's Word Remains Constant and True

Matthew 24:35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."

14. The Timing of Jesus' Return Is Secret but Will Be Sudden Be Spiritually Ready

Like the Days of Noah - Matthew 24:36-44 - "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. [37] For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. [38] For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, [39] and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. [40] Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. [41] Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. [42] Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know

on what day your Lord is coming. [43] But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. [44] Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

Be Faithfully Working

The Faithful and Wise Servant - Matthew 24:45-51 - "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? [46] Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. [47] Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. [48] But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' [49] and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, [50] the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know [51] and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Be Actively Watching

The Parable of the Ten Virgins - Matthew 25:1-13 - "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. [2] Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. [3] For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, [4] but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. [5] As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. [6] But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' [7] Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. [8] And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' [9] But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' [10] And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. [11] Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' [12] But

he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' [13] Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

15. Don't Waste Your Life - Invest In Eternal Things

A Wasted Life Evidences A Path Towards Hell - Dishonoring the Master

An Invested Life Evidences A Path Towards Heaven - Honoring the Master

The Parable of the Talents - Matthew 25:14-30 "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. [15] To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. [16] He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. [17] So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. [18] But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. [19] Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. [20] And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' [21] His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' [22] And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' [23] His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' [24] He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, [25] so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' [26] But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? [27] Then you ought to have invested my

money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. [28] So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. [29] For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. [30] And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

16. When Jesus Returns All Will Be Judged and Sent to Heaven (Eternal Life) or Hell (Eternal Punishment) -

The Final Judgment - Matthew 25:31-46 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. [32] Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. [33] And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. [34] Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. [35] For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, [36] I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ [37] Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? [38] And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? [39] And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ [40] And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ [41] “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. [42] For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, [43] I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ [44] Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord,

when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ [45] Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ [46] And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

- 2 Corinthians 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”
- Hebrews 9:27-28 “And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, [28] so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.”

17. Jesus’ Judgement Is Inescapable

The Parable of the Weeds Explained - Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 “Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, ‘Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.’ [37] He answered, ‘The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. [38] The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, [39] and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. [40] Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. [41] The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, [42] and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [43] Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

- Matthew 8:11-12 “I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, [12] while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

18. Many Falsely Believe Themselves to Be Saved

I Never Knew You - Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. [22] On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' [23] And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

19. Lack of Forgiveness to Others Evidences A Path Towards Hell

Matthew 18:34-35 "And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. [35] So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

20. Jesus Is With His True Followers Always, To The End of the Age

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

If you knew the end times were here, how would your priorities change? We never know when our last day of life will be, so we must seek to make the most of each day, always ready for Jesus' return.

You may not get additional opportunities to change your priorities. The time to change is now. We are urged to "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). Don't delay, this may be your last day.

- Have you submitted your life to Jesus' control?
- Are you following Him faithfully every day?

- Do you trust Jesus more than yourself?
- Does your life evidence a love of God?

Prioritize Jesus by attending church every Sunday. We are blessed with many biblically faithful churches that will encourage and strengthen our faith in these difficult and dark days. Get in and stay in the Bible daily so you are in love with and led by your Savior's voice.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT WOMEN OF FAITH?

Here are some of the best examples of faithful women across the Scriptures.

It is amazing to see how God worked in and through them.
What examples of faithfulness to us all!

Eve - a helper fit for man, taken out of man, the first mother - Genesis 2:18-4:1, 2 Corinthians 11:3, 1 Timothy 2:13

- Genesis 2:18 "Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'" (ESV)
- Genesis 2:23 "Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.'"
- Genesis 3:20 "The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living."

Noah's Wife - endurance through disaster, faithfulness as a wife and mother for hundreds years (Noah lived until 950 years old) in the midst of an evil generation where "every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5) - Genesis 5:28-9

Sarah - obeyed and courageously moved along with her husband into a faraway land at the call of God, wife to Abraham, denied protection by a cowardly Abraham and allowed to be taken

by Pharaoh and Abimelech, barren/childless until 90, sinned multiple times in her treatment of Hagar, laughed at God's promise of a child, yet the Lord blessed her with a child in Isaac and praised her faith, lived until 127 years old - Genesis 11:29-23; Romans 9:9; Hebrews 11:11; 1 Peter 3:6

- Genesis 21:1 "The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised."
- Hebrews 11:11 "By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised."
- 1 Peter 3:6 "as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening."

Hagar the Egyptian - mistreated by Sarah, used and cast off by Abraham, mother to Ishmael with Abraham, cared for and protected by the Lord - Genesis 16, 21:8-21

- Genesis 16:13 "So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, 'You are a God of seeing,' for she said, 'Truly here I have seen him who looks after me.'"
- Genesis 21:17 "And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, 'What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.'" (ESV)

Rebekah - attractive but modest, virgin, selfless servant, kind, hard-working, wife to Isaac, struggled with infertility, seeks the Lord during her pregnancy, husband is cowardly in denying her in front of the people of Gerar (Abimelech), provides sinful advice and favoritism to her son Jacob, yet the Lord chooses and uses Jacob through Rachel - Gen. 24-27, Rom. 9:10-13

- Genesis 25:21 "And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. And the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived."

Rachel - hardworking shepherdess, beautiful, patiently waits for her husband, Jacob's wife, loved, barren for many years,

envied her sister Leah, mother to Joseph and Benjamin, stole her father's idols and deceived him, died giving birth to Benjamin - Genesis 29-31, 33, 35

- Genesis 30:22-24 "Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. [23] She conceived and bore a son and said, 'God has taken away my reproach.' [24] And she called his name Joseph, saying, 'May the LORD add to me another son!'"

Leah - not as beautiful as Rachel, Jacob's wife, marriage based on deception, hated by Jacob, blessed by the Lord with children, mother to Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah - Genesis 29-31, 33, 35

- Genesis 29:31 "When the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren."
- Ruth 4:11 "Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel"

Shiphrah & Puah - Hebrew Midwives in Egypt - feared God more than Pharaoh, disobeyed the evil laws of the government and refused to murder babies, risked their lives and lied to Pharaoh to protecting lives of the babies, blessed by God and the nation of Israel prospered through their faithfulness. Exodus 1:15-22

- Exodus 1:17 "But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live."

Jochabed - Moses' & Aaron's mother, enslaved, courageously protects her baby by hiding him as long as possible then giving him up for adoption when she had no other option, able to nurse Exodus 1, 2:1-10, 6:20; Numbers 26:59; Hebrews 11:23

- Hebrews 11:23 "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict."

Pharaoh's Daughter - courageously adopted Moses knowing the

danger of disobeying her father - Exodus 2:5-10

- Exodus 2:6 "When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, 'This is one of the Hebrews' children.'"

Miriam - prophetess, Moses and Aaron's sister, protects her baby brother Moses by watching him until he is adopted, bravely speaks to Pharaoh's daughter so her mom can nurse Moses, leads women rejoicing in song and dance in response to God's salvation from the Egyptian army when they were drowned by God in the Red Sea, given another chance to serve God after failing in opposing Moses and punished with leprosy - Exodus 2:1-10, 15:20-21, Numbers 12:1-15

- Exodus 2:4, 7 "And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. ...[7] Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?'"
- Exodus 15:20-21 "Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing. [21] And Miriam sang to them 'Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.'"

Faithful Whole-Hearted Women - generous in giving, skilled in their work, hard-working, passionate heartfelt service for the purpose of providing for and building the Tabernacle to worship God - Exodus 35:20-29

- Exodus 35:29 "All the men and women, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work that the LORD had commanded by Moses to be done brought it as a freewill offering to the LORD."

Rahab - prostitute, believed in God, great-great-grandmother to King David, bravely hid the spies of Israel from the king of Jericho, faith evidenced by her obedience - Joshua 2, 6; Matthew 1:5; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25-26

- Joshua 2:11 “for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath”
- Hebrews 11:31 “By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.”
- James 2:25–26 “And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? [26] For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.”

Deborah - faithful and brave when Barak failed to courageously lead Israel against General Sisera, wise prophetess and the 5th Judge of Israel, sang with Barak a song of gratitude to God - Judges 4 & 5

- Judges 4:4–5 “Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. [5] She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment.”

Jael - clever in defeating General Sisera to lull him to sleep and killed him with a tent peg - Judges 4:17-22

- Judges 4:21 “But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand. Then she went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple until it went down into the ground while he was lying fast asleep from weariness. So he died.”
- Judges 5:24 “Most blessed of women be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, of tent-dwelling women most blessed.”

Samson's Mother - godly parent with Manoah, humbly shares the angelic appearances with her husband and lets him lead their family, barren, obeys the angel's command to abstain from alcohol and unclean food, given Samson as a son - Judges 13, 14:1-9; 16:17

Naomi - widowed, lost both sons, honored and blessed God even in her loss, gave wisdom to Ruth, great-great-grandmother to King David - Ruth 1; 4:13-22

- Ruth 1:5, 8 “the woman was left without her two sons and her husband. ...But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, ‘Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.’”

Ruth - widowed, faithful to her mother-in-law Naomi, believed and trusted in God, great-grandmother to King David - Ruth 1-4

Hannah - loved by Elkanah, suffered from infertility, prayer and dedicated son Samuel to the Lord, endured provocation from Peninnah, Elkanah's other wife, over her childlessness, depressed, took her sorrow and anxiety to the Lord in prayer, trusted in God's promise through Eli, gave and dedicated Samuel over to serve the Lord, beautiful song of praise to the Lord, faithfully committed to the Lord and blessed her son, God gave her five more children - 1 Samuel 1; 2:1-11, 18-21

- 1 Samuel 1:10 “She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly.”
- 1 Samuel 1:27–28 “For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition that I made to him. [28] Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD.”

Abigail - discerning and beautiful, married to a to wealthy but wicked man (Nabal), she showed understanding and generosity in providing an avenue for peace for her family, was culturally wise and humble, worked hard to care for others, selflessly and courageously offers to take on the penalty others deserve, trusted in the Lord, patiently endured much suffering, married King David - 1 Samuel 25:2-42

- 1 Samuel 25:3 “The woman was discerning and beautiful”

Bathsheba - beautiful, raped by King David, grieved over the

murder of her husband, lost a son, given and raised a godly son in Solomon, lineage of Jesus, wisely intercedes in a dangerous situation so that her son can become King, well respected - 2 Samuel 11; 12:13-24, 1 Kings 1-2

- 2 Samuel 12:24-25 "she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. And the LORD loved him [25] and sent a message by Nathan the prophet. So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD."
- 1 Kings 2:19 "Then he sat on his throne and had a seat brought for the king's mother, and she sat on his right."

Widow at Zarephath - hard working, humble, faithful to obey the Lord, hospitable, generously prepared a meal for Elijah out of her last food, Lord provides unending flour and oil, son raised from dead by Elijah - 1 Kings 17:7-24

- 1 Kings 17:24 "And the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth."

Widow of a Prophet - faithfully served the Lord alongside her husband, widowed with two sons, poor and overcome with debt, faithfully followed Elisha's advice, the Lord provided oil to pay off her debt - 2 Kings 4:1-7

- 2 Kings 4:7 "She came and told the man of God, and he said, 'Go, sell the oil and pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on the rest.'"

Shunammite Woman - wealthy, generously hospitable with meals and built a guest room for Elisha, she was suffering from infertility and the Lord blessed her with a son through Elisha, her son dies but is raised from the dead by her persistence in seeking healing from God through Elisha - 2 Kings 4:8-37

- 2 Kings 4:30 "Then the mother of the child said, 'As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So he arose and followed her."

Huldah - trustworthy, hardworking, encouraged King Josiah

to read and believe the Bible (Book of the Law) that was found, courageously proclaimed truth in obedience to God - 2 Chronicles 34:22-33, 2 Kings 22:14-20

- 2 Kings 22:15 "And she said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Tell the man who sent you to me ... '"

The Woman Who Fears the Lord (Proverbs 31 Woman) - trustworthy, excellent wife, full of good works, diligent with her hands, wise with finances and a smart businesswoman, wakes up early and is not lazy, physically strong and healthy, generous to the poor, prepares for seasons of difficulty, thinks of the needs of others before herself, builds up the reputation of her husband, dignified, speaks with wisdom and kindness, praised by her husband and children, fears the Lord above all else - Proverbs 31:10-31

- Proverbs 31:30 "Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised."

Esther - orphaned and adopted, wise learner and submissive, beautiful and favored, though a foreigner, becomes queen, endures racist attacks by Haman, seeks the Lord through fasting and prayer, bravely risks her life and saves tens of thousands of Jewish people across the world

- Esther 2:15 "he asked for nothing except what Hegai the king's eunuch, who had charge of the women, advised. Now Esther was winning favor in the eyes of all who saw her."
- Esther 4:14 "And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"
- Esther 4:16 "hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish."

Jehosheba - bravely and wisely hides her nephew and future King from a murderous Queen for six years

- 2 Kings 11:2-3 "But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah and stole him

away from among the king's sons who were being put to death, and she put him and his nurse in a bedroom. Thus they hid him from Athaliah, so that he was not put to death. [3] And he remained with her six years, hidden in the house of the LORD, while Athaliah reigned over the land."

Elizabeth - righteous and faithful wife to a priest, childless until old, trusts the Lord's promise, obedient to God's commands, mother of John the Baptist, encourager and relative to Mary - Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

- Luke 1:6 "And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord."

Mary - sexually pure, virgin until Jesus is born, raises Jesus, bravely follows and trusts God, widowed, watches son murdered, faithful - Luke 1:26-56; 2; 3; Matthew 1:18-25, 2, John 2:1-12, Luke 8:19-21, John 19:25-27

- Luke 1:38 "Mary said, 'Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.'"
- Luke 1:46-47 "And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior'"

Anna - married seven years, widowed for ~50+ years, worships God day and night at the Temple with fasting and prayer, sees Jesus, prophetess, full of gratitude and praise to God, speaks truth - Luke 2:36-38

- Luke 2:37-38 "She did not depart from the temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day. [38] And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem."

Samaritan Woman - married multiple times, living with a man, encounters Jesus, tells everyone in her town about Jesus - John 4:4-42

- John 4:29 "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?"

Sinful Woman - sinful life, bravely enters the Pharisee's house, cries at Jesus' feet, cleans His feet with her hair, anoints His feet with an expensive ointment, sins forgiven by Jesus, loved Jesus greatly - Luke 7:36-50

- Luke 7:47 "Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little."

Sick Woman - weakened and impoverished by chronic bleeding, goes to Jesus, has faith in Jesus, works hard to get to Jesus in a crowd, touches Jesus and is healed - Mark 5:24-34

- Mark 5:27-28 "She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. [28] For she said, 'If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.'"

Mary of Bethany - sits at Jesus' feet, listening and learning, chooses wisely how to spend her time, pours perfume on Jesus' feet in gratitude for her brother Lazarus' resurrection and preparation for Jesus' death - Luke 10:38-42, John 11:1-45; 12:1-8

- Luke 10:39-42 "Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ...the Lord answered her, "... one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."
- John 12:3 "Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume."

Martha of Bethany - sister Mary brother Lazarus dies, loved by Jesus, welcomes Jesus into her home, works hard for Jesus, Jesus encourages her to worry less and listen at his feet - Luke 10:38-42, John 11:1-45

- Luke 10:38 "Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house."

- Luke 10:40–41 “But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” [41] But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things”

Widow with Two Coins - impoverished, lonely, gives sacrificially of everything she has, trust the Lord for His provision - Luke 21:1-4; Mark 12:41-44

- Luke 21:3–4 “And he said, ‘Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. [4] For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.’”

Mary Magdalene - was possessed by demons but set free by Jesus, faithful to Jesus to the end - Luke 8:1-3; 24:1-10; John 19:25; 20:11-18, Matthew 27:55-61; 28:1; Mark 15:40-41; 16:1-11

- Mark 16:1 “When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him.”

Dorcas (Tabitha) - helped others with works and generosity, died, resurrected by Peter - Acts 9:36-42

- Acts 9:36 “Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity.”

Lydia - businesswoman, seller of purple cloth, believes in Jesus through Paul at Philippi, hospitable - Acts 16:11-15, 40

- Acts 16:14 “One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.”

Priscilla - Aquila’s wife, mentors alongside her husband, church in their home - Acts 18:1-3, 18-26, Romans 16:3-4, 1 Corinthians 16:19

- Acts 18:26 “He [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”
- Romans 16:3–4 “Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, [4] who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well.”

Lois & Eunice - grandmother and mother to Timothy, provided godly instruction and example of genuine faith in God - 2 Timothy 1:5, Acts 16:1

- 2 Timothy 1:5 “I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.”

Younger Widows -

- 1 Timothy 5:14 “So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander.”
- 1 Corinthians 7:39–40 “A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. [40] Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.”

Older Women - modeling godliness, teaching and training younger women as wives and mothers

- Titus 2:3-5 “Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, [4] and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, [5] to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”

Phoebe - a servant

- Romans 16:1 “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant

of the church at Cenchreae”

Mary - a hard worker

- Romans 16:6-7 “Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. ... They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.”

Andronicus and Junia - relatives and prisoners with Paul

- Romans 16:7 “Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.”

In Every Place Women - respectable, modest, self-controlled, humble, doing good, learning, submissive, not teaching or exercising leadership over men in church (rooted in the order of creation and the fall), faithfully enduring as mothers and godly women

- 1 Timothy 2:8-15 “I desire then that in every place ... women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, [10] but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. [11] Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. [12] I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. [13] For Adam was formed first, then Eve; [14] and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. [15] Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.”
- 1 Corinthians 11:3,8, 11-13, 16 - “But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. ... [8] For man was not made from woman, but woman from man... [11] Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; [12] for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. [13] Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God

with her head uncovered? ... [16] If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.”

- 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, [34] the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. [35] If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.”

In Marriage - Godly Wives - Ephesians 5:22-33 - 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 - 1 Peter 3:1-7 - Colossians 3:18-25

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-marriage-roles

- Helpmate (Gen 2:18)
- Loving and gracious submission to the leadership of her husband (Eph 5:22, Col 3:18)
- Not strive/resist the leadership of her husband (Gen 3:16, 1 Pet 3:1)
- Respect her husband (Eph 5:33)
- Diligent worker, whether at home or in the workplace (Pro 31)
- Hospitable towards others and generous towards poor (Pro 31)
- Cares for children and household (Prov 31)
- Meet sexual needs of husband (1 Cor 7)
- Be beautiful on the inside (1 Pet 3:4)

PRAYER AND FASTING

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT PRAYER?

10 Reasons to Pray

1. **Encounter God** - Pray is a meeting to intentionally and humbly communicate with God.
2. **Know God** - Listening and speaking to Jesus enables us to know Him more personally.
3. **Glorify God** - It pleases and honors God when we draw near to Him in prayer.
4. **Experience God's Power** - Prayers of the righteous are answered powerfully.
5. **Understand God's Present Work** - God desires to be related to and enjoyed daily.
6. **Look Forward to God's Future Work** - Submit and yield your future into His hands.
7. **Protect from Satan's Attacks** - We remember our real enemy in Satan, his demons, the world, and our flesh and are reminded that prayer is a spiritual weapon of offense and defense.
8. **Share True Hope with Others** - We evangelistically pray for God's saving work.
9. **Awareness of His Presence** - Failing to pray means

ignoring His constant presence with us.

10. **Obedience** - God has commanded and taught us to relate to Him through prayer.

Top Books to Devotionally Guide Your Prayer

- *Everyday Prayers: 365 Days to a Gospel-Centered Faith* by Scotty Smith
- *Pray for the World* - by Patrick Johnstone
- *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions* by Arthur Bennett
- *Morning and Evening* - Charles H. Spurgeon
- *The Songs of Jesus: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms* by Timothy & Kathy Keller
- (for comfort, a compilation) *Streams in the Desert* by Mrs. Charles E. Cowman
- (for ladies) *Whispers of Hope: 10 Week of Devotional Prayer* by Beth Moore
- (for ladies) *Praying God's Word Day by Day* by Beth Moore

Top 3 Books to Learn About Prayer & How to Pray

1. *Praying the Bible* by Donald S. Whitney
2. *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* by Timothy Keller
3. *George Müller: Delighted in God* by Roger Steer

Personal Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15, ESV)

Prayer is Personal Conversation

v.5-6 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to

you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

Prayer is Meaningful Conversation

v.7-8 "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

Prayer is God-Focused Conversation

v.9 Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread,

12 & forgive us our debts (sins), as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

14-15 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

A.C.T.S.

A helpful acronym to remember how to pray!
Spend time praying over each of these areas

Adoration (of God)

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." (Matthew 6:9 ESV)

Confession (of sins)

"and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." (Matthew 6:12 ESV)

Thanksgiving (for His work)

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth
as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10 ESV)

Supplication

(how can you ask God to help you or others)

“Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11 ESV)

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver
us from evil.” (Matthew 6:13 ESV)

3 Ways To Prepare For Prayer

1. Make Your Focus God-ward “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [6] But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:5-6 ESV)

2. Ask Genuinely and Significantly “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. [8] Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” (Matthew 6:7-8 ESV)

3. Sincerely Show Mercy & Grace to Others “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, [15] but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matthew 6:14-15)

BEST BIBLE VERSES ON PRAYER

There are 650 prayers listed in the Bible...check them out at:
www.gospelpedlar.com/articles/Christian%20Life/Prayer.pdf

Here are some favorites:

- (James 5:13-18) Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. [14] Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. [15] And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. [16] Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. [17] Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. [18] Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, & the earth bore its fruit.
- (Philippians 4:4-7) Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. [5] Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; [6] do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- (Proverbs 28:9) If one turns away his ear from hearing the

law, even his prayer is an abomination.

- (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) Rejoice always, [17] pray without ceasing, [18] give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
- (Psalm 55:16-17) But I call to God, and the LORD will save me. [17] Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice.
- (Luke 18:1-8) And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. [2] He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. [3] And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' [4] For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, [5] yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" [6] And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. [7] And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? [8] I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"
- (James 4:1-4) What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? [2] You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. [3] You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. [4] You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
- (1 John 5:14-15) And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. [15] And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of

him.

- (Ephesians 6:18-20) praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, [19] and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, [20] for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.
- (Romans 8:26-27) Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. [27] And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.
- **(Matthew 6:5-15) The "Lord's Prayer":** And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [6] But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. [7] "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. [8] Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. [9] Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. [10] Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. [11] Give us this day our daily bread, [12] and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. [13] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [14] For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, [15] but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
- **(John 17) Jesus' Prayer to His Father - The "High Priestly Prayer":** When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his

eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you ... [9] I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. [11] ... Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ... [15] I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ... [17] Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ... [20] "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, [21] that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ... [24] Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ... [26] I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

PRAYER IN THE PSALMS AND PROVERBS

A.C.T.S. - A helpful acronym to remember how to pray!

ADORATION (of God)

Humble Yourself - The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life. (Proverbs 22:4)

- One's pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor. (Proverbs 29:23)

Respect the Lord - The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor. (Proverbs 15:33)

- Blessed is the one who fears the LORD always, but whoever hardens his heart will fall into calamity. (Proverbs 28:14)

CONFESSION (of sin)

Turn Your Lips - Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. - Proverbs 28:13

Turn Your Lives - Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. [8] It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. (Proverbs 3:7-8)

- One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless. (Proverbs 14:16)

- The highway of the upright turns aside from evil; whoever guards his way preserves his life. (Proverbs 16:17)

THANKSGIVING (to God)

Recognize the Source - For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; (Proverbs 2:6)

Rest in the Source - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding, [6] In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

- My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, [12] for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights. (Proverbs 3:11-12)

Respond to the Source - Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce (Proverbs 3:9)

SUPPLICATION (asking)

Seek Him - Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand it completely. (Proverbs 28:5)

- Many seek the face of a ruler, but it is from the LORD that a man gets justice. (Proverbs 29:26)

Speak to Him - The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous. (Proverbs 15:29)

Make Godly Requests Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die [8] Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me. (Proverbs 30:7-8)

Seek His Favor - A good man obtains favor from the LORD (Proverbs 12:2)

Seek His Answers - The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD. (Proverbs 16:1)

What should guide our prayers?

Pray According to His Voice "If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." (Proverbs 28:9 ESV)

- "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him." (1 John 5:13-15)

Pray According to His Character "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him." (Proverbs 15:8)

- "Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you." (John 16:23)

Pray According to His Relationship "The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous." (Proverbs 15:29)

- "And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith." (Matthew 21:22)
- "and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him." (1 John 3:22)

PRAYING THE PSALMS

Donald Whitney (Praying the Bible by Donald S. Whitney) has shared an outstanding method of using the Psalms as a guide and format for our prayers. There are 150 Psalms, with around 30 days per month, which provides about 5 Psalms/Day to Choose To discover which daily Psalms you might consider praying through, take the day of the week and add in increments of 30. For instance, on January 7th you would have Psalm 7, 37, 67, 97, and 127 to choose from (Day of the Week + 30). Skim over those five Psalms until you discover one in which your heart resonates for that particular day. Then read a verse at a time, pausing to reflect and pray over and according to that particular truth to God.

Take a few minutes and try praying personally through Psalm 7.

Psalm 7

REFUGE [1] O LORD my God, in you do I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers and deliver me, [2] lest like a lion they tear my soul apart, rending it in pieces, with none to deliver.

DISCIPLINE [3] O LORD my God, if I have done this, if there is wrong in my hands, [4] if I have repaid my friend with evil or plundered my enemy without cause, [5] let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it, and let him trample my life to the ground and lay my glory in the dust. Selah

PROTECTION [6] Arise, O LORD, in your anger; lift yourself up against the fury of my enemies; awake for me; you have

appointed a judgment. [7] Let the assembly of the peoples be gathered about you; over it return on high.

RIGHTEOUSNESS [8] The LORD judges the peoples; judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me.

JUSTICE [9] Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end, and may you establish the righteous—you who test the minds and hearts, O righteous God!

PLEASING OR DISPLEASING GOD [10] My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart. [11] God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day.

WRATH [12] If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword; he has bent and readied his bow; [13] he has prepared for him his deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery shafts.

THE WICKED [14] Behold, the wicked man conceives evil and is pregnant with mischief and gives birth to lies. [15] He makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into the hole that he has made. [16] His mischief returns upon his own head, and on his own skull his violence descends.

PRAISE [17] I will give to the LORD the thanks due to his righteousness, and I will sing praise to the name of the LORD, the Most High.

Prayers Of Endurance

(Psalm 69 ESV)

No Situation Is Hopeless: Run To God!

[1] Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. [2] I sink

in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me. [3] I am weary with my crying out; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God. [4] More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; mighty are those who would destroy me, those who attack me with lies. What I did not steal must I now restore?

Confess Your Sin

[5] O God, you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you. [6] Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me, O Lord GOD of hosts; let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me, O God of Israel. [7] For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonor has covered my face. [8] I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother's sons.

Messengers Are Often Attacked For Their Message: Stay Humble But Zealous

[9] For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me. [10] When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting, it became my reproach. [11] When I made sackcloth my clothing, I became a byword to them. [12] I am the talk of those who sit in the gate, and the drunkards make songs about me.

God Is Aware, Able, And Good: Never Doubt

[13] But as for me, my prayer is to you, O LORD. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love answer me in your saving faithfulness. [14] Deliver me from sinking in the mire; let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters. [15] Let not the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up, or the pit close its

mouth over me.

Seek His Presence In Your Loneliness

[16] Answer me, O LORD, for your steadfast love is good; according to your abundant mercy, turn to me. [17] Hide not your face from your servant; for I am in distress; make haste to answer me. [18] Draw near to my soul, redeem me; ransom me because of my enemies! [19] You know my reproach, and my shame and my dishonor; my foes are all known to you. [20] Reproaches have broken my heart, so that I am in despair. I looked for pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none. [21] They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.

Seek And Trust God's Just Vengeance And Punishment

[22] Let their own table before them become a snare; and when they are at peace, let it become a trap. [23] Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see, and make their loins tremble continually. [24] Pour out your indignation upon them, and let your burning anger overtake them. [25] May their camp be a desolation; let no one dwell in their tents. [26] For they persecute him whom you have struck down, and they recount the pain of those you have wounded. [27] Add to them punishment upon punishment; may they have no acquittal from you. [28] Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; let them not be enrolled among the righteous.

Trust His Salvation Plan: Now & Future

[29] But I am afflicted and in pain; let your salvation, O God, set me on high! [30] I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. [31] This will please the LORD more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs. [32] When the humble see it they will be glad; you who seek God, let your hearts revive. [33] For the LORD hears

the needy and does not despise his own people who are prisoners. [34] Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them. [35] For God will save Zion and build up the cities of Judah, and people shall dwell there and possess it; [36] the offspring of his servants shall inherit it, and those who love his name shall dwell in it.

Prayers Of Protection

(Psalm 31)

Admit You Need Outside Help!

[1] In you, O LORD, do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me! [2] Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily! Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me!

Praise Your Protector

[3] For you are my rock and my fortress; and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me; [4] you take me out of the net they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge. [5] Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.

Recognize Your Enemies & Increase In Your Love Of God

[6] I hate those who pay regard to worthless idols, but I trust in the LORD. [7] I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction; you have known the distress of my soul, [8] and you have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy; you have set my feet in a broad place.

Be Transparent With The Depth Of Your Need!

[9] Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief; my soul and my body also. [10] For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away. [11] Because of all my adversaries I have become a reproach, especially to my neighbors, and an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me. [12] I have been forgotten like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel.

Regardless Of Your Circumstances, Trust In The Lord!

[13] For I hear the whispering of many—terror on every side!—as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life. [14] But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, “You are my God.” [15] My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors! [16] Make your face shine on your servant; save me in your steadfast love!

Ask Specifically For Help

[17] O LORD, let me not be put to shame, for I call upon you; let the wicked be put to shame; let them go silently to Sheol. [18] Let the lying lips be mute, which speak insolently against the righteous in pride and contempt.

Thank God Profusely

And Specifically

[19] Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind! [20] In the cover of your presence you hide them from the plots of men; you store them in your shelter from the strife of tongues. [21] Blessed be the LORD, for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me when I was in a besieged city. [22] I had said in my alarm, "I am cut off from your sight." But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cried to you for help.

Never Forget That God Is In Control

[23] Love the LORD, all you his saints! The LORD preserves the faithful but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride. [24] Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the LORD!

TOP 30 WAYS TO PRAY

Here are some suggestions and ideas for ways to pray!

1. ACTS: Spend time praying over each of these areas: Adoration (of God), Confession (of sins), Thanksgiving (for His work), Supplication (how can you ask God to help you or others)
2. Pick a Psalm and pray through it, reflecting how you might be feeling and thinking in a similar way or situation (150 Psalms, ~30 days/month, 5 psalms to choose from per day)
3. Pray over the names of God. Reflect on who He is and adore Him (from *God Is* by Ken Hemphill): Alpha (beginning), Omega (end), Our Advocate, the Almighty, the Author & Finisher, the Beloved Son, the Bread of Life, the Bright Morning Star, Captain of our Salvation, the Chief Shepherd, the Cornerstone, Our Creator, Our Counselor, Our Deliverer, the Door, the Faithful Witness, Everlasting Father, the First Begotten, the Good Shepherd, the Great High Priest, the Holy Child, the Head of the Church, the Great I AM, Immanuel, Jesus, the Just One, the Life, the Lamb of God, the Light of the World, the Lion of Judah, the Lord of All, the Lord of Glory, Our Master, the Man of Sorrows, Our Mediator, the Messiah, the Mighty God, Our Redeemer, the Prince of Peace, Our Rock, the Resurrection & the Life, Our Savior, the Rose of Sharon, the Son of God, the

Son of Man, the True Light, the True Vine, the Truth, Wonderful, the Word of God, & the Way

4. Pray the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15)
5. Remain in silence – reflect on who the Lord is and how the Lord is working upon your life
6. Pray for Missionaries – International, across North America, & Military chaplains

Use *Pray for the World* by Patrick Johnstone as a guide!

7. Pray over the 10 commandments and ask for forgiveness of those you have broken (Exodus 20)
8. Journal out (write) down a prayer
9. Write your sins on a dry erase board or a paper. Pray for forgiveness and then destroy the writing.
10. Pray out loud.
11. Pray for five of your friends by name.
12. Pray for students and senior adults in your church by name.
13. Pray for a non-believer by name. Pray for a struggling Christian by name.
14. Pray for the leaders of our church: Staff. Lay leadership. Sunday School teachers. Volunteers.
15. Pray for five members of your family by name.
16. Pray for opportunities to witness and for love, boldness, wisdom, and courage to do so.
17. Pray for increased growth in your own spiritual walk with Christ: Bible Reading, Prayer, Worship, Stewardship, Service, etc.
18. Thank God because we are: the salt of the earth, the light of the world, witnesses of the Gospel, branches in God's vine, friends of Jesus, called by Christ, Saints of God, justified before God, walking in newness of life, in the Spirit, Sons of God, more than conquerors, one body, strong for the weak, filled with God's goodness,

not Spiritually lacking, in Christ Jesus, God's field and building, God's temple, the Members of Christ, known by God, the Aroma of Christ, given over to death, protected from Fear of Death, a new creation, ambassadors for Christ, strong when we are weak, crucified with Christ, heirs with Christ, sons and not slaves, not under the law, sealed with the Holy Spirit, created to do good, fellow citizens with the Saints, Christ's household, not quitters, protected by God's power, God's people, blessed when we are cursed, called God's children, from God (from *We Are* by Ken Hemphill)

19. Pray for strength and ways of escape with certain struggles and temptations you are dealing with. Pray for Satan to remain far from you.
20. Prayer walk: Walk around and pray for the areas and people you see.
21. Pray for specific needs/concerns of others.
22. Pray for your future spouse, children, or grandchildren (if the Lord wills).
23. Randomly open your Bible and pray over the Scripture you read. Reflect how you may have experienced or are experiencing similar things.
24. Pray freely as you feel led use a devotional book to guide you (try *Everyday Prayers: 365 Days to a Gospel-Centered Faith* by Scotty Smith).
25. Pray an ancient prayer of a Puritan (try a book called: *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions* by Arthur Bennett)
26. Pray through a church prayer sheet. Pray in a group over each other's needs/requests & as you feel led.
27. Pray sitting (2 Sam 7:18), standing (Mark 11:25), kneeling (Chronicles 6:13; Daniel 6:10; Luke 22:41; Acts 7:60, 9:40, 20:36, 21:5; Ephesians 3:14),

with your face to the ground (Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:35), and with hands lifted up (1 Timothy 2:8).

28. Pray as you watch the news. As you are sitting in class. As you are driving a car (eyes open). Let your surroundings guide and instruct your prayer.
29. Pray when you receive news by email, text message, phone calls, or Facebook.
30. Read Luke 18:1-8. Pray for a situation that you've "lost heart" over?

A 10-DAY PRAYER FOR LOVE FROM 1 CORINTHIANS 13

Remember Valentine's Day?

As kids, Valentine's Day was a time of nervousness and excitement as we exchanged and received cards and gifts in secret. As adults, Valentine's Day can be a helpful reminder to be more intentional in how we love one another. *One of the most famous passages on love is found in 1 Corinthians 13. Read it closely then let it guide your responsive prayer back to God.*

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (ESV)

Who Is God Calling You to Love Better? Is it your spouse, child, parent, relative, neighbor, coworker, or friend. Pick one person now and use their name to fill in the blanks below as you pray to Jesus. Will you pray for them for 10 days like Jeremiah prayed in seeking God's voice (Jeremiah 42:7)?

- Lord, help me to love _____ patiently.
- Lord, help me to show love to _____ with my kind words and actions.
- Lord, help me to demonstrate love towards _____ by being

more content in my situation in life.

- Lord, help me to speak lovingly to _____ with my praise and encouragement.
- Lord, help me to demonstrate more humility towards _____ by thinking more of them as more important than myself.
- Lord, help me to be more gentle towards _____ in my actions and responses.
- Lord, help me to make selfless choices that prioritize _____'s needs above my own.
- Lord, help me to be less demanding and more easy-going towards _____.
- Lord, help me to let go of my past hurts and be more forgiving towards _____.
- Lord, help me to be righteous in my actions towards _____.
- Lord, help me to read, hear, know, and speak your truth into _____'s life.
- Lord, help me to show mercy towards _____ and to protect them from their enemies in this world.
- Lord, help me to give grace to _____ and to be a faithful presence in their life.
- Lord, help me to be positive and optimistic in my relationship with _____.
- Lord, help me to love _____ well until the day I die.

Now let's not just pray about love. Let's practice it. Will you love _____ better in the year ahead?

100 BEST PRAYER QUOTES

1. "Some people pray just to pray and some people pray to know God." Andrew Murray
2. "Some people think God does not like to be troubled with our constant coming and asking. The way to trouble God is not to come at all." D.L. Moody
3. "There is a mighty lot of difference between saying prayers and praying." John G. Lake
4. "You may pray for an hour and still not pray. You may meet God for a moment and then be in touch with Him all day." Fredrik Wisloff
5. "I have so much to do that I spend several hours in prayer before I am able to do it." John Wesley
6. "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had absolutely no other place to go." Abraham Lincoln
7. "Always respond to every impulse to pray. The impulse to pray may come when you are reading or when you are battling with a text. I would make an absolute law of this – always obey such an impulse." Martyn Lloyd-Jones
8. "Wishing will never be a substitute for prayer." Ed Cole
9. "Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?" Corrie Ten Boom
10. "Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan." John Bunyan
11. "Of all the duties enjoined by Christianity none is more essential and yet more neglected than prayer." François

Fénelon

12. "When a Christian shuns fellowship with other Christians, the devil smiles. When he stops studying the Bible, the devil laughs. When he stops praying, the devil shouts for joy." Corrie Ten Boom
13. "When I pray, coincidences happen, and when I don't pray, they don't." William Temple
14. "Pray, and let God worry." Martin Luther
15. "Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers, pray for powers equal to your task." Phillips Brooks
16. "God's answers are wiser than our prayers." -Unknown
17. "Prayer in its highest form is agonizing soul sweat." Leonard Ravenhill
18. "Let the fires go out in the boiler room of the church and the place will still look smart and clean, but it will be cold. The Prayer Room is the boiler room for its spiritual life." Leonard Ravenhill
19. "The Church has not yet touched the fringe of the possibilities of intercessory prayer. Her largest victories will be witnessed when individual Christians everywhere come to recognize their priesthood unto God and day by day give themselves unto prayer." John R. Mott
20. "I must secure more time for private devotions. I have been living far too public for me. The shortening of devotions starves the soul, it grows lean and faint. I have been keeping too late hours." William Wilberforce
21. "I have held many things in my hands, and have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess." Martin Luther
22. "If you read history you will find out that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next." C.S. Lewis

23. "He that loves the Word and the purity of its precepts cannot turn traitor." William Gurnall
24. "My main ambition in life is to be on the devil's most wanted list." Leonard Ravenhill
25. "Satan always rocks our cradle when we sleep at our devotions." Joseph Hall
26. "The Scriptures were not given to increase our knowledge but to change our lives." D.L. Moody
27. "The vigour of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts." George Mueller
28. "The best of it is, God is with us." John Wesley
29. "Little of the Word with little prayer is death to the spiritual life. Much of the Word with little prayer gives a sickly life. Much prayer with little of the Word gives more life, but without steadfastness. A full measure of the Word and prayer each day gives healthy and powerful life." Andrew Murray
30. "Our ordinary views of prayer are not found in the New Testament. We look upon prayer as a means for getting something for ourselves; the Bible idea of prayer is that we may get to know God Himself." Oswald Chambers
31. "If you are sick, fast and pray; if the language is hard to learn, fast and pray; if the people will not hear you, fast and pray, if you have nothing to eat, fast and pray." Frederick Franson
32. "Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons; but they are helpless against our prayers." J. Sidlow Baxter
33. "Notice, we never pray for folks we gossip about, and we never gossip about the folk for whom we pray! For prayer is a great deterrent." Leonard Ravenhill
34. "God never gives us discernment in order that we may criticize, but that we may intercede." Oswald Chambers
35. "There is nothing that makes us love a man so much as

- praying for him." William Law
36. "A servant of the Lord stands bodily before men, but mentally he is knocking at the gates of heaven with prayer." John Climacus
 37. "Rich is the person who has a praying friend." Janice Hughes
 38. "It is necessary to rouse the heart to pray, otherwise it will become quite dry. The attributes of prayer must be: love of God, sincerity, and simplicity." John of Kronstadt
 39. "The true spirit of prayer is no other than God's own Spirit dwelling in the hearts of the saints. And as this spirit comes from God, so doth it naturally tend to God in holy breathings and pantings. It naturally leads to God, to converse with him by prayer." Jonathan Edwards
 40. "Accustom yourself gradually to carry Prayer into all your daily occupation -- speak, act, work in peace, as if you were in prayer, as indeed you ought to be." François Fénelon
 41. "Whether we think of or speak to God; whether we act or suffer for him; all is prayer when we have no other object than his love, and the desire of pleasing him." John Wesley
 42. "God does not stand afar off as I struggle to speak. He cares enough to listen with more than casual attention. He translates my scrubby words and hears what is truly inside. He hears my sighs and uncertain gropings as fine prose." Timothy Jones
 43. "In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart." John Bunyan
 44. "Prayer is not so much an act as it is an attitude—an attitude of dependency, dependency upon God." Arthur W. Pink
 45. "There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with

God." Brother Lawrence

46. "Prayer does not fit us for the greater work, prayer is the greater work." Oswald Chambers
47. "The Church used to be a lifeboat rescuing the perishing. Now she is a cruise ship recruiting the promising." Leonard Ravenhill
48. "The only reason we don't have revival is because we are willing to live without it!" Leonard Ravenhill
49. "A sinning man stops praying, a praying man stops sinning" Leonard Ravenhill
50. "If weak in prayer, we are weak everywhere." Leonard Ravenhill

E.M. Bounds Quotes on Prayer

51. "Private place and plenty of time are the life of prayer." E.M. Bounds
52. "Prayer is the language of a man burdened with a sense of need." E.M. Bounds
53. "Prayer is the greatest of all forces, because it honors God and brings him into active aid." E.M. Bounds
54. "Nothing is clearer than that prayer has its only worth and significance in the great fact that God hears and answers prayer." E.M. Bounds
55. "The story of every great Christian achievement is the history of answered prayer." E.M. Bounds
56. "Trust receives what prayer acquires. So, what prayer needs, at all times, is abiding and abundant trust." E.M. Bounds
57. "Public prayers are of little worth unless they are founded on or followed up by private praying." E.M. Bounds
58. "To be too busy with God's work to commune with God is the highway to backsliding." E.M. Bounds
59. "The goal of prayer is the ear of God." E.M. Bounds
60. "Jesus taught that perseverance is the essential

- element in prayer." E.M. Bounds
61. "Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still." E.M. Bounds
 62. "A holy life does not live in the closet, but it cannot live without the closet." E.M. Bounds
 63. "He only can truly pray who is all aglow for holiness, for God, and for heaven." E.M. Bounds
 64. "Heaven is too busy to listen to half-hearted prayers or to respond to pop-calls." E.M. Bounds
 65. "Holy living is essential preparation for prayer." E.M. Bounds
 66. "He who is too busy to pray will be too busy to live a holy life. Satan had rather we let the grass grow on the path to our prayer chamber than anything else." E.M. Bounds
 67. "It is necessary to iterate and reiterate that prayer, as a mere habit, as a performance gone through by routine or in a professional way, is a dead and rotten thing." E.M. Bounds
 68. "It is only when the whole heart is gripped with the passion of prayer that the life-giving fire descends, for none but the earnest man gets access to the ear of God." E.M. Bounds
 69. "No learning can make up for the failure to pray. No earnestness, no diligence, no study, no gifts will supply its lack." E.M. Bounds
 70. "Prayer should not be regarded as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege to be enjoyed, a rare delight that is always revealing some new beauty." E.M. Bounds
 71. "Prayer succeeds when all else fails." E.M. Bounds
 72. "The greatest benefactor this age could have is the man who will bring the teachers and the church back to prayer." E.M. Bounds
 73. "Prayer makes a godly man, and puts within him the mind of Christ, the mind of humility, of self-surrender,

- of service, of pity, and of prayer. If we really pray, we will become more like God, or else we will quit praying." E.M. Bounds
74. "Sainthood's piety is made, refined, perfected, by prayer. The gospel moves with slow and timid pace when the saints are not at their prayers early and late and long." E.M. Bounds
 75. "What the Church needs to-day is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use - men of prayer, men mighty in prayer." E.M. Bounds
 76. "Prayer is not learned in a classroom but in the closet." E.M. Bounds
 77. "Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still." E.M. Bounds
 78. "True prayer must be aflame. Christian life and character need to be all on fire." E.M. Bounds
 79. "Giving thanks is the very life of prayer." E.M. Bounds
 80. "No erudition, no purity of diction, no width of mental outlook, no flowers of eloquence, no grace of person can atone for lack of fire. Prayer ascends by fire. Flame gives prayer access as well as wings, acceptance as well as energy. There is no incense without fire; no prayer without flame." E.M. Bounds
 81. "The men who have done the most for God in this world have been early on their knees. He who fritters away the early morning, its opportunity and freshness, in other pursuits than seeking God will make poor headway seeking Him the rest of the day. If God is not first in our thoughts and efforts in the morning, He will be in the last place the remainder of the day." E.M. Bounds
 82. "We can do nothing without prayer. All things can be done by importunate prayer. It surmounts or removes all obstacles, overcomes every resisting force and gains its ends in the face of invincible hindrances." E.M.

Bounds

83. "God draws mightily near to the praying soul." E.M. Bounds
84. "You know the value of prayer: it is precious beyond all price." E.M. Bounds
85. "The little estimate we put on prayer is evident from the little time we give to it." E.M. Bounds
86. "Without devotion prayer is an empty form, a vain round of words." E.M. Bounds
87. "God cannot help hearing the prayer of an obedient child." E.M. Bounds
88. "PRAYER, praise and thanksgiving all go in company." E.M. Bounds
89. "To see God, to know God, and to live for God-these form the objective of all true praying." E.M. Bounds
90. "Pray without ceasing; continue in prayer; continuing instant in prayer; in everything by prayer, let your request be made known unto God; pray always, pray and not faint; men should pray everywhere; praying always, with all prayer and supplication." E.M. Bounds
91. "He who would pray, must obey. He who would get anything out of his prayers, must be in perfect harmony with God. Prayer puts into those who sincerely pray a spirit of obedience, for the spirit of disobedience is not of God and belongs not to God's praying hosts." E.M. Bounds
92. "An obedient life is a great help to prayer. In fact, an obedient life is a necessity to prayer, to the sort which accomplishes things. The absence of an obedient life makes prayer an empty performance, a mere misnomer. A penitent sinner seeks pardon and salvation and has an answer to his prayers even with a life stained and debauched with sin. But God's royal intercessors come before him with royal lives. Holy living promotes holy praying. God's intercessors "lift up holy hands," the symbols of righteous, obedient

lives." E.M. Bounds

93. "Four things let us ever keep in mind: God hears prayer, God heeds prayer, God answers prayer, and God delivers by prayer." E.M. Bounds
94. "Enthusiasm is more active than faith, though enthusiasm cannot remove mountains nor call into action any of the omnipotent forces which faith can command. Activity is often at the expense of more solid, useful elements, and generally to the total neglect of prayer. To be too busy with God's work to commune with God, to be busy with doing church work without taking time to talk to God about His work, is the highway to backsliding, and many people have walked therein to the hurt of their immortal souls." E.M. Bounds
95. "Wise is he in the day of trouble who knows his true source of strength and who fails not to pray." E.M. Bounds
96. "God's acquaintance is not made hurriedly." E.M. Bounds
97. "God does not bestow His gifts on the casual of hasty comers and goers. Much with God alone is the secret of knowing Him and of influence with Him." E.M. Bounds
98. "Prayer is God's plan to supply man's great and continuous need with God's great and continuous abundance." E.M. Bounds
99. "Life growing in its purity and devotion will be a more prayerful life." E.M. Bounds
100. "Prayer breaks all bars, dissolves all chains, opens all prisons, and widens all straits by which God's saints have been held." E.M. Bounds

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT FASTING?

(Ezra 8:21-23, ESV) Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. 22 For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, "The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him." 23 So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.

10 Reasons To Fast

From Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life by Donald Whitney

1. **Strengthen Prayer**
2. **Seek God's Guidance**
3. **Express Grief**
4. **Seek Deliverance or Protection**
5. **Express Repentance or Return to God**

6. **Humble Oneself Before God**
7. **Express Concern for the Work of God**
8. **Minister to the Needs of Others**
9. **Overcome Temptation & Dedicate Yourself to God**
10. **Express Love and Worship to God**

7 Ways To Fast

- **Normal Fast** – fasting from all food, not from water
Jesus' temptation (Matthew 4:1-11)
- **Partial Fast** – limitation of your diet
(Daniel 1:12 – vegetables to eat and water to drink)
(Matthew 3:4 - John the Baptist - locusts & wild honey)
- **Absolute Fast** – fasting from all food and all water
(Ezra 8:21-23, Esther 4:12-16, Paul - Acts 9:9, David - 2 Samuel 12:15-23)
- **Supernatural Fast** – requires God's intervention to survive
Moses (Deuteronomy 9:9), Elijah (1 Kings 19:8)
- **Private Fast** - in a way not to be noticed (Matthew 6:16-18)
- **Congregational Fast** – united focus (Joel 2:15-16, Acts 13:2)
- **Other than food** - "a voluntary denial of a normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity" - Richard Foster
Fasting from sex within marriage for more focus on prayer (1 Corinthians 7:3-5)

Helpful Resources for Learning More about Fasting

- Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life by Donald Whitney

- A Hunger for God by John Piper - Freely available at www.desiringgod.org/books/a-hunger-for-god
- "Crossway Interview with John Piper on *A Hunger for God*" - www.desiringgod.org/interviews/crossway-books-interview-with-john-piper-on-a-hunger-for-god

TOP BIBLE VERSES FOR FASTING

"Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. 22 For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, "The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him." 23 So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty." (Ezra 8:21-23, ESV)

Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" [15] And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. [16] No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. [17] Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved." (Matthew 9:14-17 ESV)

"And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [17]

But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, [18] that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:16-18 ESV)

“Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. [2] While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ [3] Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.” (Acts 13:1-3 ESV)

“And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” (Acts 14:23 ESV)

“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. [2] And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. [3] And the tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.’ [4] But he answered, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (Matthew 4:1-4 ESV)

“Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.’” (John 6:35 ESV)

“You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:13 ESV)

“Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do.” (1 Corinthians 8:8 ESV)

“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: [10] ‘Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and

the other a tax collector. [11] The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. [12] I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ [13] But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ [14] I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 18:9-14 ESV)

“For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. [19] Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. [20] But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, [21] who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” (Philippians 3:18-21 ESV)

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, [2] through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, [3] who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. [4] For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, [5] for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.” (1 Timothy 4:1-5 ESV)

HELPFUL QUOTES ON FASTING

- “Prayer is reaching out after the unseen; fasting is letting go of all that is seen and temporal. Fasting helps express, deepen, confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God.” Andrew Murray
- “In Shansi I found Chinese Christians who were accustomed to spend time in fasting and prayer. They recognized that this fasting, which so many dislike, which requires faith in God, since it makes one feel weak and poorly, is really a Divinely appointed means of grace. Perhaps the greatest hindrance to our work is our own imagined strength; and in fasting we learn what poor, weak creatures we are - dependent on a meal of meat for the little strength which we are so apt to lean upon.” Hudson Taylor
- “Bear up the hands that hang down, by faith and prayer; support the tottering knees. Have you any days of fasting and prayer? Storm the throne of grace and persevere therein, and mercy will come down.” John Wesley
- “We are a culture of abundance that indulges and abuses—fasting is a means of God’s grace to embrace someone greater than our appetites.” Keyan Soltani
- “I would entreat the people of God to be very cautious how they give heed to such things. I have seen ‘em fail in very many instances; and know by experience that impressions being made with great power, and upon the minds of true saints, yea, eminent saints; and presently after, yea, in

the midst of, extraordinary exercises of grace and sweet communion with God, and attended with texts of scripture strongly impressed on the mind, are no sure signs of their being revelations from heaven: for I have known such impressions to fail, and prove vain by the event, in some instances attended with all these circumstances.” Jonathan Edwards (*Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, p. 282.)

John Piper Quotes on Fasting

- “Fasting helps cultivate that spiritual hunger by forcing the hunger issue on us and making us ask if we really do hunger for God.” John Piper
- “Christian fasting, at its root, is the hunger of a homesickness for God” John Piper
- “Therefore there is a distinctive Christian fasting. It is always both contentment in the already and dissatisfaction in the not yet.” John Piper
- “We fast because we’re hungry for God’s Word and God’s Spirit in our lives.” John Piper
- “We fast because we long for God’s glory to resound in the church and God’s praise to resound among the nations.” John Piper
- “We fast because we yearn for God’s Son to return and God’s kingdom to come.” John Piper
- “Ultimately we fast simply because we want God more than we want anything this world has to offer us.” John Piper
- “If you are not fasting, it is perhaps because you do not feel any fervent longings for God’s power in your life.” John Piper
- “Fasting is an offering of emptiness to show where fullness can be found. It is a sacrifice of need and hunger.” John Piper
- “And fasting sets us onto God for satisfaction and off of food.” John Piper

BIBLICAL HEALTH

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SPIRITUAL HEALTH?

Am I Spiritually Healthy?

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. [2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2 ESV)

Take a Diagnostic Exam (Romans 12:9-21)

- **Am I increasing in my love of God? (v.9, 11, 12)**
- **Am I increasing in my hatred of sin? (v.9)**
- **Am I increasing in holy living? (v.9)**
- **Am I increasing in my love of others? (v.10,14-18)**
- **Am I increasing in the fruits of God's Spirit? (v.12, 21)**
- **Am I increasing in generosity to God & others? (v.13,21)**
- **Am I increasing in forgiveness? (v.18-20)**

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. [10] Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. [11] Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. [12] Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. [13] Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. [14] Bless those who persecute you; bless and do

not curse them. [15] Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. [16] Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. [17] Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. [18] If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. [19] Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." [20] To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." [21] Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:9-21)

How to Increase in Spiritual Health

- **Fulfill your purpose with the body of Christ**
(Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12, Acts 2:42-47)
Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them... (Romans 12:6)
- **Take Individual Responsibility** - let the Holy Spirit grow and use you in God's good work through His church
- **Intentionally Fellowship** – develop caring and committed relationships
- **Humbly Serve** – share towards each other in times of need & reach outside the church to show Christ's love in a tangible way
- **Passionately Worship** – ascribe glory to God and enjoy His presence!
- **Courageously Evangelize** - lovingly connect people to Christ by intentionally sharing the Gospel message
- **Constantly Pray** – speak with God personally, regularly, and for one another
- **Teach Yourself & Others** – personally and corporately study God's Word

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT PHYSICAL HEALTH?

8 Dimensions of Physical Health

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Safeguards - Do I unnecessarily put my or others' lives at risk?

Diet - Am I given to gluttonous or unhealthy eating habits?
The one who keeps the law is a son with understanding, but a companion of gluttons shames his father. (Proverbs 28:7)

Addictions – Do I take in substances which can harm me?
"All things are lawful for me,' but not all things are helpful. 'All things are lawful for me' but I will not be dominated by anything." (1 Corinthians 6:12)

Hygiene – Do I have good health habits to protect myself?

Medicine – Do I utilize the gift of medical wisdom?

Exercise – Do I use my body physically for its purposes?
The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road! There is a lion in the streets!" As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed. The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth. (Proverbs 26:13-16)

Stewardship – Do I recognize that my body is not my own?

Suffering – Do I trust God when He chooses or allows for my health or life to be taken away?

“Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?”
In all this Job did not sin with his lips.” (Job 2:10)

Take Action & Improve Your Physical Health

1. **Endurance:** There is no easy or quick fix.
2. **Diet:** Watch what you take in. Discipline yourself.
3. **Exercise:** Work out creatively, effectively, regularly.
4. **Rest:** Pace yourself according to God’s plan.
5. **Vanity:** Avoid living in self-righteousness.
6. **Guilt:** Avoid living in self-condemnation.
7. **Medical advice:** Seek it, take it, obey it.
8. **Addictions:** Recognize it, confess it, find help.
9. **Protection:** Protect yours and others’ health and lives.
10. **Honor** the Lord with your health.
11. **Trust** the Lord in sickness and health

1 Timothy 4:8 “for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH?

Am I Mentally Healthy?

Mind Games: What is going on in my head?

Satan, the World, and Our Flesh Wage a Mental War

- We destroy arguments & every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God (2 Cor 10:5)
- David (1 Chronicles 21:1), Judas (John 13:2), Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10), Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:34-37)

Pursue Mental Obedience: Take Every Thought Captive

- and take every thought captive to obey Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5)
- Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

How to Be Mentally Healthy

(2 Timothy 3:10-17 ESV)

- **Fill Your Mind...with Truths from Trustworthy Lives** [10]
You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, [11] my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.
- **Mental Suffering Happens** [12] Indeed, all who desire to

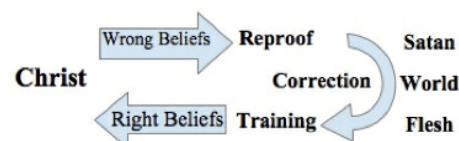
live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, [13] while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

- **Continue to Fill Your Mind with God's Truths** [14] But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it

God's Truths are the Key to...

Eternal Life [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

A Valued Life [16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for



training in righteousness,

- **Reproof – Stop Wrong Beliefs** – Recognize Lies
- And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)
- “For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.” (Rom 14:23)
- “Sin is anything that displeases God and since without faith you can't please God, therefore, if you don't have faith, everything you do it sin, because everything you do displeases God.” John Piper
 - **Correction - Fix Wrong Beliefs** – Replace Lies with Truth
 - **Training – Remain in Right Beliefs** – Fill your mind with God's truth
- **Live a Complete & Purposed Life** [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT EMOTIONAL HEALTH?

How to Be Emotionally Healthy (Psalm 55 ESV)

Seek God in Truth-Filled Prayer 1 Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy! 2 Attend to me, and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and I moan,

Acknowledge Your Circumstances 3 because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked. For they drop trouble upon me, and in anger they bear a grudge against me.

Honestly Share Your Emotions with God 4 My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen upon me. 5 Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me. 6 And I say, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest; 7 I would wander far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; Selah 8 I would hurry to find a shelter from the raging wind and tempest.”

Ask God to Act Righteously 9 Destroy, O Lord, divide their tongues; for I see violence and strife in the city. 10 Day and night they go around it on its walls, and iniquity and trouble are within it; 11 ruin is in its midst; oppression and fraud do not depart from its marketplace.

Prepare for Deep Emotional Wounds 12 For it is not an enemy who taunts me— then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me—then I could hide from him. 13 But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. 14 We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng.

Stand Confident in the Lord's Deliverance 15 Let death steal over them; let them go down to Sheol alive; for evil is in their dwelling place and in their heart. 16 But I call to God, and the Lord will save me. ... 22 Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

Constantly Go to God 17 Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice. 18 He redeems my soul in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me.

Trust in the Lord's Justice 19 God will give ear and humble them, he who is enthroned from of old, Selah, because they do not change and do not fear God. 20 My companion stretched out his hand against his friends; he violated his covenant. 21 His speech was smooth as butter, yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords. ... 23 But you, O God, will cast them down into the pit of destruction; men of blood and treachery shall not live out half their days.

Listen to and Trust His Voice 23 But I will trust in you.

Anger – James 1:19-20, Despair – Colossians 3:1-2, Worry – Matthew 6:27, Fear – Joshua 1:9, Sadness – Philippians 4:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Shame – Romans 8:1-2, Self-Righteousness – Matthew 22:29, Hatred – Matthew 5:43-44, Envy – 2 Corinthians 12:10, 1 Timothy 6:8-10

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT FINANCIAL HEALTH?

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread (Matthew 6:11)

How To Be Financially Un-Healthy

1. Think Things Are Yours (Exodus 13:1-2)
2. Whine & Forget His Previous Provision (Exodus 12:33-39)
3. Fear for the Future (Ex 13:13)
4. Reminisce on the Past (Ex 16:3)
5. Greedily Gather an Excess (Ex 16:4-5, 20)
6. Complain about Your Finances (Ex 16:8)
7. Be Too Lazy to Work (Ex 16:16)
8. Seek Provision Apart from God (Ex 16:27-28)
9. Doubt in the Present (Ex 17:3)
10. Forget the Lord's Presence (Ex 17:7)
11. Spend on the Silly (Ex 20:22-23)
12. Refrain from Giving (Ex 20:24)
13. Give Publicly to Be Seen (Matthew 6:1)
14. Turn Good Things Into God Things (Matt 6:19)

15. Be Careless with God's Possessions (Matt 6:19)
16. Treasure Treasure (Matt 6:21)
17. Focus on the Forbidden (Matt 6:23)
18. Fail to Honor God with Your Wealth (Matt 6:24)
19. Worry about God's Basic Provision (Matt 6:25)

5 Truths For Financial Health

1. Seek God's Face (Exodus 19:3)
2. Know God's Truths (Exodus 19:3)
3. Remember God Is God (Exodus 19:4)
4. Honor & Obey God (Exodus 19:5)
5. Understand Everything Is God's (Exodus 19:5)

4 Actions For Financial Health

1. You Need a Budget (Luke 14:28-30)
2. Prioritize Sacrificial, Secret Giving (Matt 6:4)
3. Ask God For Specific Needs (Matt 6:11, 7:7)
4. Guard Your Eyes, Mind, Ears, & Heart from Greed (1 John 5:21, James 4:1-4)

"Every time you doubt that you can live on 90% of your income, let the glorious promise of God strengthen your faith: 'My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus' (Philippians 4:19)." John Piper

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT HOME HEALTH?

(Deuteronomy 6:4-9 ESV)

Fix Your Priorities - How can I tell what my priorities are? (Ephesians 5:15-16)

- o How do I spend my time when I am home?
- o What do I find myself thinking most about?
- o What do I get excited, angry, or depressed about?
- o How do I allocate money?
- o Whom do I invest my talents in?
- o What subjects are easy for me to talk about?
- **Who are God's priorities for me?**
 - o God. Spouse. Kids. Family.
 - o Home-less: Orphans & Widows
 - o Fellow Christians.
 - o Coworkers. Neighbors. Strangers.
 - o Self.

Make Your Home God-Centered (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

Devotional – individual and family, Scripture – teach, memorize, live, Quality Time Together - Love

Make a Home for Your Marriage (Ephesians 5:22-33)

- Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. (Hebrews 13:4)

- However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Ephesians 5:33)

Make a Home for Your Kids (Ephesians 6:1-4) Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

- Commanding → Coaching → Cheering

Make a Home for Your Family (1 Tim 5:1-8) But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Make a Hospitable Home (1 Peter 4:8-9)

- Christian brothers & sisters (Romans 12:10,13)
- Neighbors, Friends, Strangers (Hebrews 13:2)

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. (1 Peter 4:8-9)

Make a Home for the Home-Less (James 1:27) Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

- **Unborn:** Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. (Psalm 82:3-4)
- **Orphans** (John 14:18, Romans 8:15) - Adoption & Foster Care
- **Widows with Family** (1 Timothy 5:4)
- **Widows without Family** (1 Timothy 5:16)
- **Prisoners:** "Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body." (Hebrews 13:3)

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT WORK PLACE HEALTH?

(Ephesians 6:5-9 ESV)

Work Is a Gift & Responsibility, Not a Right v.5 Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,

- Know Your Role
- Obey Your Boss
- Respect Your Boss – Humbly & Sincerely
- Work As If Jesus Is Your Boss
- Be Thankful for Your Job
- Be Thankful for Your Talents & Abilities

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17 ESV)

Watch Out for Temptations To... v.6 not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,

- Settle for the Minimum Standard
- Fake It
- Gossip
- Complain

- Argue
- Be Half-Hearted
- Forget that Work is Part of God's Will

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. [32] Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, [33] just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. (1 Corinthians 10:31-33 ESV)

Be a Great Employee [7] rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, [8] knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

- Serve Others: Bosses, Fellow Employees, Customers
- Do Good: Look for Opportunities, Take Opportunities
- Trust in God's Reward, Not Your Position or Paycheck

"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12 ESV)

Be a Great Boss [9] Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

- Be Fair, Be Merciful, Be Gracious, Be Peace-making

Work Is Your Every-Day Mission Field [12] Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, [13] bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. [14] And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. [15] And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. (Colossians 3:12-15 ESV)

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT RETIREMENT HEALTH?

A "Typical American" Retirement Is Not a Biblical Command or Concept

Life & retirement isn't about us - it is about glorifying God by enjoying & sharing Him!

Retirement Is a Gift & Responsibility, Not a Right - Don't Waste It!

Psalm 71:18 "So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come." (ESV)

8 Opportunities In Retirement - Seize the Season!

- 1) **More Spiritual Growth** - additional time allows for purposeful and intentional reprioritization, consider how to enjoy God more through your Bible and prayer!
- 2) **More Service** - within your church, among family, in your community
- 3) **More Missions** - cross some boundaries to go and tell the Good News of Jesus wherever He calls with fearless love
- 4) **More Generosity** - if you've been wise financially you will have less significant expenses that may free you for more chances to invest God's resources back into ministries and

missions

- 5) **More Relationships** - a slower pace creates space to be with you spouse, children, family, friends and neighbors more
- 6) **More Travel** - God's creation is amazing; free time allows more chances to enjoy God's blessings in His creation with those whom you love
- 7) **More Learning** - more time freed up from no work schedule can allow time to read, listen, and watch teachers and authors for personal growth that overflows to others
- 8) **More Rest** - many of us have worked at too furious of a pace and it has taken a toll, retirement can serve as a season of rest and reprioritization

5 Temptations in Retirement - Watch Out!

- 1) **Self-indulge** - living for self and the pursuit of the pleasures and temptations of the world
- 2) **Self-harm** - overeating and under-exercising, lack of medical oversight or intervention
- 3) **Self-destruct** - over-committing, over-working, not adjusting your pace to the physical realities of aging
- 4) **Self-isolate** - over-sleeping, overly-lazy and sedentary lifestyles lead to depression
- 5) **Self-love** - it's easy to prioritize yourself and your needs over others through self-focus

Be Intentional in Your Season of Retirement!

Ephesians 5:15–17 “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, [16] making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (ESV)

Retirement Is a Mission Field to Proclaim God's Goodness to the Next Generation

2 Timothy 4:7 “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

A Helpful and Free Resource! “Rethinking Retirement: Finishing Life for the Glory of Christ” by John Piper <https://www.desiringgod.org/books/rethinking-retirement>

Proverbs 17:6 “Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, & the glory of children is their fathers.”

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT RELATIONAL HEALTH?

The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
There is no other commandment greater
than these." (Mark 12:31 ESV)

When do we love? Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)

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

Why do we love? For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers (Romans 9:3)

Because Christ loved & died for us. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Eph 5:2-3)

Who do we love? But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, [45] so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:44-45)

• *Spouses. Children. Family. Church. Friends. Strangers. Enemies.*

What does it mean to love? Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" [37] He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise." (Luke 10:36-37)

Love thinks, feels, and gives mercy & grace. How do you love yourself?

• *5 Ts – Thoughts & Feelings – Talk – Time – Talents – Treasures*

Walk in Christ-like obedience and holiness. put on the armor of light. [13] Let us walk properly as in the daytime...[14] But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13:12-14)

How do we love others? Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. (Romans 10:1)

• We ought to lay down our lives for the brothers (1 John 3:16)
• *5Ts – Thoughts & Feelings – Talk – Time – Talents – Treasures*

Share the Gospel Love: Warnings & Promises: Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. [9] For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." [10] Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:8-10)

• Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4)

6/10 Commandments: Exodus 20:12-17 (see Ephesians 4:17-32)

5. Honor & Respect Others (v.12) "Honor your father and your mother"

6. Grant Forgiveness (v.13) "You shall not murder."

7. Be Sexually Pure (v.14) "You shall not commit adultery."

8. Give Rather than Take (v.15) "You shall not steal."

9. Speak Truth (v.16) "You shall not bear false witness"

10. Love God More Than Things (v.17) "You shall not covet your neighbor's house...wife...servant...ox...donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SEXUAL HEALTH?

1 Corinthians 7:1-7 (ESV)

Sexual Virginity Is Precious and Beautiful [1] Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman."

God-Given Singleness Is a Gift [6] Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. [7] I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

Marital Fidelity Is the Solution to Sexual Immorality [2] But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

Sex Is for Heterosexual Marriage. [3] The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband.

- God's plan for marriage is "the joining of one man and one woman with the promise of being faithful to one another for a lifetime" (Baptist Faith & Message). Marriage is a spiritual, covenantal, and lifetime union of two souls by our Creator God. (Mark 10:1-12)

Your Body Belongs to God, But Is Placed Under the Authority of Your Spouse

(Past, Present, or Future) [4] For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

Willing Sexual Abstinence In Marriage...

...Is Not an Option ([5] Do not deprive one another,)

...Unless Both Spouses Agree (except perhaps by agreement)

...For a Brief Period of Time (for a limited time,)

...For the Purposes of God-Focus (that you may devote yourselves to prayer)

...With an Intentional Plan for Sexual Re-Union (but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control)

We Will Be Held Accountable for Our Sexual Health Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. (Hebrews 13:4)

How to Be Sexually Healthy

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. (Ephesians 5:3)

Single? Remember you have an enemy. Repent where you have failed. Don't have sex... in your mind...in your heart...with yourself...with others. Don't take steps towards sex outside marriage. Save sex until you are married according to God's plan.

Married? Remember you have an enemy. Avoid the appearance of sexual immorality. Avoid temptations towards sexual immorality. Avoid all sexual immorality. Have sex regularly (aim for twice a week). Make sex special, spiritual, and significant. When sex is not possible, find alternatives (HINT: hands & mouths & bodies...read Song of Solomon).

enjoy spending every spare minute they can.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Jonathan Carl



Jonathan Carl

grew up in the great state of Texas as the oldest of six kids. He graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point and served in the U.S. Army as a tanker with a combat tour in Iraq in the early 2000s. He had the joy of journeying to Kentucky where he met and married his wonderful wife, Brittney. Several years later he became the lead pastor at South Fork Baptist Church where he has served for over a decade. He enjoyed the opportunities to study and earn his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Evangelism & Missions from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Jonathan & Brittney have four daughters (Sophia, Lydia, Alia & Mia) with whom they

BOOKS BY THIS AUTHOR

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6. Was Mary Always Saved? Did Mary Never Sin? Is Mary the Cause of Salvation? Was Mary a Virgin Her Entire Life? Did Jesus

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7. Are Images of Jesus, Mary, Saints, or Angels Helpful or Harmful? Do Relics & Rosaries have Power?

8. Should We Pray to Mary and Saints? Is it OK to Pray to Angels?

9. Will I Go to Purgatory? Do Indulgences Help Us?

10. Can Marriages Be Annulled? What about Catholic Divorce and Remarriage?

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5-30 Minute Plans

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This could be a 1, 2, or 3 year plan for you to read the Bible. You might want to start off with a 5 minute-per-day commitment one year (Psalms & Proverbs), before progressing to a 10 (New Testament) or 15 (Old Testament) minute-per-day goal. Or maybe you have always wanted to read through the entire Bible in 52 weeks, you could start this any time of year, but will want to prepare for at least 30 minutes of Bible reading or listening each day.

Since this reading plan is outlined as a "weekly" plan instead of a "daily" plan, you might find that you spend more time on the weekends reading and then use the past readings for journaling, reflecting, and praying on the weekdays. Or you may prefer to do your reading on weekdays and keep the weekends as a "catch up" time for anything you missed.

Regardless of the specific plans you make, I am proud of you for taking this significant step. May you enjoy your weekly

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