

THE TRUSTWORTHY
WORD

Volume 4 - Life Issues

Dr. Jonathan Carl

CONTENTS

Title Page	
Four Helpful Websites	3
Introduction	13
Life Issues	15
What Does the Bible Say About Forgiveness?	16
10 Truths About Forgiveness	25
What Does the Bible Say About Enemies?	27
How to Respond to Your Enemies	33
What Does the Bible Say About the Death of Babies & Children?	44
What Does the Bible Say About Depression?	49
What Does the Bible Say About Suicide?	60
What Does the Bible Say About Worry?	69
What Does the Bible Say About Suffering, Worry, Death, Life & Heaven?	76
What Does the Bible Say About Dating?	84
What Does the Bible Say About Marriage Roles?	90
Passages on Marriage	93
30 Days to Improve Your Marriage	96
What Does the Bible Say About Divorce and Remarriage?	101
What Does the Bible Say About Addictions?	116

What Does the Bible Say About Alcohol?	118
What Does the Bible Say About Sexual Sin?	130
How to Protect Yourself and Your Family from Porn	139
What Does the Bible Say About Homosexuality and Gender Identity?	144
A Biblical Response to Pride Month	152
What Does the Bible Say About Voting and Politics?	156
How Should a Christian Vote?	162
A Prayer for Our Nation	165
Christians, We Must Stop Our Partisan Politics!	168
What Does the Bible Say About Abortion?	176
What Does the Bible Say About Multi-Level or Network Marking?	179
What Does the Bible Say About Money?	186
What Does the Bible Say About Idols?	191
What Does the Bible Say About Secret Sin?	198
Best Children's Bible Apps	200
Fun Ideas on How to Use Children's Bible Apps	202
How to Talk to Your Kids About the Toughest Topics	204
Top Resources for Children (By Age)	207
Top 6 Most Helpful Online Resources	209
About the Author	211
Books By This Author	213

The Trustworthy Word:

Volume 4 - Life Issues

Copyright © 2022 Jonathan Logan Carl. All rights reserved.

Download & share this book FREE as well as many other resources and helpful study videos at: **www.TrustworthyWord.com**

ISBN-13: 9798836132057

Cover Photo by Henry Hustava on Unsplash

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. May not copy or download more than 500 consecutive verses of the ESV Bible or more than one half of any book of the ESV Bible. Accessible online at: www.esv.org

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 4- Life Issues is a work based on the most common life questions I have encountered as a pastor. 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... forgiveness, enemies, depression, worry, death of babies and children, suicide, suffering, dating, marriage, addictions, alcohol, sexual sin, homosexuality, gender identity, politics, abortion, multi-level marketing, money, idols, 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.

Download & share this book (and the entire 4 volume compilation of *The Trustworthy Word* via a free PDF download @ www.TrustworthyWord.com)

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

Ephesians 6:13 “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.” (ESV)

LIFE ISSUES

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT FORGIVENESS?

www.trustworthyword.com/forgiveness

Consider these four questions...

- Is there someone you haven't forgiven?
- Have you forgiven everyone the way Jesus commands you to?
- Is there hate, bitterness, anger, or resentment in your heart?
- Do you realize the presence of unforgiveness may be a sign you are going to Hell?

Before you answer these tough questions, read below...

Understand the definition of these words

- **Forgive** - to stop feeling angry or resentful toward (someone) for an offense, flaw, or mistake; to cancel (a debt)
- **Hate** - to feel intense or passionate dislike
- **Bitterness** - anger and disappointment at being treated unfairly; resentment
- **Anger** - a strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility
- **Resentment** - bitter indignation at having been treated unfairly

What is forgiveness and why do I need it? How do I become forgiven by God? Forgiveness is the restoration of a relationship through the removal of obstacles and offense.

All people have loved themselves more than God and separated themselves from God through sin.

Jesus Christ is the only way for the obstacle and offense of sin

to be removed. Here are two resources to consider to ensure that you get to enjoy Him forever in Heaven and are not forever separated from Him in Hell:

- **"How Can I Become a Christian"** : trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian
- **"How Can I Be Sure I'm A Christian"** : trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian
- Hebrews 10:17 "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."
- Psalm 103:8-14 "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; **as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.** As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame he remembers that we are dust."
- Hebrews 8:12 "For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

"Resentment is like taking poison and hoping the other person dies."
~Unknown

Forgiveness Is In Imitation of Jesus and Is Evidence of Salvation

- Matthew 6:14 "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you"
- Ephesians 4:30-32 "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."
- 1 John 4:19-21 "We love because he first loved us. If anyone

says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother."

- 1 John 5:2-3 "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome"

Lack of Forgiveness Is Sin and Is Evidence of Lostness

- 1 John 2:9 "Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness."
- Hebrews 12:15 "See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled"
- Matthew 5:22-24 "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. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."
- Matthew 6:15 "but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."
- Matthew 18:32-35 "Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

How can I know if I have truly forgiven someone?

- You see their spiritual problem before their other issues.
- You feel pity, not hate.

- You feel compassion, not anger.
- Your heart is broken, not bitter.
- You trust God's revenge, not plotting your own.
- You bless them, instead of curse them.
- You pray for their salvation (if they are lost), not their destruction.
- You pray for God to convict, change and bless them (if they are saved).
- You refuse to bring up the hurt, instead of repeating and resisting the matter.

Colossians 3:12-17 "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 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. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 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."

Un-forgiveness Affects Your Prayer Life

Mark 11:25 "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

Hatred of Others Is A Manifestation of Hatred of Self

Ecclesiastes 2:17-18 "So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after wind. I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me"

Hatred of Self and Hatred of Others Is A Manifestation of a

Hatred of God

- Titus 3:3 “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.”
- Ephesians 5:29-30 “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.”
- Psalm 81:15 “Those who hate the LORD would cringe toward him, and their fate would last forever.”
- “What does the Bible say about suicide?”
www.trustworthyword.com/suicide

Forgiveness Does Not Necessitate Friendship

- 1 Corinthians 15:33 “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company ruins good morals.’”
- Galatians 6:1 “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”

Forgiveness Trusts Jesus’ Judgement, Justice, and Vengeance

- Romans 12:19 “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.’”
- Proverbs 19:11 “Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.”
- Matthew 5:39 “But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

Forgiveness Shows Kindness to Your Enemy

- Romans 12:14 “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.”
- Romans 12:20-21 “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.’ Do not be

overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Forgiveness Intentionally Pursues Peace

- Romans 12:17-18 “Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”
- Romans 14:19 “So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”
- Matthew 5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

A Forgiving Spirit in the Offended Precedes the Offender’s Repentance

Luke 6:31 “And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.”

Forgiveness Does Not Remove Earthly Consequences for their Sin

Luke 6:35-36 “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. [36] Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”

Giving Forgiveness: Forgive As You Would Want Someone to Do To You: Quickly, Repeatedly, Genuinely

Matthew 18:21-22 “Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

Personal and Private - The Offended Has Responsibility

- Matthew 18:15-17 “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to

you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”

- Luke 17:3-4 “Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”
- God Wants to Restore Us To Himself & Others
- 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.”
- 1 John 2:10-11 “Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

Helpful Resources from www.gotquestions.org

- What is forgiveness?
- Got Forgiveness? How do I receive forgiveness from God?
- Does the Bible instruct us to forgive and forget?
- Do Christians have to keep asking for forgiveness for their sins?
- Will God continue to forgive you if you commit the same sin over and over again?
- How can I forgive those who sin against me?
- Is there any sin that God will not forgive?
- What does the Bible say about forgiving yourself?
- If I do not forgive others, does that mean my sins are not forgiven? What does Matthew 6:14-15 mean?
- What does the Bible say about self-hatred? What does the Bible say about hate?

“Live Peaceably with All, If Possible” by John Piper

www.desiringgod.org/messages/live-peaceably-with-all-if-possible

Choose Freedom. Choose Forgiveness.

*Forgiveness is a choice you must make.
Your decision to forgive evidences your salvation
& has serious consequences for your life.*

Consider Tamar’s Hurt. Consider Your Hurt - 2 Samuel 13:15 (ESV) “Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, ‘Get up! Go!’”

Everyone Has Been Hurt: How about you...

- **Why were you hurt?** Intentionally and Unintentionally
- **By Whom were you hurt?** Family, Friends, Strangers, by Ourselves
- **When were you hurt?** Repeated or One-Time; Past, Present or Future
- **How Bad were you hurt?** Deep or Shallow, Significant or Silly
- **How were you hurt?** Words, Relationships, Actions, Inactions

Questions to consider...

- What wounds do you have?
- What will you do with your hurts?
- How will you live?
- Will you forgive?
- Will you heal?

Remove Bitterness: Some Truths & Warnings...

1. Time Does Not Heal Wounds
2. Untreated Wounds Get Worse with Time

3. Covering Up A Wound Is Dangerous

- **Wounds Need:**
Timely Intervention
Internal Healing
Intentional Treatment

4. "Hurt People Hurt People"

Choose God's Forgiveness: Only God Truly Heals Wounds

- A Healthy Heart Heals Wounds: No matter the hurt...how great, deep, or often.

10 TRUTHS ABOUT FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness....

1. Requires Confession

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.

2. Must Be Experienced In Faith

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."

3. Releases and Removes Infection

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.

4. Heals Wounds

2 Chronicles 7:14 if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

5. Strengthens Our Lives

2 Corinthians 2:5-7 Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. [6] For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, [7] so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

6. Frees Our Living

Galatians 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

7. Reveals Salvation

Matthew 6:14-15 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.

8. Reminds Us of Our Ultimate Enemy

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 “Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.”

9. Is Extended by True Believers

Matthew 26:28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

10. Enjoys & Shows the Gospel

Romans 4:7-8 Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ENEMIES?

www.trustworthyword.com/enemies

In life we face many enemies. We must be aware of the sources, strategies, and solutions to our suffering so that we may live in victory and freedom in Christ.

Sources: 10 Truths About Your Enemies

Ephesians 6:12 “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.” (ESV)

1. They Exist in your Sinful Flesh.

- Romans 7:5 “For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.”
- Romans 8:13 “For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

2. They Exist in this Fallen World and Fallen Humanity.

- James 4:4 “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.”

3. They Exist in Fallen Angels: Satan and his Demons.

- Revelation 12:9 “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

4. They Are Powerful.

- Matthew 24:24 “For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.”
- “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2)

5. They Are Persistent.

- Genesis 39:10 “she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.”
- Judges 16:16 “she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death.”

6. They Are Persuasive.

- Genesis 3:1,4 “1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”...“You will not surely die,’ the serpent said to the woman.”

7. They Are Defeated.

- 1 Corinthians 15:26 “The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”
- 1 Corinthians 15:57 “thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- Colossians 2:15 “God disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.”
- 1 John 3:8 “The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of

the devil.”

- Hebrews 2:14 “Christ took on human nature that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil.”

8. They Are Limited in Power.

- Job 1:12 “And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.”

9. They Are Limited in Time.

- John 12:31 “the ruler of this world be cast out”

10. They Are Enslaved. Blinded. Unrighteous. Captive. Dead. Ignorant. Lost.

- Galatians 4:3 “enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.”
- 2 Timothy 2:26 “they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”

Strategies – 10 Tactics of Your Enemies

2 Corinthians 2:11 “so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.” (ESV)

1. Deception with Lies and Accusations.

- Revelation 12:9–10 “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. ... the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.”
- John 8:44 “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10 “with all wicked deception for those who are perishing”

2. Desires of the World, Flesh, and Pride of Life.

- Ephesians 2:2 “in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience”
- Matthew 4:3 “the tempter came and said”
- 1 John 2:16 “all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.”
- James 4:1 “What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?”

- 1 Thessalonians 3:5 “somehow the tempter had tempted you”

3. Defeat by Intimidation.

- 1 Samuel 17:10 “the Philistine said, ‘I defy the ranks of Israel this day’”

4. Division.

- 1 Corinthians 1:10 “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united”

5. Distraction.

- 2 Corinthians 12:7 “a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited”
- 1 Thessalonians 2:18 “we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us.”

6. Destruction. Sickness.

- John 8:44 “the devil...was a murderer from the beginning”
- 1 Peter 5:8 “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”
- Luke 13:16 “this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years”
- Acts 10:38 “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.”

7. Depression and Apathy.

- Job 2:9 “Then his wife said to him, ‘Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.’”

8. Disguise.

- 2 Corinthians 11:13–15 “For such men are false apostles,

deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. [14] And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. [15] So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.”

- Matthew 7:15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”

9. False Worship

- Consulting the dead (Deut 18:11), divination (Lev 19:26), sorcery (Deut 18:10), mediums (Lev 19:31), seeking ghosts (Ezek 13:20), witchcraft (Gal 5:20), astrology (Isa 47:13-14, Deut 4:19), spell casting (Deut 18:11), and interpreting omens (Deut 18:11)
- 2 Thessalonians 2:9–10 “The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders”
- 2 Corinthians 11:3 “But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

10. Gospel- Opposed

- 2 Corinthians 4:4 “the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”
- Mark 4:15 “And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.”

HOW TO RESPOND TO YOUR ENEMIES

www.trustworthyword.com/enemies

1. Expect their Presence and Attacks.

- John 15:18-20 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. [19] If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. [20] Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” (ESV)

2. Prepare for Confrontation and Questions.

- 1 Peter 3:15 “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”
- 2 Timothy 2:24–25 “And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth”

3. Prayer.

- Ephesians 6:18 “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”
- 2 Corinthians 12:8–10 “Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, ‘My grace

is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

- Matthew 6:13 "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"

4. Understand God and His Good Purposes.

- 1 Kings 3:11 "God said to him, 'Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right'"
- Romans 8:28 "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."
- Genesis 50:20 "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."

5. Seek Wisdom Concerning their Strategies.

- 2 Corinthians 2:11 "so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs."
- James 3:13-18 "Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. [14] But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. [15] This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. [16] For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. [17] But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. [18] And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

6. Love in Action.

- Philippians 2:3-4 "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."
- Luke 6:27-31 "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them."
- 1 John 3:18 "let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth"
- Romans 12:20-21 "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.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

7. Suffer with Endurance.

- Matthew 5:38-42 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' [39] But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. [40] And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. [41] And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. [42] Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you."
- 1 Corinthians 4:11-13 "To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things."

- 2 Timothy 2:3 "Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."

8. Truth-Filled.

- Romans 12:2 "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 10:17 "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."

9. Truth-Speaking.

- Ephesians 6:17 "and take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"
- Ephesians 4:15 "speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way...into Christ"

10. Gospel- Sharing.

- Zechariah 9:11 "As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit."

11. Silent Patience When Threatened, Slandered, & Abused.

- 1 Peter 2:21–23 "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."

12. Bold Confrontation against Threats, Words, Lies, and Actions.

- 2 Corinthians 10:5 "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ"

13. Slow to Speak. Slow to Get Angry. Quick to Listen.

- James 1:19–20 "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God."
- 2 Timothy 2:24–25 "The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness"

14. Humility. Meekness. Contentment.

- 2 Corinthians 12:9–10 "he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

15. Count Your Suffering to be Joy. There is Purpose in your Pain.

- Matthew 5:10-11 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 'Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.'"

16. Sometimes We Flee.

- 1 Timothy 6:11 "But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness."
- 2 Timothy 2:22 "So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."
- 1 Corinthians 6:18 "Flee from sexual immorality."
- Acts 9:25 "his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall"

17. Sometimes We Stand Firm.

- Hebrews 10:39 "But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their

souls.”

- Ephesians 6:13 “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”

18. Set an Example.

- 2 Timothy 3:10-13 “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.”
- Philippians 3:17-20 “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. [18] 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” (ESV)

19. Seek and Trust the Lord.

- 2 Timothy 3:14-17 “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.”

20. Follow Jesus.

- 2 Corinthians 4:7-11 “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and

not to us. [8] We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; [9] persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; [10] always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. [11] For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.”

- Proverbs 16:7 “When a man's ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

21. Rejoice.

- Hebrews 10:32-34 “But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, [33] sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. [34] For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.”

22. Forgive and Be Merciful

- Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”
- Luke 6:36 “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”
- Proverbs 24:17-18 “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles, lest the LORD see it and be displeased, and turn away his anger from him.”

23. Pursue Peace and Trust the Lord for Justice and Vengeance.

- Romans 12:17-19 “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”
- Romans 12:19-21 “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."

24. Don't Join Them in their Evil.

- 1 Peter 2:23 "When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."
- Proverbs 1:10 "My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent."

25. Seek Your Strength and Protection in God.

- Ephesians 6:11 "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."
- James 4:7 "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

26. Don't Worry.

- Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life"
- Luke 12:25-26 "And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?"

27. Don't Envy.

- Proverbs 23:17 "Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the LORD all the day."
- Proverbs 3:31-33 "Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways, [32] for the devious person is an abomination to the LORD, but the upright are in his confidence. [33] The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous."

28. Don't Fear.

- Joshua 1:9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."
- Philippians 1:28 "and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but

of your salvation, and that from God."

29. Listen and Obey.

- Joshua 1:7-8 "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."
- 2 Corinthians 10:5 "Take every thought captive to obey Christ"

30. Grow.

- Philippians 1:6 "And 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."
- Romans 5:3-5 "Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."
- James 1:2-4 "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, [3] for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. [4] And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

31. Reorient Your Mind.

- Romans 12:2 "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."
- Philippians 3:13-14 "Brothers, I do not consider that I have

made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

32. Pursue Holiness

- Ephesians 4:27 “and give no opportunity to the devil.”
- 1 Peter 1:14–16 “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, [15] 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.’”
- 1 Peter 3:16–17 “having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. [17] For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.”

33. Stay Confident in God's Eternal Justice and Judgment

- Revelation 20:10 “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.”
- Revelation 12:11: “They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.”

34. Always Be Ready

- 1 Peter 5:8–10 “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. [9] Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. [10] And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”

1 Timothy 1:18–19 “This charge I entrust to you, Timothy,

my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith”

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE DEATH OF BABIES & CHILDREN?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-the-death-of-babies-children

When babies or children die, the pain of parents, family and friends is immense. Whether the situation is from an intentional act (abortion or crimes) or an unintentional act (miscarriage, illness, accidents), grief abounds. Tough questions arise. Answers are sought.

What happens to babies or children who die before they are mature enough to respond to the Gospel? John MacArthur helpfully and succinctly answers this question, "Instant Heaven."

Here are 5 Bible passages that are helpful to seeing these truths:

- **David's Response to the Death of His Baby** (punishment for his adultery with Bathsheba): David realizes he will be united in heaven with his child one day. "Then his servants said to him, 'What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive; but when the child died, you arose and ate

food.' 22 He said, 'While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who knows whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' 23 But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.'" (2 Samuel 12:21-23, ESV)

- **Entry into the Promised Land is Granted to Young Children.** Why? Israel's sin of rebellion against God (for not entering into the promised land) was held only against those who were mature enough to discern between good and evil. "And as for your little ones, who you said would become a prey, and your children, who today have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in there. And to them I will give it, and they shall possess it." (Deuteronomy 1:39, ESV)
- **Job's Response to Suffering:** Job realized that to be stillborn was better than to be alive. Why? Job understood stillborn babies to be in heaven. "Why did I not die at birth, come out from the womb and expire? ...13 For then I would have lain down and been quiet; I would have slept; then I would have been at rest 16 Or why was I not as a hidden stillborn child, as infants who never see the light? ...17 there the weary are at rest." (Job 3:11-17, ESV)
- **King Solomon's comparison of living a prosperous, long-lived life with that a stillborn child.** Who is better off? A stillborn child who "finds rest." "If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life's good things, and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. 4 For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. 5 Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he." (Ecclesiastes 6:3-5, ESV)
- **When unbelieving parents sacrifice their children for**

their own selfish purposes, God refers to them as "innocents." This implies God's grace in looking upon them as innocent. "Because the people have forsaken me and have profaned this place by making offerings in it to other gods whom neither they nor their fathers nor the kinds of Judah have known; and because they have filled this place with the blood of innocents." (Jeremiah 19:4, ESV).

Are babies and infants conceived in sin? Do they sin? Yes. Are they guilty before God and deserving of eternal death? Yes. (Original sin, inherited sin nature, total depravity) (1 Kings 8:46, Isaiah 48:8, Proverbs 20:9, Psalm 58:3; 143:2, Ecclesiastes 7:20, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 5:12, Ephesians 2:3) "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalm 51:5, ESV)

"It is true they sin, little ones sin. Little children disobey, they're selfish, they're angry, etc. But they are incapable of understanding the moral essence of that sin. They are incapable of understanding God. And they are incapable of understanding the gospel. They are incapable of exercising a true repentance toward God and a saving faith so that they are with excuse. Whereas the pagans in Romans 1 are without excuse because they are capable of knowing and understanding the revelation God has given them in creation and conscience and they are capable of faith. So unbelief for them is a willful choice." John MacArthur

Does God's grace cover those babies and children who die? Yes. The weight of Scripture points to them being safe in God's grace.

"All children who die before they reach the condition of accountability by which they convincingly understand their sin and corruption and embrace the gospel by faith are graciously saved eternally by God through the work of Jesus Christ being

elect by sovereign choice, innocent of willful sin, rebellion and unbelief by which works they would be justly condemned to eternal punishment. " John MacArthur

What happens to babies who die in the womb? What about infants and young children who die; do they go to Heaven? What is the age of accountability? These are important questions that many people have asked themselves as they or others they know have struggled with the loss of a child. Got to gotquestions.org for answers to these tough questions...

"What happens to babies and young children when they die?"

"Where do I find the age of accountability in the Bible?",

"Do mentally ill people go to heaven?"

"What does the Bible say about household salvation?"

"What does the Bible say about infant baptism?"

I have not found a pastor or teacher who has addressed the issue with such biblical depth and breadth as John MacArthur. His book, *Safe in the Arms of God*, answers the below questions: "Where is my child?", "What can we say with certainty to those with empty arms?", "How does God regard children?", "What if my child is not among the elect?", "Will I see my child again?", "What is my child's life like in heaven?", "Why did my child have to die?", "How shall we minister to those who are grieving?" Here are two sermons in which John MacArthur expounds the relevant biblical passages and also addresses many of the same questions as in his book.

- The Salvation of Babies Who Die - Part 1 (<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/80-242>)
- The Salvation of Babies Who Die - Part 2 (<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/80-243>)
- Also, an article: The Age of Accountability (<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Articles/4836>)

2 Samuel 12:21-23 "His servants asked him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!" 22 He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' 23 But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT DEPRESSION?

www.trustworthyword.com/depression

NOTE: Special thanks to Savannah Clemons, a professional Christian counselor, for her help to me in putting this chapter together. Her wisdom and experiences were invaluable!

What is depression? Why does depression happen? Depression affects millions of people around the world and is characterized by several weeks of a low/saddened mood, persistent throughout one's day and situations. Depression often has a variety of spiritual, psychological, physiological, relational, and environmental contributing factors (learned behavior, rejection, abuse, trauma, sickness, medicinal side effects, poor health, lack of sleep, negative thinking, anger, guilt, etc.). Treatment of depression thus necessitates a wholistic approach to gain lasting solutions.

Psalm 42:5-6 "Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.

My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you"

What are the differences between discouragement/disappointment and depression? Discouragement/disappointment is usually temporary, related to failure in a

specific relationship or a goal and is overcome or put into proper perspective. Depression is lasting, difficult to overcome, and becomes a significant and defining perspective in all areas of one's life.

Psalm 34:18 "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."

What is it like to suffer depression? What are the signs of depression?

No motivation. Difficulty in explaining one's situation to others. Sense of overwhelming darkness. Dramatic change in personality. Lost Hope, hopelessness. Non-communicative, quiet. Withdrawal from life. Low joy and high negativity. Low self-esteem, derogatory remarks about oneself. Verbalization and signs of suicide. Lethargic and tired. Presence of pain without a clear cause. Inability to function with the normal activities of life.

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

Is depression described in the Bible?

Yes, depression as a temptation and as a sin is described in many places in the Bible...here are some examples:

- Abraham - hopeless for a child in his old age, trusted the Lord in the midst of overwhelming darkness (Genesis 15:3,12)
- Job - in intense emotional, physical, relational, & financial suffering came to points where he hated life and was encouraged to die by his own wife (Job 2:9, 3:11, 3:26, 10:1, 30:15-17)
- Moses - broken and burdened by the suffering of others to the point he was willing to give up his own salvation and life (Exodus 32:32, Numbers 11:14-15)
- David - seen in many of the Psalms and in his loss of his sons (Psalm 38:6-8, Psalm 56:8, 2 Samuel 12:15-23, 18:33)
- Psalm 42 & 43 - powerful Psalms walking through depression

- Elijah - even after a great victory and protection by God, runs away and hides in fear and depression (1 Kings 19)
- Jeremiah - was mocked, persecuted, and ignored to the point he wished he wasn't born (Jeremiah 20:14,18)
- Jonah - angry with God and mad at God (Jonah 4:3 & 4:9)
- Jesus - was sorrowful unto death, sweating blood in his suffering (Mark 14:34-36, Luke 22:44)

Proverbs 3:5-8 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ...It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones."

Is it ok to be depressed? What are the dangers of depression?

We must be careful not to minimize, justify, or excuse depression because of its severity, commonality, or frequency. There are definitely some people who experience seasons of depression more frequently than others. We should have compassion on those who experience depression but we should also love them enough to show them how to fight for joy and resist the temptation of depression. If depression is a struggle of yours, reach out for help, it is deadly dangerous and you need friends, pastors, and professionals to help you.

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

Is it a sin to be depressed? Can a Christian be depressed?

Depression is a form of temptation. It is a temptation to believe a lie about one's self, one's situation, about others, and about God. Since it is a temptation it must be resisted actively. When depression is embraced, entertained, acted upon, or chosen as an identity it becomes sinful. Ongoing unrepentant sin is dangerous and must be confronted with truth. "For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins" Hebrews 10:26

"We cut the root of sin by being more satisfied in God." John Piper

What about mental illness? It is important to understand that some people struggle with worry, anxiety, fear, and depression to such a degree that it paralyzes them while others only have occasional struggles. Mental illness is real, just like a physical illness, and Christians should not neglect to consider medicines and medical solutions that God has provided to help treat and relieve the symptoms of mental illness. Adequate research should be done concerning the side effects and potential dependence on medicines.

Simultaneous to any medicinal usage, Christians should be reminded that we have a volitional responsibility to know and believe God's revealed truth and actively follow Him in obedience (mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually), regardless of our feelings (Mark 12:30-31). Christians should demonstrate sympathy and compassion towards those dealing with mental illness, even if they do not fully understand or have not experienced similar struggles or mental bondage.

Worry, fear, anxiety, depression, and mental illness should never be looked at from a mere physiological approach. We should be reminded that we have a real, supernatural enemy in Satan who seeks to "kill and destroy" (John 10:10) us (mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually) from loving God and loving others. God's truths are described as the "sword of the Spirit" which is one of our weapons in spiritual warfare as we stand firm in our faith, prayerfully resisting the enemy of our souls (Ephesians 6:10-20). Non-believers who struggle with mental illness should be reminded that their only hope for everlasting peace will be found in Christ Jesus.

- "How Can I Become a Christian?" - www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian
- "How Can I Be Sure I am a Christian?" - www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian

"When anxiety strikes and blurs our vision of God's glory and the greatness of the future that he plans for us, this does

not mean that we are faithless, or that we will not make it to heaven. It means our faith is being attacked." John Piper

Christians who struggle with mental illness should not doubt their faith, but should be reminded that they are not helpless or hopeless. They should desperately petition God for relief, but simultaneously see their weakness as an opportunity to grow in faith and dependence on Christ (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). If Jesus chooses not to remove your mental struggles from you, you must trust His grace to be sufficient for you.

"Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:8-10 ESV)

Is it wrong to take psychiatric medicines like antidepressants?

Oftentimes medicine is necessary for mental illness the same as is necessary for physical illness. Psychiatric medicines can be a key component of a wholistic solution when an individual seeks and is ready to receive help. Unfortunately, some discount or discredit the need for medicinal treatment while others abuse and overly-depend on a medicinal aid.

In biblical times, alcohol was used and biblically described & prescribed for medicinal purposes in ways similar to an antidepressant (Ecclesiastes 9:7, Psalm 104:15, Proverbs 31:6-7, Luke 10:34) but was simultaneously warned about concerning the dangers of misuse, abuse, and over-dependance (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-5, Romans 14:21).

Proverbs 31:4-7 "it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to take strong drink, lest they drink and forget what has been decreed

and pervert the rights of all the afflicted.
Give strong drink to the one who is perishing,
and wine to those in bitter distress;
let them drink and forget their poverty and
remember their misery no more.”

What are some myths about depression?

- True Christians never struggle with depression.
- Nothing bad happens to God’s people.
- God doesn’t care about or love me.
- People don’t care about or love me.
- Depression has a simple solution, just have faith.

Daniel 3:17-18 “If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

Will I ever be able to overcome my depression? How can I overcome my depression? Seek the God of comfort. All things are possible to Him. Make all of your requests known to Him, but finish your prayers with a heart of trust in His will and plan. Be like Paul, seeking relief from demonic torment,

2 Corinthians 7:6-7 “But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more.”

- **Recognize Your Situation** - ID your problems, causes, feelings, beliefs, and situation
- **Recognize Your Enemies** - Satan, the world, & humans (yourself included) fight against you
We destroy arguments & every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God (2Cor10:5)

- **Right mind** - believe the truth and repent/turn from wrong belief about yourself & your situation
and take every thought captive to obey Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5)
- **Right action** - avoid sin and act in obedience to God, discipline yourself
Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)
- **Right feelings** - avoiding false feelings and embrace true feelings
Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”
- **Right suffering** - seek relief from suffering but trust God in your suffering
- Mark 14:35-36 “And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, ‘Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.’”

Hebrews 13:6 So we can confidently say,
"The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"
Become as healthy as possible, addressing all areas of your life, see the truths linked below!

Spiritual Health - www.trustworthyword.com/spiritual-health

Mental Health - www.trustworthyword.com/mental-health

Physical Health - www.trustworthyword.com/physical-health
Emotional Health - www.trustworthyword.com/emotional-health

Relational Health - www.trustworthyword.com/relational-health

Home Health - www.trustworthyword.com/home-health

Workplace Health - www.trustworthyword.com/work-place-health

Marital Health - www.trustworthyword.com/30days-improve-marriage

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

Sexual Health - www.trustworthyword.com/sexual-health

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

Financial Health - www.trustworthyword.com/financial-health

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

Tips for those in a season of depression:

- Force yourself to get out and about with people who care about and know you.
- Ask for help from a faithful pastor, an experienced, biblical counselor, and a trusted doctor.
- Sing, memorize, pray & trust God's truths, don't just study them. Hope in Jesus.
- Be thankful to God for the blessings in your life, no matter how small they seem at the time.
- Desperately and dependently ask God's help regularly through His Word.
- Ask Jesus daily for joy and healing. Confess your sinful failures daily and let them go.

God's Spirit produces the fruit of patience and peace which oppose and replace depression. Seek the Spirit's fruit by staying in fellowship with other Christians, staying in the Word of God, desperately seeking God in prayer, and walking in holy living. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness..." Galatians 5:22

"At first blow, our belief in God's promises may sputter and swerve. But whether we stay on track and make it to the finish line depends on whether, by grace, we set in motion a process of resistance — whether we fight back against the unbelief of anxiety." John Piper

How can I help someone who is depressed? What should I do? What should I not do? Not helping is not an option. Be compassionate and sympathetic, even if you do not understand. Be like the friends of the lame man, using your faith and love to carry your friend to Jesus.

DO:

- Be present, even when the depressed wants to be alone.
- Listen and let the depressed process out loud verbally.
- Even if you don't understand, validate their feelings as genuine.
- Love practically - acts of kindness, encouraging notes/emails/texts
- Send encouraging verses as the Lord lays them on your heart
- Let them know when you are thinking, praying, and fasting for them.
- Speak truth in a humble, loving, and compassionate manner.

Proverbs 27:6 "Faithful are the wounds of a friend"

DON'T:

- Give trite/short/simple statements to tough/complex/overwhelming problems.
- Try to solve all their problems as they verbalize them.
- Think the solution will be quick or easy.
- Add to their overwhelming guilt.
- Avoid them or give surface level interaction when you are uncomfortable.

1 John 3:16 "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us,

and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.”

What does the Bible say about suicide? If you're considering suicide...

Don't. Stop. Please call out for help. Your life matters, even if you don't think it does at this moment. Your pain and distress is temporary. There is hope and strength here for the pain you are in right now! There are people that do care about you. Suicide may seem like the only answer to your problems at the moment. Don't believe that. In truth...

- Suicide doesn't "fix" problems or relieve pain. It creates more problems and pain.
- Suicide isn't a cure for suffering. It creates more suffering.
- Suicide isn't an escape from this world to heaven. It may take you immediately to Hell.

www.trustworthyword.com/suicide

What does the Bible say about worry, fear, and anxiety? Truths about worry are found in several places but two good places to begin our focus are Matthew 6:25-34 and Luke 6:46-49. Just take these two verses (below) and we can see that God commands us not to worry so whenever we disobey him we are acting like we are God at that moment and that we are in charge.

- "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life"
Matthew 6:25
- "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"
Luke 6:46

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

What does the Bible say about Christian identity? The greatest gift of Christianity is not merely a future existence in Heaven, but is the present and eternal reality of a relationship and unity with Christ (John 15:1-11, 1 Corinthians 6:17). As Christians we must realize that we are not products of our past or present decisions, failures, or successes. Our identity, value, & worth are rooted in our new name and identity in Christ. We focus

on knowing God first and foremost and simultaneously discover our amazing nature as God's forever adopted children.

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

HELPFUL RESOURCES

GotQuestions.org

www.412teens.org

“Is It wrong for a Christian to be depressed?” -
www.gotquestions.org/Christian-depressed.html

“What does the Bible say about depression?” -
www.gotquestions.org/depression-Christian.html

“Should a Christian take anti-depressants?” -
www.gotquestions.org/Christian-anti-depressants.html

“Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?”

Luke 24:38

TrustworthyWord.com is an international resource, but for those living in the United States of America, here are some suicide hotlines and helpline ready for you now. If you do not live in the USA, please call your local authorities or medical treatment centers for help immediately.

- National Hopeline Network: 1-800-SUICIDE
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK
(Español: 1-888-628-9454)
- National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-CHILD
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SUICIDE?

www.trustworthyword.com/suicide

Suicide is a heartbreaking and touchy topic. Everyone reading this has likely been touched, or will be touched, by suicide. Maybe you are having thoughts of, or are considering suicide yourself. Maybe you have lost a loved one due to suicide. Maybe you are concerned for someone who has previously talked about or attempted suicide. *This resource is designed to help you to find God's answers for some of your toughest questions.*

If you're considering suicide...

Don't. Stop. Please call out for help. Your life matters, even if you don't think it does at this moment. Your pain and distress is temporary. There is hope and strength here for the pain you are in right now! There are people that do care about you. Suicide may seem like the only answer to your problems at the moment. Don't believe that. In truth...

- Suicide doesn't "fix" problems or relieve pain. It creates more problems and pain.
- Suicide isn't a cure for suffering. It creates more suffering.
- Suicide isn't an escape from this world to heaven. It may, in fact take you immediately to Hell.

These statements may sound harsh or "unloving," but they are the truth. If you are in the depths of a depression that is so dark

and deep that you see no other way out than taking your own life, the truths you are reading now are the very thing you need. If your pain seems inescapable with no end or relief in sight, you need true hope that is rooted in reality. You don't need false hopes or "feel good" statements that temporarily distract you from your situation or pain. You need to know what God has to say to you. He loves and cares for you. He has much to say to you about your pain and suffering. So keep reading to discover His truths...

"What Does the Bible Say about Suffering, Worry, Death, Life & Heaven?"

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-suffering-worry-death-life-and-heaven

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,
for you are with me; your rod and your staff,
they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)

Is suicide really that serious? Don't I have the right to take my own life whenever and however I see fit? Suicide is murder, self-murder. Murder is a sin. (Exodus 20:13) God cares about you. The same God who made the universe made you, formed you, and knew you (Jeremiah 1:5, Psalm 22:10; 139:13; 147:3-4). You are not an accident or mistake. God has a purpose and plan for your life. Listen to Him. Trust in Him. Receive His love. Let Him forgive you, heal you, and rescue you.

"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names." (Psalm 147:3-4 ESV)

Aren't there stories and examples of suicide in the Bible?

Yes. There are several examples in the Bible of suicide (Judges 9:54, 1 Samuel 31:4-6, 2 Samuel 17:23, 1 Kings 16:18, Matthew 27:5). However, the men that took their own life in the bible

were considered wicked and ungodly. Examples of suicide are *described* to us, but suicide is not *prescribed* for us. In other words, they are told as examples and lessons as how NOT to act or react to our troubles in this life. God does not support or allow suicide as a response or option for us, even in the most desperate of situations. Suicide is always condemned by God as sin in the Bible.

Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Isaiah 35:4

I feel so useless and such a burden on everyone. Won't the world be a better place without me? Absolutely not. God has a specific purpose for your life. Even before He created the universe, He already knew us. He already had planned our life. (Psalm 139:16, Ephesians 1:4). Your existence was no accident. Even in your pain and distress, God still has a plan for your life (Jeremiah 29:11).

Is suicide the "unforgivable" sin? If someone commits suicide, will they go to Hell? Is it possible to commit suicide and go to Heaven? There is only one unforgivable sin; the ongoing rebellion and rejection of Jesus as Lord (Matthew 12:31). All other sin is forgivable. Jesus talks about the "unforgivable sin" in Mark 3:22-30. *Suicide is so serious because it is a final act of rejecting God as being in charge of your life, choosing to end your life on your terms and timing. Dying in this state of open rebellion as a non-believer gives you no opportunity afterward to be forgiven of all your sin by trusting in the work of Jesus on the cross* (Luke 16:19-31).

As earlier stated, suicide is murder. Murder is sin. An authentic Christian has been pardoned from all sin, past and future (Romans 8:1); including murder. While it is possible for a Christian to commit suicide, it should be cause for serious concern for the genuineness of one's faith if he doesn't see any other way to deal with life's troubles and struggles other than

suicide (1 Corinthians 10:13).

"How Can I Be Sure I am a Christian?"

- www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian

"How Can I Become a Christian?"

- www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian

"What Does the Bible Say about Heaven?"

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

"What Does the Bible Say about Hell?"

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

What about "assisted suicide" or "active euthanasia"?

Assisted suicide and active euthanasia are terms used to describe the intentional act of ending one's life in light of a medically declared untreatable or incurable condition (medically diagnosed as eventually ending in the death of the individual). It is often considered and acted upon as an avenue for "speeding up" the apparently inevitable.

Assisted suicide is usually referred to as PAC (physician assisted suicide). PAC involves a physician's prescription of some sort of lethal medication to the patient. The patient is then responsible for taking this lethal medication themselves. Active euthanasia is similar; however, the treating physician is much more active in the process by administering the lethal medication to the patient himself.

Both of these processes are initiated by the patient's desire and decision to end their life due to their seemingly incurable and terminal disease or condition. This is not the same as being on life support in an unconscious state. Making such a decision based on medical advice ultimately, however, doesn't consider the truth that God can heal anyone He chooses to from any illness or otherwise hopeless physical condition, if

He wills.

The Bible contains stories and examples of those that express their desires to God for Him to end their life because of extreme mental or spiritual anguish from troubles and suffering (1 Kings 19:1-14, Jonah 4:3, Job 6:8-11). None of these requests are granted by God, however. The Bible tells us that God is the One that determines the day of our death, and not us (Deuteronomy 32:39, Psalm 90:3, 1 Samuel 2:6).

While there may be times that we experience extreme distress and trouble in our life, even to the point of wanting to die, God tells us in His Word that there is always a solution to our problems here on earth, and suicide is not an option for us to consider (1 Corinthians 10:13). Therefore, regardless of the circumstances, assisted suicide and active euthanasia are still considered murder.

And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

Luke 24:38

Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Isaiah 35:4

What about cutting, and self-harm? The Bible talks about cutting and self-mutilation in the Old Testament concerning pagan rituals while worshipping false gods. In the New Testament, cutting was mentioned in a story concerning demon possession (Mark 5:2-5).

Cutting and self-harm is something practiced today by some individuals that are dealing with depression, anger, or pain that hasn't been properly dealt with or addressed. Often, they have had traumatic experiences in life, severe stress, ongoing anxiety, or other difficult life events. As a result, physical pain to oneself in the form of cutting and self-harm serve as an outlet for emotional pain. Self-harm produces a

type of temporary relief from mental and emotional stress, and sometimes even serves as self-punishment for feelings of guilt and self-condemnation.

The Bible doesn't specifically talk about cutting and self-harm as a result of anxiety, stress or depression. However, God does remind us that as Christians, our body does not belong to us anymore, and we should treat it with care (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). A person practicing cutting and self-harm has a false view of themselves and their identity and self-worth. God wants us to know that our worth is found in the love of Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. A personal relationship with Jesus through this work is absolutely necessary to truly understand our actual and full worth. This is the ultimate cure for self-harm and cutting; to see how valuable we are to Christ who sacrificed His life so we may live!

"What Does the Bible Say about Christian Identity?"

- Check out www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-christian-identity

What about mental illness? It is important to understand that some people struggle with worry, anxiety, fear, and depression to such a degree that it paralyzes them, while others only have occasional struggles. Mental illness is real, just like a physical illness, and Christians should not neglect to consider medicines and medical solutions that God has provided to help treat and relieve the symptoms of mental illness. Adequate research should be done concerning the side effects and potential dependence on such medicines.

Simultaneous to any medicinal usage, Christians should be reminded that we have a volitional responsibility to know and believe God's revealed truth and actively follow Him in obedience (mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually), regardless of our feelings (Mark 12:30-31). Christians should demonstrate sympathy and compassion towards those dealing with mental illness, even if they do not fully understand or have

not experienced similar struggles or mental bondage.

Worry, fear, anxiety, depression, and mental illness should never be looked at from a mere physiological approach. We should be reminded that we have a real, supernatural enemy in Satan who seeks to “kill and destroy” (John 10:10) us (mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually) from loving God and loving others. God’s truths are described as the “sword of the Spirit” which is one of our weapons in spiritual warfare as we stand firm in our faith, prayerfully resisting the enemy of our souls (Ephesians 6:10-20). Non-believers who struggle with mental illness should be reminded that their only hope for everlasting peace will be found in Christ Jesus.

“When anxiety strikes and blurs our vision of God’s glory and the greatness of the future that he plans for us, this does not mean that we are faithless, or that we will not make it to heaven. It means our faith is being attacked.” John Piper

Christians who struggle with mental illness should not doubt their faith, but should be reminded that they are not helpless or hopeless. They should desperately petition God for relief, but simultaneously see their weakness as an opportunity to grow in faith and dependence on Christ (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). If Jesus chooses not to remove your mental struggles from you, you must trust and seek out His grace to be sufficient for you.

Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. [9] But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10] For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:8-10 ESV)

For more on mental and emotional health see:

“What Does the Bible Say about Mental Health?”

• www.trustworthyword.com/mental-health

“What Does the Bible Say about Emotional Health?”

• www.trustworthyword.com/emotional-health

What can I do to help a family grieving from loss of a loved one to suicide?

Families and individuals that have lost a loved one to suicide will deal with ongoing and intense emotions. Along with normal feelings associated with loss, those dealing with suicide can also be dealing with guilt, anger, and shock. Many times, loss to suicide can be unexpected when an individual doesn’t share his personal troubles or pains with others as not to “burden them.” Guilt can be felt as a result of thinking of the lost opportunities to talk the deceased about those pains and struggles. Here are some very practical and truth-filled ways of loving and assisting those that have experienced loss due to suicide:

- *Be praying and fasting*, they need healing and strength that only God can provide.
- *Be present with them*, even in silence, lovingly showing you care.
- *Be silent and respect their privacy*, don’t ask for details you don’t have the right to know.
- *Be sensitive*, think before you speak out shallow, ineffective sayings that hurt more than help.
- *Be helpful*, meals and routine, practical help makes a difference as life goes on.
- *Be patient*, healing can take a long time and things will never be the same.
- *Be a friend*, don’t abandon or forget them in their time of need, no matter how awkward or difficult it may be.

“The Lord is near the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit” (Psalms 34:18, ESV)

Ultimately, the family and loved ones of those experiencing such a tragic loss need to be loved. They need to be loved in the way

that Christ loves them. Be an example of the that love by being present in their time of need. This process of grieving can be long and painful, so be patient with them and their emotions. Always be prepared to answer their questions and doubts in love and truth (1 Peter 3:15).

5 TRAGIC STATISTICS CONCERNING SUICIDE

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death in the U.S. for the age groups of 10-14 year olds, 15-24 year olds, and 25-34 year old age groups. (cdc.gov)
- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death overall in the U.S. Homicide ranks 17th. (cdc.gov)
- There is one death by suicide every 12.3 minutes in the U.S. (cdc.gov), and one every 40 seconds in the world. (World Health Organization, AAS)
- There are 800,000 suicides per year worldwide. (World Health Organization, AAS)
- 90% of adolescents that receive treatment for depression are treated successfully (TADS Study)

HELPFUL RESOURCES

www.gotquestions.org

www.412teens.org

TrustworthyWord.com is an international resource, but for those living in the United States of America, here are some suicide hotlines and helpline ready for you now. If you do not live in the USA, please call your local authorities or medical treatment centers for help immediately.

- National Hopeline Network: 1-800-SUICIDE
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (Español: 1-888-628-9454)
- National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-CHILD
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT WORRY?

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

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

Worry is sin. Truths about worry are found in several places but two good places to begin our focus are Matthew 6:25-34 and Luke 6:46-49. Just take these two verses (below) and we can see that *God commands us not to worry* so whenever we disobey him we are acting like we are God at that moment and that we are in charge.

- "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life"
Matthew 6:25
- "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"
Luke 6:46

Ongoing unrepentant sin is dangerous and must be confronted with truth.

"For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins" Hebrews 10:26

God's Spirit produces the fruit of patience and peace which oppose and replace worry.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness..." Galatians 5:22

Calling Jesus 'Lord' must be evidenced through faith-produced works of obedience.

"So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." James 2:17

What about mental illness? It is important to understand that some people struggle with worry, anxiety, fear, and depression to such a degree that it paralyzes them while others only have occasional struggles. Mental illness is real, just like a physical illness, and Christians should not neglect to consider medicines and medical solutions that God has provided to help treat and relieve the symptoms of mental illness. Adequate research should be done concerning the side effects and potential dependence on such medicines.

Simultaneous to any medicinal usage, Christians should be reminded that we have a volitional responsibility to know and believe God's revealed truth and actively follow Him in obedience (mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually), regardless of our feelings (Mark 12:30-31). Christians should demonstrate sympathy and compassion towards those dealing with mental illness, even if they do not fully understand or have not experienced similar struggles or mental bondage.

Worry, fear, anxiety, depression, and mental illness should never be looked at from a mere physiological approach. We should be reminded that we have a real, supernatural enemy in Satan who seeks to "kill and destroy" (John 10:10) us (mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually) from loving God and loving others. God's truths are described as the "sword of the Spirit" which is one of our weapons in spiritual warfare as we stand firm in our faith, prayerfully resisting the enemy of our souls (Ephesians 6:10-20). Non-believers who struggle with mental illness should be reminded that their only hope for everlasting peace

will be found in Christ Jesus.

- "How Can I Become a Christian?" - www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian
- "How Can I Be Sure I am a Christian?" - www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian

"When anxiety strikes and blurs our vision of God's glory and the greatness of the future that he plans for us, this does not mean that we are faithless, or that we will not make it to heaven. It means our faith is being attacked." John Piper

Christians who struggle with mental illness should not doubt their faith, but should be reminded that they are not helpless or hopeless. They should desperately petition God for relief, but simultaneously see their weakness as an opportunity to grow in faith and dependence on Christ (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). If Jesus chooses not to remove your mental struggles from you, you must trust and seek out His grace to be sufficient for you.

Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. [9] But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10] For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:8-10 ESV)

Why do Christians worry? Is it ok to worry sometimes?

We must be careful not to minimize, justify, or excuse worry because of its commonality or frequency. There are definitely some people who experience seasons of worry more frequently than others. We should have compassion on those who experience worry but we should also love them enough to show them that worry is a sin.

Even if we are inclined to believing that worry is merely a

temptation towards sin, we must not neglect God's warning of the serious danger of temptation. Just because we experience or feel worry is right or justified at times does not make our feelings right or good. We must not also not think ourselves powerless against worry or resign ourselves to an "I can't help it" attitude. All temptation and sin, to include worry, can be resisted through the power of Christ within us.

“At first blow, our belief in God’s promises may sputter and swerve. But whether we stay on track and make it to the finish line depends on whether, by grace, we set in motion a process of resistance — whether we fight back against the unbelief of anxiety.” John Piper

***Worry is closely intermingled with doubt, fear, and anxiety.
God has much to say about these subjects:***

And have mercy on those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. Jude 1:22-23

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

And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. Matthew 28:17

And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?" Luke 24:38

He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." Matthew 14:29-33

But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. Romans 14:23

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. James 1:5-8

for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 2 Timothy 1:7

And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. 25 And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." 26 And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. 27 And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?" Matthew 8:24-27

It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. Psalms 127:2

Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Isaiah 35:4

He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit." 9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? Jeremiah 17:8-9

And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? Luke 12:25-26

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." Matthew 6:31-34

When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. Matthew 10:19

But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42 but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." Luke 10:41-42

I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. 33 But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. 35 I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord. 1 Corinthians 7:32-3

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.

Philippians 4:5-7

Nowhere in Scripture do we find a positive command towards or justification of worry, fear (except fear of God), doubt, or anxiety. Let's flee from these temptations and sins!

If you find yourself commonly tempted towards worry, here are some truths to memorize and guide your prayer during those moments and seasons of temptation.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Matthew 6:13

Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Mark 14:38

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:13

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. James 1:13-15

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. Proverbs 14:12

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Galatians 6:1

"We cut the root of sin by being more satisfied in God." John Piper

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SUFFERING, WORRY, DEATH, LIFE & HEAVEN?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-suffering-worry-death-life-and-heaven

PSALMS TO READ AND USE TO GUIDE YOUR PRAYER

Psalms 6, 13, 18, 22, 23, 40, 68, 90, 102, 107, 116, 121, 130, 138, 142

SUFFERING

- 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.
- Romans 8:17-18 Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
- 2 Timothy 2:10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.
- Hebrews 10:34 You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you

- knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.
- Revelation 2:10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.
 - 2 Timothy 4:6-8 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.
 - Job 1:21-22 And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.
 - Job 2:10 "Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.
 - Job 8:9 for we were born only yesterday and know nothing, and our days on earth are but a shadow.
 - Job 9:25 My days are swifter than a runner; they fly away without a glimpse of joy.
 - Job 14:2 He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure.
 - Isaiah 38:12 Like a shepherd's tent my house has been pulled down and taken from me. Like a weaver I have rolled up my life, & he has cut me off from the loom; day & night you made an end of me.
 - James 4:14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."
 - 1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

- 2 Chronicles 32:24 In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. He prayed to the LORD, who answered him and gave him a miraculous sign.
- Psalm 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- Psalm 44:22 Yet for your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.
- Psalm 68:20 Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign LORD comes escape from death.
- 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, neither 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.

WORRY

- Philippians 4:6-8 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.
- Matthew 6:27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?
- Matthew 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

DEATH

- Psalm 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 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.

- Philippians 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
- Job 14:5 Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.
- Psalm 39:5 You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath. Selah
- Psalm 89:47-48 Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have created all men! What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave? Selah
- Psalm 90:9 All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan.
- Psalm 102:3 For my days vanish like smoke; my bones burn like glowing embers.
- Psalm 102:11 My days are like the evening shadow; I wither away like grass.
- Psalm 102:23-24 In the course of my life he broke my strength; he cut short my days. So I said: "Do not take me away, O my God, in the midst of my days; your years go on through all generations.
- Ecclesiastes 6:12 For who knows what is good for a man in life, during the few and meaningless days he passes through like a shadow? Who can tell him what will happen under the sun after he is gone?
- Ecclesiastes 8:8a No man has power over the wind to contain it; so no one has power over the day of his death.
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-2a There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die
- Ecclesiastes 7:1-2 A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of birth. It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart.
- Psalm 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.
- Romans 14:8 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.
- Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

- Hebrews 9:27-28 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.
- Proverbs 14:32 When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down, but even in death the righteous have a refuge.
- Deuteronomy 32:39 See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.
- 1 Samuel 2:6 The LORD brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up.
- 2 Samuel 22:5-6 The waves of death swirled about me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me
- Psalm 89:48 What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave?
- Isaiah 57:2 Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.
- Philippians 1:20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.
- Hebrews 2:15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death

LIFE

- 1 John 5:12-13 He who has the Son has life; he who 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 so that you may know that you have eternal life.
- Romans 8:10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.
- Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
- 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.
- John 5:24 I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.
- John 8:51 I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." (speaking of Spiritual death...i.e. will not enter into Hell but will have eternal life in Heaven)
- Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Romans 8:6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;
- 2 Corinthians 4:12 So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

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.
- 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.

- 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, 13-17 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. ...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 DATING?

www.trustworthyword.com/dating

This outline is based on an AWESOME book, *The Ten Commandments of Dating* by Ben Young and Dr. Sam Adams. This book was helpful to me over twenty years ago and is still relevant and helpful today. I have added Bible verses and a few other notes to be as biblical as possible on the subject!

The Ten Commandments of Dating
By Ben Young & Dr. Samuel Adams
Biblical principles and practical wisdom for preparing for and handling the dating scene.

1. THOU SHALT GET A LIFE

“The Un-Life” – a life put on hold for a want of a dating relationship

- 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.”

2. THOU SHALT USE YOUR BRAIN

The key is using your head in the matters of the heart. Romantic love has little to do with real love.

- Balance the head and the heart
- Refrain from physical intimacy

- Analyze your past relationships
- Include others in the process
- Never neglect opportunities to evaluate along the way
- Jeremiah 17:9-10 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? ‘I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.’”

3. THOU SHALT BE EQUALLY YOKED

Spiritual Connection – **Date only Christians**, no exceptions.

- 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?”

4. THOU SHALT TAKE IT SLOW

THREE reasons to take it slow!

- You do not get to know a person in a short period of time
- You need time to bond
- You protect yourself from getting attached too quickly

SEVEN SLOW MOTION DATING STRATEGIES

1. Make the two-year commitment
2. Make your first date short and casual
3. Don't volunteer too much information up front
4. Delay physical affection

Men are looking for a CAR

- Challenge – long term relationship vs. short term fling
- Attraction – more to do with personality and character
- Respect – they respect a woman with boundaries and standards
- 5. Stay connected with your friends
- 6. Do not pray together
- 7. Don't mention the M word

5. THOU SHALT SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

A healthy relationship requires good, solid, and well-defined relational boundaries

How to stop people from running over you:

Your body belongs to ~~you~~:CHRIST 1 Cor 6:19-20 Your emotions belong to ~~you~~:CHRIST

Your thoughts belong to ~~you~~:CHRIST Mk 12:30 Your actions belong to ~~you~~:CHRIST 1Thess4:3-6

6. THOU SHALT NOT PLAY HOUSE

Excuses people give: Love, Finances, Practice, & Engagement

The Truth??? Fear, Sex, Manipulation, Immaturity

- Couples that live together before marriage have an 80% higher chance of getting a divorce
- Women who cohabit are TWICE AS LIKELY to be victims of domestic violence
- Women who cohabit are FOUR TIMES to experience depression than married women & 71% of women wouldn't cohabit again

7. THOU SHALT SAVE SEX FOR LATER

Seven BLUNDERS of the Sexual World

- All you need is a condom - *What about disease and pregnancy?*
- You've got to have it - *Is sex your master or is Christ your master?*
- Sex equals intimacy – NO, NO, NO!!! Real Intimacy take hard work, time, self-sacrifice, honesty & commitment.
"Couples who have been married for many years record the highest levels for intimacy, happiness, and dynamic sex"
- If you are in love, it's ok - True love requires a lifelong commitment. Sex outside of marriage is never ok.
- You must sample the goods – A big mistake that will diminish the excitement within marriage.
- It's just a physical thing – Sex is primarily a SOUL thing.
- Everybody is doing it – Look at the damage to marriage and relationships it has done.

How to Save Sex for Later

- Celebrate Wholeness – say no to instant gratification and yes to delayed gratification
- Receive Forgiveness – and recommit yourself to purity until you marry
- Set Clear Boundaries – plan how to keep yourself out of danger
- Stay Accountable – keep friends involved in your life

1 Cor 6:12-20 – READ, BELIEVE, & LIVE IT

8. THOU SHALT FIGHT FAIRLY

Top Four Harmful Responses to Conflict:

Peace at all costs (Avoidance)

Win/Lose (Defensiveness)

You Don't Count (Invalidation)

All-Out War (Intensification)

Fair Fighting Techniques

1. Dial Down (20 minutes or more of cool-down time)
2. Set the Tone (be careful how you start the conversation)
3. Shut up and listen (shut up and listen)
4. Use "I" Statements ("I feel __ when __" – prevents criticism, labeling, accusing, & attacking)
5. Negotiate and Compromise
5. James 1:19-20 ¹⁹My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."

9. THOU SHALT NOT IGNORE THE WARNING SIGNS

SEVEN DEADLY SIGNS (Get out quick!!)

1. Abuse – physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual – there is no excuse for abuse, ever.
2. Addictions – alcohol, drugs, pornography, self-injury, gambling (watch out for 'coaddicts')
3. Infidelity – no trust = little relationship
4. Irresponsibility and Immaturity – responsibility IS important

5. No physical/sexual attraction – what???
6. Emotional baggage – aware of their problems? see how it effects relationships? Getting help?
7. Denial – when you recognize signs but try to rationalize what you are doing

Don't go into a relationship thinking you can FIX or HELP someone. Find someone who already has their act together.

10. THOU SHALT CHOOSE WISELY

Are you making poor choices?

First-available syndrome, Fooled by the externals, Blinded by sex, Going too fast

Discerning Character – what is character?

Faithful, Honest, Committed, Forgiving, Giving

Helpful hints....

- Crisis reveals someone's true character
- Character is who you are when no one is looking
- Friends are a good window into a person's character
- Look back on prior relationships to determine patterns of behavior
- Give it lots of TIME!!!

11. TAKE ACTION!!!!

1. Take a look at yourself
2. Take responsibility for your relationships
3. Take back what you lost
4. Take a look around you
5. Take time out
6. Take these guidelines seriously
 - 1 Corinthians 15:33 "Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.'"
 - Romans 5:3-5 "Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God

has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

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

INTERNET RESOURCES

- www.gotquestions.org - The most comprehensive and biblical resource for short answers to tough questions
- www.focusonthefamily.com - An amazing collection of biblical answers on many questions in life.
- www.familylife.org - A great resource to prepare for marriage and to understand God's relational truths!

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT MARRIAGE ROLES?

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

What is the wife's role in marriage?

- 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)

What is the husband's role in marriage?

- Spiritual leader (1 Cor 11:3) towards glorifying God and unity with each other (one flesh)
- Not dictatorial or harsh (Col 3:19)
- Leading in a sacrificial way the way Christ loves the church (Eph 5:23)

- Provide - feed and care (Eph 5:29, Gen 3:17-19)
- Protect - love their wives as themselves (Eph 5:28, 1 Pet 3:7)
- Praise your wife (Prov 31:28)
- Meet sexual needs of wife (1 Cor 7)
- Be considerate & respect your wife (1Pet 3:7)

To solve marriage conflict, we must not:

- Be proud against each other – (1 Cor 4:6)
- Judge one another – (Romans 12:16)
- Lie to one another – (Colossians 3:9)
- Be partial with one another – (1 Tim 5:21)
- Provoke or envy one another – (Gal 5:26)
- Lust after one another – (Romans 1:27)
- Hate one another - Titus 3:3
- Take one another to court – (1 Cor 6:1-7)
- Use each other - Galatians 5:15

To solve marriage conflict, we must:

- Be at peace with one another - Mark 9:50
- Love one another - John 13:34; Rom 12:10; 1 Pet 4:8; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12
- Build up one another - Rom 14:19; Eph 4:12; 1Thess 5:11
- Be of the same mind toward one another - Romans 12:16
- Give preference to one another - Romans 12:10
- Greet one another - Romans 16:16
- Esteem others as better than yourself - Philippians 2:3
- Serve one another - Galatians 5:13
- Receive one another - Romans 15:7
- Be devoted to one another - Romans 12:10
- Rejoice or weep with one another - Romans 12:15
- Admonish one another - Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16
- Care for one another - 1 Corinthians 12:25
- Show tolerance to one another - Rom15:1-5; Eph4:2; Col 3:13
- Be kind and forgiving to one another - Ephesians 4:32; Col 3:13
- Submit to one another - Romans 12:10; Ephesians 5:21; 1 Pet 5:5

- Comfort one another - 1 Thessalonians 4:18
- Encourage one another - 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13
- Be compassionate with one another - 1 Peter 3:8
- Pray for one another - James 5:16
- Confess your faults to one another - James 5:16
- Accept one another - Romans 14:1; 15:7

PASSAGES ON MARRIAGE

(Ephesians 5:22-33) Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. [24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. [25] Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, [26] that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, [27] so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. [28] In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29] For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, [30] because we are members of his body. [31] “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” [32] This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. [33] However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

(1 Corinthians 11:2-16) Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. [3] 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. [4] Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, [5] but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. [6] For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. [7] For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. [8] For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. [9] Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. [10] That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. [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? [14] Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, [15] but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. [16] If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.

(1 Peter 3:1-7) [Wives and Husbands] Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, [2] when they see your respectful and pure conduct. [3] Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—[4] but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. [5] For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, [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.[7] Likewise, husbands, live with

your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

(Colossians 3:18-25) Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. [19] Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. [20] Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. [21] Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

30 DAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR MARRIAGE

www.trustworthyword.com/30days-improve-marriage

The 30-Day Covenant Love Challenge **Appreciate Your Mate!**

What Is It? A 30-Day challenge to love your spouse without condition for 30 focused minutes each day.

Why?

Covenant Love: Have fun serving God together!

Throughout Scripture, God's people regularly committed to serve God together in covenant. Some Old Testament examples of covenants are seen under the leadership of Moses the prophet (Exodus 24:7-11), the servant-leader Joshua (Joshua 24:14-18), Jehoiada the priest (2 Kings 11:7), Josiah the King (2 Kings 23:1-3), Asa the King (2 Chronicles 15:2), Ezra (Ezra 10:2-5), and Nehemiah the Governor (Nehemiah 9:38, 10:28-29). New Testament examples are seen in Baptism (1 Peter 3:21, 1 Timothy 6:12), the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:24; Matt 26:28), and church membership (Matt 18:15-17, 2 Cor 3:6, Eph 5:23, 1 Cor 15:1-11). Covenants have been part of church history (Pliny the Elder, AD 112 "binding themselves by a solemn oath", Baptist history (see Charles Deweese, Baptist Church Covenants).

In marriage, you have covenanted to serve God together for life!

MARRIAGE IS: God-authored · God-witnessed · God-

Accountable · Glorious Gospel Purpose
"the LORD was witness between you and
the wife of your youth . . .
she is your companion and your wife by
covenant." (Malachi 2:14 ESV)

Give Authority Over Your Body to Your Spouse

"The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. [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. [5] Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." (1 Corinthians 7:1-5 ESV)

Act in Humble Imitation of Christ

"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)

How? The Ground Rules

- **Give Your Spouse** Permission to Exercise Authority Over Your Body, Time, Attention & Energy for **30 minutes a day for 30 consecutive days**. Give them the unqualified choice of how you can best love them biblically.
- **Your spouse picks** the category and specifics of the assignment.
- **No whining**, bartering, compromising, negotiating, complaining, huffing, eye-rolling, excuse-making, arguing, or sleeping on the job. Just do it without conditions.
- **Go 110%** all out for your mate. Work hard at loving them. Appreciate Your Mate.

- **Pay Attention** to Your Mate. Study them to Do Better. Extend Your Commitment.
- If you know others participating in this... **pray for and encourage them**, but DO NOT ASK for details, their covenant commitments may be personal and private!

Here are some categories and ideas to best understand how to love your spouse!

from the “Five Love Languages” by Gary Chapman

Quality Time: Date Your Mate Ideas

Neighborhood Walk & Talk · Mall Strolling · Cabin Retreat · City Action · Coffee & Donuts · Lattes & Beignets · Breakfast in Bed · Scenic Picnic · Star Gazing · Hayride · Art Show · Bonfire Roast · Bike Ride · Sports Game · Outdoors Hiking · Carnivals, Fairs, or Festivals · Movie on the Couch Night · Movie Theater Night · Fondue Feast · Dinner on a Train · Countryside Drive · Fireside Reading · Bake Something Sweet · Orchard or Pumpkin Patch Excursion · Beachside Strolls · Searching for Seashells · Sunrise or Sunset Quiet Time · Couples Extreme Selfie Contest · www.DateCrates.co · Soup Kitchen Service · Buffet Night · Bowling Night · Fancy Dinner · Fast Food Fun · Golfing & Golf Carting · Amusement Park · Lakeside Lovers · Rent a Boat · Home Spa · Get-Away Spa · Sushi Night · Experimental Eating Evening · Board Game Night · Arcade Fun · Discover Dancing (Ballroom, Salsa, Club, Square, Line) · Museum Musing · Exercise & Workout Together · Race a 5k, Color Run, or Mud Run · Birdwatching · Hunting · Fishing · River Float (Canoeing, Kayaking or Tubing) · Cave Exploring · Improv or Comedy Show · Zoo Time · Bookstore Wandering · Restaurant Romance · Drive-In Night · Skype/Facetime Dates (when apart) · Gourmet Grocery Store Shopping · Pizza Night · Rent a Hotel Room Nearby · Attend a Ballet, Musical, Concert, Opera or Play · Spring Shopping for Plants or Flowers Mini-Road Trip · Linger at a Local Landmark · Make a Matinee · Find a Splash Park · Make & Take Gifts to a Nursing Home · Camping Weekend · Play in a Pet Store · Park & Talk

Somewhere Remote · See What You Can Find at a Flea Market · Fondue Night · Watch a Mobile Movie (on a Laptop or Mobile Device) Somewhere Unique · Scavenger Hunt · Ice Skating · Go Karts · Laser Tag · Paintball · View Funny YouTube Videos · Water Ballon/Gun Fight · Volunteer Together · Make a Family Scrapbook · Movie Marathon · Dessert-Only Dinner · Putt-Putt Golf · Play Pool · High School Sports Night · Geo-Caching Treasure Hunt · Public Park Stroll · Arrange and Schedule for a Late-Morning Sleep-In · Write a Letter or Song · Go Car Shopping · Climb a Tree · People Watch at an Airport · Go Rock Skipping · Babysit Someone Else’s Kids · Horseback Riding · Water Ski · Plant a Garden · Go Sailing · Find a Ferry to Ride · Ski or Sled · Skydiving · Make a Snowman · Tennis · Croquet · Water Park · BBQ Night · Homemade Ice Cream · Garage Sale Rampage · Swing and Slide · Feed Ducks, Geese or Fish · Circus · Observatory

Words Of Affirmation

Note Writing · Encouragement & Compliment · Text Messages · Love Letters · Song · Poem

Gifts

Surprises · Themed · Delicious Treats · Flowers · Frivolous or Practical · Creative · Personal

Acts Of Service

Household Chores · Kid Tasks · Swapping Regular Responsibilities

Physical Touch

Sexual Intimacy · Massage · Cuddling · Hand-Holding

End Of The Month Assignment

Write a note or have a conversation, thanking your spouse for sacrificially loving & yielding to you. Be specific with how it impacted you, how it strengthened you, how it energized and encouraged you, and how it motivated you to love God, love your spouse, and love others better.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE?

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

**“There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death.”
(Proverbs 14:12 ESV)**

An Introduction and Personal Note. The topic of divorce and remarriage is both a touchy and difficult conversation to have. Many people have been hurt by divorce. Others are offended by such discussions because they perceive the teachings on such issues to be a personal attack on their identity (as a “divorcee” or “remarried”) or plans to pursue remarriage. Many godly Christians have different convictions on this issue. The below convictions are mine alone and not expressive of the convictions my church family.

As a pastor, I have a unique calling to officiate over marriages. In such a capacity I always want to ensure that I follow God’s explicit instructions for the institution He created in marriage. I want to be obedient to His commands and to offer the best counsel to those who are likewise seeking to walk in His wisdom. I have prayed over and studied the Scriptures diligently

on this topic and hope that this resource is helpful to you on your own journey of obedience to the Lord.

When I speak with those who have divorced and are pursuing remarriage, I encourage them to read this article (and mainly the Scriptures at the end) and to soak their studies in prayer. May you consider the whole of Scripture on the topic and not simply seek an understanding that appeals to your past experiences, feelings, or future hopes.

If you find yourself reaching conclusions different than mine, or your own pastor, I hope you will show grace towards us. Although I think I am correct on this topic, I acknowledge that I may be wrong in my conclusions. If I encountered a vegetarian who sincerely felt divinely called to not eat meat, I would never demean them or force them to eat meat. Likewise, I hope you will not look down upon nor criticize any pastor with such biblical convictions against officiating certain weddings. May we show grace towards one another in our differences and faithfully follow the convictions that the Lord has given us on this important issue.

James 4:17 "So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin."

What does the Bible say about marriage? Marriage is created by God as lifelong institution between a man and a woman, rooted in creation, with a significance that shows in its comparison to Christ's relationship with the church (Ephesians 5:22-33). Today marriage is often defined by the emerging trends, understandings, feelings, and opinions of the culture rather than the transcendent, immutable, and eternal truth found described by the God who created it. This change in understanding and practice has led to an overwhelming number of marriages ending in divorce and resulting in remarriage. Although many sociological, psychological, economic, emotional, and man-centered rationales may be created to explain and justify the practice of divorce and

remarriage, the Christian perspective and practice must be rooted in a balanced and holistic application of biblical theology.

The overwhelming practice in today's churches is to allow remarriage in most cases of legal divorce. This is problematic in a society that frequently allows no-fault divorce, thus eliminating most standards or requirements for divorce. In the few churches that do choose to discriminate in the practice of remarriage, it is often confusing and complex to determine accurately the circumstances surrounding the divorce as well as the guilt or innocence of each party involved. In evaluating the Scriptural texts in regard to marriage, divorce, and remarriage the Bible points to the marriage bond as ending only in death, not merely being severed by legal divorce, thereby prohibiting remarriage following divorce no matter the circumstance (Matthew 19:6, Romans 7:1-3, 1 Corinthians 7:10-11,39).

What does the Bible say about divorce? Jesus very clearly says that divorce is not part of God's plan for humanity (Matthew 19:3-12) but was only permitted by Moses because of the hardness of mankind's hearts. As Paul gives guidance to the Corinthians in regard to marriage, he very clearly states in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 that the Lord commands couples not to divorce or separate, but that if they do, they "should remain unmarried or else be reconciled."

God does share that there are occasions when divorce is permitted as the only option and that the believer is "free" from continuing to try to reconcile their marriage with their unbelieving spouse. Examples of such situations may be when an unbelieving spouse is persistent in sexual or adulterous behavior, continuing to abuse their spouse, or abandoning their spouse. Although such divorce situations are allowed for, there is never the implication or approval for remarriage even in situations of "biblical" divorces.

What the Bible say about remarriage after the death of a spouse? God clearly permits remarriage after the death of a

spouse and actually encourages remarriage for younger widows (Romans 7:1-3, 1 Corinthians 7:8-9,27-28,39-40; 5:11-16). The only qualification for the remarriage of a widow is that the new spouse must be a Christian (1 Corinthians 7:39, 2 Corinthians 6:14).

What does the Bible say about remarrying the spouse you previously divorced? God clearly allows for remarrying your previously divorced spouse (1 Corinthians 7:10-11) unless either spouse had subsequently remarried someone else (Deuteronomy 24:1-4).

What does the Bible say about singleness?

What about my happiness? How can I be happy if I am divorced and never remarried?

How can I resist lust if I am divorced and not remarried?

God actually speaks very highly of singleness as a gift and a joy (1 Corinthians 7:1, 7-8,26-34,38). We have often idolatized our happiness and ease of life above the glory and holiness of God. We cannot justify a sin (remarriage after divorce) merely as a means towards avoiding another sin (depression, lust, etc.). God is sufficient for our needs. If we find ourselves divorced and single, we must trust in the Lord's strength, provision, and fellowship to sustain us no matter the temptations we face in our single state (1 Corinthians 10:13).

What does the Bible say about remarriage after divorce?

Is a remarried person in a continuous state of adultery?

Remarriage after divorce is always labeled by God as a sin or specifically as an act of adultery (Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Malachi 2:14-16, Matthew 5:32, Matthew 19:3-10, Mark 10:1-12, Romans 7:1-3, 1 Corinthians 7). God says clearly in Romans 7:3 that a woman "will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive," explaining that only the death of her husband releases her from the law of marriage and permits her to be remarried.

Christ came to satisfy the penalty of our law-breaking.

When we confess Christ as Lord of our life, and believe that He died on the cross and rose from the grave, we know that we "have died to the law" (Romans 7:4) and thus are set free from the eternal consequences of our sin (Romans 6:23). It is important for Christians to understand that "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

Although Christians no longer bear eternal condemnation for their sin, they still recognize that God's laws are "holy" and His commandments are "righteous and good" (Romans 7:12). Christians should desire to avoid what God calls sin or "evil" and to practice what God calls righteous or "good" (Romans 7:18-25). When Christians are convicted by God for any sin, to include a past sin of an unbiblical divorce or remarriage while a previous spouse is still alive, they should confess their sin to God and a trusted Christian friend (1 John 1:9, James 5:16). When such confession occurs, God provides healing and affirms His eternal cleansing and forgiveness. Although such sin is forgiven eternally ("now no condemnation" Romans 8:1), some of the earthly consequences of such a sin may linger. Christians should remember and obey God's ongoing command to walk in holiness in their present marriage or singleness, and accordingly not seek an unbiblical divorce or remarry after a divorce.

Many God-loving Christians have justified remarriage after divorce on the basis of a flawed assumption, that "it is assumed in the Bible that wherever Scripture allows divorce, remarriage is also allowed." Over and over this is shown to be the backbone of their defense, but they fail to show this to be a biblical truth. This is dangerous territory to be in as it is an exegetical fallacy (false way to understanding the meaning of the bible) that you can make an argument from biblical silence.

What if my divorce was based on biblical grounds?

What is my divorce was before I was a Christian?

Doesn't Matthew 5:32, 19:9, or 1 Corinthians 7:15 imply that

remarriage after divorce in certain circumstances isn't sin? That when someone is "loosed" or not "bound" it implies the freedom to remarry?

Scripture never speaks positively about or encourages remarriage after divorce. Scripture does not distinguish any sorts of allowance for remarriage based on a "biblical" divorce or based on a divorce occurring before someone was a Christian. Paul recognizes that divorce may physically and legally end a marriage, but in the eyes of God's law, the marriage bond and "one flesh union" only ends in death (Matthew 19:6, Romans 7:1-3, 1 Corinthians 7:10-11,39).

The word chosen by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:15 is *luo* in Greek or 'free' in English. It is important to note that this is not the same word that he uses for divorce, *chorizo*, (1 Corinthians 7:10,11,15 and Matthew 19:6) or *aphenai* (1 Corinthians 7:11,12,13). The conclusion of this differing word choice is summed up as meaning "that the Christian is not bound to fight in order to preserve togetherness." Is it also significant to note that the "the word used for 'bound' (*douloo*) in verse 15 is not the same word used in verse 39...Paul consistently uses *deo* when speaking of the legal aspect of being bound to one marriage partner (Ro 7:2, 1 Co 7:39) or to one's betrothed (1 Co 7:27)." Paul uses a different word because he is not giving them the same right to remarry. In contrast, in verse 39 Paul clearly speaks to how the marriage bond ends in death by saying "free to marry" which is a phrase that is noticeably absent from 1 Corinthians 7:15, Matthew 19:9 and 5:32.

Is remarriage after divorce an "unforgivable" sin? *No, the only unforgivable sin is ongoing rejection of Jesus as God as revealed by His Holy Spirit (Mark 3:28-30).* Although divorce is a sin (when not biblically allowed, see 1 Corinthians 7), it is not unforgivable. However, the forgiveness of the sin of divorce does not relieve the earthly consequences of that sin and thus permit remarriage since the previous spouse is still alive. Even if someone's divorce was "biblical" or they were the "innocent"

party, Scripture still labels remarriage as a sin since the previous spouse is still alive. Regardless of the circumstances, the sin of remarriage after divorce is not "unforgivable."

Isn't it hypocritical to say divorced men can serve as deacons while saying remarriage after divorce is a sin?

No. Although we may want to personally exercise "grace" and say remarriage after divorce is not a sin, the Bible clearly calls remarriage after divorce a sin because marriage only ends in death, not in divorce. We cannot condone what God clearly calls sin (Romans 1:32, Isaiah 5:20).

Although we may want to uphold "righteousness" by excluding divorced and remarried men from serving as deacons, the Bible upholds God's grace and faithfulness in the life of believer, showing that no sin is unforgivable. Christians are no longer identified by their past sin and thus do not live under condemnation (Romans 8:1, 1 Corinthians 6:11, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21). The standards and qualifications for deacons and pastors all point to present faithfulness not past sin (i.e. "Who are they now?" NOT past-tense, "Who were they?", see Acts 6:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9).

What about _____ (example of a godly couple that is remarried after divorce), should they have not gotten married?

The ends (a godly remarried couple) do not justify or rationalize a sin (remarriage after divorce). A remarried couple is not in the ongoing state of adultery, but the sin of adultery (which Jesus explains also happens in our hearts with lust (Matthew 5:27-30)) is serious and should not be ignored, justified, or excused.

I struggle with lust. I need a father/mother for my kids. I am lonely. Isn't remarriage a better solution to these issues than being divorced and single? Won't Jesus forgive me?

Being divorced and single is complicated and not without its own difficulties, struggles, and temptations. Despite these challenges we cannot ignore God's truths on divorce and

remarriage. We must seek God in our weakness and seek His strength, grace, and peace to carry us and guide us (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). Although it is true that Jesus can and is willing to forgive all sin, we should not abuse His grace or ignore His truths concerning what is best for us in both singleness and marriage and His warnings of the earthly consequences of sin (Romans 6, 1 Corinthians 7).

Please do not take our word solely on this issue.

Please consider the Scriptures and resources below so that you may personally understand and seek God's wisdom on such a delicate issue.

SCRIPTURES ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Genesis 2:23-24

"23Then 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." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

"When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, 2and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, 3and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife, 4then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the LORD. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance."

Leviticus 21:13-15

"13And he shall take a wife in her virginity. 14A widow, or a divorced woman, or a woman who has been defiled, or a prostitute, these he shall not marry. But he shall take as his wife a virgin of his own people, 15that he may not profane his offspring among his people, for I am the LORD who sanctifies him."

Malachi 2:14-16

"14 But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. 15 Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. 16"For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless."

Malachi 2:16

"For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless." (ESV)

"I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith." (NIV)

"For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the LORD of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously." (NASB)

" For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For

it covers one's garment with violence," Says the LORD of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously." (NKJV)

Matthew 5:32

"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 19:3-12

"3And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" 4He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,5and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." 7They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" 8He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." 10The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."11But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. 12For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it."

Mark 10:1-12

"1 And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them. 2And Pharisees came

up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" 3He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" 4They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away." 5And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. 6But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 7 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, 8and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. 9 What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." 10And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. 11And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, 12and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Luke 16:18

18"Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery."

1 Corinthians 7

"1Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." 2But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. 3 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4For 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. 5Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6Now 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.

8To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am.⁹But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion. 10To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband 11(but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife. 12To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. 13If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. 14For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. 15But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. 16For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife? 17Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. 18Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. 19 For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. 20 Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. 21Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) 22For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. 23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. 24So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God. 25Now concerning the betrothed, I have no

command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. 26I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. 27Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. 29This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none,³⁰and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, ³¹and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away. 32I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. 33But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, ³⁴and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. 35I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord. 36If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. 37But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. 38So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better. 39 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. 40Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.”

Romans 7:2-3

“For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.”

1 Timothy 5:14

“So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander”

Ephesians 5:22-33

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,26that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,27so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,30because we are members of his body. 31 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

“Be killing sin or it will be killing you.” John Owen

Recommended Resources for Further Study

Piper, John. “Divorce & Remarriage: A Position Paper.” (July 21, 1986), available online from: <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/divorce-remarriage-a-position-paper> .

Piper, John. “On Divorce & Remarriage in the Event of Adultery.” (January 1, 1986), available on-line from: <http://www.desiringgod.org/all-resources/by-topic/divorce-remarriage> .

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ADDICTIONS?

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

Romans 14, ESV

Understand the Difference between Truth and Opinion

v.1 As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.

Exercise Grace towards Others

v. 3 Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.

Make a Truth & Spirit-Filled Decision

v.5 Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

v.21-23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

Be Prepared to Stand Before God

v.12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Care More about Others than Your Personal Pleasures/Freedoms

v.13 Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any

longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

v.15-19 For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. ... So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up building.

10 Questions to Ask When Evaluating a Possible Addiction:

- The Word's Work: What does the Bible say?
- The Prayer Test: Have I sincerely, openly, honestly prayed about it?
- The Spirit's Work: Am I ashamed? Convicted? Should I be?
- Godly Counsel: What do my godly friends and family think?
- Government's Work: Is it legal or illegal?
- The Transparency Test: Am I hiding this behavior from anyone? Why?
- Gospel-Harm: Does it harm my Gospel witness to others?
- Others-Harm: Is it helpful or harmful to others? Put others at risk?
- Self-Harm: Is it helpful or harmful to me? Use of time/talent/treasures?
- Offensive: Does it offend others around me? Set a good example?

Areas to Consider:

Alcohol, Marijuana, Coffee/Caffeine, Shopping, Thrill-Seeking/Adrenaline, Sleeping, TV, Video Games, Medications, Cutting, Gambling, Sexual Sin, Over Eating/Sugar, Eating Disorders, Smoking/Dipping, Sports, Vanity

"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)

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ALCOHOL?

www.trustworthyword.com/alcohol

The drinking of alcohol is an issue that is particularly touchy within modern America, much less so in many other countries and times in history. The influence of prohibition and the temperance movement in American history has probably shaped more Western Christian views on the issue more than Scripture has, even to the point of misinterpreting the Bible. Tradition and opinion can be dangerous (Romans 14:1 & Colossians 2:8) apart from God's wisdom, so let's discover together what the Bible *really* says about alcohol...

Alcohol brings some good. God allows for and describes several positive aspects to alcohol. It can serve as a tool for the relief of physical, mental, and emotional pain (Proverbs 31:6-7). In contexts where clean water is unavailable, alcohol can serve as a hygienic drink and has medicinal value (1 Timothy 5:23, Luke 10:34). Alcohol can be responsibly used for the special purposes of celebration and socialization (John 2:1-11).

Alcohol brings a lot of dangers. Arrogance. Combativeness. Impaired judgment. Abuse. Anger. Increased sin. Decreased job performance. Poverty. Damaged health. Broken relationships. Diminished Christian witness (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-5, Romans 14:21).

Many of us have seen and experienced the irreversible damage caused by drunkenness. We've witnessed firsthand the destruction of lives, marriages, families, and friendships from the misuse of alcohol.

Is it wrong to drink alcohol? Not usually. In moderation and at appropriate times, alcohol drinking is described in either neutral or positive ways at several places in the Bible (Ecclesiastes 9:7, Psalm 104:15, Amos 9:14). Jesus' first miracle was the creation of wine from water (John 2:1-11). Jesus used wine at His last supper to symbolize His life-giving blood sacrifice and then pointed forward to Heaven with the inclusion of wine as a beverage (Matthew 26:27-29). But God also points out valid reasons to abstain from alcohol even when it is permissible (Romans 14).

Is it wrong to get drunk? Yes. In excess, whether drunk, tipsy, or slightly impaired, alcohol harms yourself and others. Drunkenness (whether drunk, tipsy, or slightly impaired) is universally prohibited and warned against by God...for a reason. Drunkenness leads to earthly and eternal destruction (Isaiah 5:11; 5:22, 1 Peter 4:3, Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:21). God loves us enough to command us away from it and lovingly warn us of its dangers.

Is it wrong to sell and serve alcohol in our community? No, not if it is legalized. Proper protections and enforcement are needed. But...just because something can be done, doesn't mean it should be done (1 Corinthians 6:12).

Is it wise to sell and serve alcohol in a community? To bring it into your home? To drink it at all? Maybe. Maybe not. Many can handle the freedom of alcohol responsibly, but many cannot. There may be some local financial advantages and advantages of convenience and pleasure, but the financial cost of alcohol misuse is actually higher than the gain (<https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol->

consumption/alcohol-facts-and-statistics). It could be wise for a community to avoid alcohol because of its many dangers but it could also be unloving to prohibit what God allows. Ultimately the drinking of alcohol is a personal preference or individual choice allowed by the Scriptures. Some believers who choose to drink see the substance as a gift from God and find themselves not tempted towards drunkenness. Others who choose to abstain see temptations and costs as too high to justify their own personal usage.

- Wisdom tells us to distance ourselves from danger (Proverbs 6:27-28).
- Wisdom tells us to distance ourselves from destructive temptations (Romans 13:14, 1 Corinthians 10:12-13).
- Wisdom tells us to seek the good of others and our community (Jeremiah 29:7, Philippians 2:3-4).

If alcohol has many implicit dangers, and many destructive possibilities, we must consider if we truly want to bring it closer to our community, families, and self, weighing out the benefits with the risks?

What about other addictions? When considering an addictive substance, we need to consider 1) its legality 2) its potential benefits 3) its potential harms to self 4) potential harms to others and 5) its potential for control. Romans 14 is a great passage and here is a helpful handout on that passage and topic: www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-addictions

- A food addiction can lead to obesity, which can damage one's heart and so much more.
- A smoking addiction can quickly harm one's lungs and those breathing the air around you.
- A shopping, hobby, or gambling habit can quickly consume one's finances and time.
- Workaholicism leads to family neglect. Laziness leads to

poverty.

- Pornography is adultery and can short circuit a healthy sexuality within marriage.
- Alcohol abuse can damage one's liver, affect one's decisions, and endanger others.
- A marijuana or drug addiction quickly damages one's brain and ruins lives.

With any potentially addictive substance we need to consider the potential harms in light of the potential goods and make decisions that take into account the impact on our witness and the effect on the lives of others around us. In such discussions we need to avoid temptations to self-righteousness or moralism, realizing we are not saved by our own good works and it is only by God's grace we are not dominated by Satan and our own addictive inclinations.

Did Jesus make some sort of non-alcoholic wine? Some sort of different, less-alcoholic wine? Did Jesus drink alcoholic wine? Did the disciples drink alcoholic wine?

Jesus' first miracle involved making "good wine" that was complimented by the master of the feast and not complained about (John 2:1-11). The same greek word used here (οἶνον) is also used in other passages referring to alcoholic wine (http://biblehub.com/greek/oinon_3631.htm). Another greek word is used for wine in four other places by Paul but is described similarly (οἶνω http://biblehub.com/greek/oino_3631.htm) with the emphasis being on moderation (Paul to Timothy to use a little for his health, 1 Timothy 5:23) and not too much or being addicted.

In Luke 7:33-44 Jesus ("The Son of Man has come eating and drinking") is distinguished from John the Baptist ("drinking no wine") and accused by the Pharisees as both a glutton and a drunkard. This distinction and accusation makes a strong suggestion that Jesus did drink alcoholic wine. There is another word used for wine (sometimes translated "sweet" or "new"

wine) only in Acts 2:13 (Γλεύκουσ http://biblehub.com/greek/gleukous_1098.htm) but it is in similarly referenced as alcoholic in an accusation drunkenness.

On the cross Jesus refuses “wine mixed with myrrh” (Mark 15:23 that could have eased his pain) but receives a “sour wine” on the cross (Mark 15:36, John 19:30 that prolongs his pain and fulfilled Psalm 69:21: see - <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-wine-jesus-drank>) but he had already told his disciples he would not taste the “fruit of the vine” again until He was in His Father’s Kingdom (Matthew 26:29, Mark 14:25, Luke 22:18). What is “fruit of the vine”? Could it be grape juice? Ultimately, without pasteurization or refrigeration, grape juice begins to ferment and become alcoholic. So a freshly squeezed juice may have little or no alcohol, but otherwise outside of grape harvest time (June-September in Israel <https://www.gci.org/law/festivals/harvest>) any drink of fruit would involve fermentation and alcohol. Jesus’ crucifixion would have been late March and early April so any fruit of the vine drink preceding his crucifixion would have certainly been fermented and alcoholic.

It is wise to note that the alcohol of Jesus’ day was probably much less alcoholic by content so anyone who feels the biblical and faith-formed freedom to drink alcohol today should be extra cautious as it can lead to drunkenness more quickly than the alcohol of Jesus’ day.

Should pastors not be allowed to drink alcohol? While there is much wisdom in those who feel personally led to abstain from wine, the Biblical qualifications for pastors and church leaders doesn’t advocate for abstinence from alcohol but rather from drunkenness or addiction to alcohol (1 Timothy 3:3,3:8 & Titus 1:7 http://biblehub.com/greek/paroinon_3943.htm). Some may point to biblical wisdom and commands against alcohol to kings and priests but ignore that this was most often connected to a voluntary (not forced) Nazarite vow (Numbers 6:1-20 or set

aside similarly like John in Luke 1:15) after which they can drink wine again, serving in the inner court or on duty (Leviticus 10:9 & Ezekiel 44:21), or with warning against drunkenness because of the need to clearly make decisions (Proverbs 31:4). While some seminaries, denominations, and churches may require abstinence from alcohol as an act of wisdom, the Bible does not. Can pastors drink alcohol? The Bible says yes. Should pastors drink alcohol? The Bible seems to leave that up to the individual conscience of the pastor (Romans 14).

We must be consistent. Some point to Romans 14:21 (“It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.”) as a reason for pastors or Christians not to drink alcoholic beverages but then steer away from the offense of meat-eating to the vegetarian. However, the next verse indicates the focus on personal faithful conviction from and accountability to God on the issue of food and drink (Romans 14:22 “The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God”).

Why is drunkenness so serious? Unlike some other addictions (gluttony, gambling, smoking, shopping, hobby-ism, workaholism, etc.) alcohol misuse presents a more sudden and direct harm to others through vehicular accidents, abuse, and neglect. Even more concerning, ongoing & unrepentant drunkenness is pointed to as an identification of those without salvation who are headed towards an eternity in Hell (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 & Galatians 5:19-21).

Does the Bible say alcohol is evil? Did Jesus say alcohol is evil? If alcohol is so dangerous, why are we biblically allowed to drink it? Throughout Scripture blame is not attributed to a substance or object, but the sin of our heart is the main concern.

- Food is not the main concern, the love of food seen in gluttony is the sin (Proverbs 23:2 & 23:20-21 and Philipians 3:19).
- Money is not the main concern, the love of money seen in greed or covetousness is the sin (1 Timothy 6:9-10).
- Carved images (idols) are not the main concern (they are

nothing but wood ultimately, Isaiah 44:19 & 1 Corinthians 8:4), the love of idols seen in the making, retention, and worship of idols that is the sin (1 John 5:21 & Revelation 9:20).

- Alcohol is not the main concern; it is the love of alcohol seen in drunkenness is the sin.

So what? There is biblical wisdom in avoiding tempting substances and in avoiding it as a stumbling block in the lives of others...but the application of those truths are more personal practice than universal prohibition or universal allowance.

Doesn't Proverbs 20:1 call wine and strong drink a sin? This passage is often quoted out of the context of the type of literature: a proverb. A proverb is a general truth statement and observation from which to derive wisdom. Accordingly, the emphasis again is not on the substance but on not being led astray by them to where one's judgment and behavior (mocking and brawling) is influenced by the substance.

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise." Proverbs 20:1 (ESV)

What should I do if someone I love has a strongly different opinion than me on this issue? Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry (James 1:19-20). Study the Scriptures together on the topic but don't let a difference of opinion become a source of division. Love the person more than winning an argument. Prioritize the Gospel and the Scriptures as you talk. Reconsider your own traditions in the light of the Word. Realize the Bible grants freedom of differences on issues like food (not gluttony) and drink (not drunkenness).

Should we use wine with the Lord's Supper/Communion? Jesus did. The Early Church did. The vast majority of churches today still do. It wasn't until 1869 that the pasteurization of grape juice was discovered by Thomas Welch, a dedicated Methodist and Prohibitionist, who made "Dr. Welch's Unfermented Wine" (grape juice) that was used primarily by churches as

for its first twenty years. Is there wisdom in offering a non-alcoholic "fruit of the vine" since it is now? Could be. Is wine a better symbol and more accurate to the original Lord's Supper? Yes. Individual churches must come to their own conclusions based on their culture and the Scriptures. Consider Paul when writing to the church at Corinth on the Lord's Supper/Communion. He rebukes them for using the bread and the cup for gluttony and drunkenness, warning that their misuse has led to sickness and death and a consequence, yet he never advocates for alcoholic abstinence or for the change of the cup to a non-alcoholic substance (1 Corinthians 11:17-34).

Here are some of the relevant Bible passages

Alcohol brings some good:

- Psalm 104:14-15 (ESV) "You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart."
- Proverbs 31:6-7 "Give strong drink to the one who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress; let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more."
- Ecclesiastes 9:7 "Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do."
- Amos 9:14 "I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit."
- 1 Timothy 5:23 "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments."
- Luke 10:34 "He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him."

- John 2:1–11 “On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. [2] Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. [3] When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” [4] And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” [5] His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” [6] Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. [7] Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. [8] And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it. [9] When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom [10] and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.” [11] This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.”
- Matthew 26:27–29 “And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.’”

Misuse of Alcohol brings a lot of dangers:

- Proverbs 20:1 “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.”
- Proverbs 23:29–35 “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine. Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an

- adder. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart utter perverse things. You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast. “They struck me,” you will say, “but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I must have another drink.”
- Proverbs 31:4–5 “It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to take strong drink, lest they drink and forget what has been decreed and pervert the rights of all the afflicted.”
- Romans 14:21 “It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.”
- Isaiah 5:11–12 “Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may run after strong drink, who tarry late into the evening as wine inflames them! They have lyre and harp, tambourine and flute and wine at their feasts, but they do not regard the deeds of the LORD, or see the work of his hands.”
- Isaiah 5:22 “Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink”
- 1 Peter 4:3–5 “For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”
- Ephesians 5:18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit”
- Galatians 5:19–21 “Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 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.”
- 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor

adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will 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.”

Use Wisdom in Your Preferences and Practices

- 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.”
- Proverbs 6:27–28 “Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched?”
- Romans 13:14 “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”
- 1 Corinthians 10:12–13 “Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. [13] No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”
- Jeremiah 29:7 “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.”
- Philippians 2:3–4 “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Check out gotquestions.org for some helpful perspectives on this and many other issues!

For statistics on alcohol use and misuse in America visit: <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/alcohol-facts-and-statistics>

- Alcohol generates \$223 billion annually in the US but costs \$249 billion from misuse. 10% of all kids live with a parent

with alcohol problems. 88,000 people die from alcohol related causes every year. 15 million Americans have an alcohol use disorder, affecting many through neglect, abuse, and assault. Alcohol is the leading “gateway drug” into illicit drugs.

10 Questions to Ask When Evaluating Your Personal Practice with Alcohol:

- The Word’s Work: What does the Bible say?
- The Prayer Test: Have I sincerely, openly, honestly prayed about it?
- The Spirit’s Work: Am I ashamed? Convicted? Should I be?
- Godly Counsel: What do my godly friends and family think?
- Government’s Work: Is it legal or illegal?
- The Transparency Test: Am I hiding this behavior from anyone? Why?
- Gospel-Harm: Does it harm my Gospel witness to others?
- Others-Harm: Is it helpful or harmful to others? Put others at risk?
- Self-Harm: Is it helpful or harmful to me? Use of time/talent/treasures?
- Offensive: Does it offend others around me? Set a good example?

“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)

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SEXUAL SIN?

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

“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, ESV)

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality” (1 Corinthians 6:9)

“Be killing sin or it will be killing you.” John Owen

Where in the Bible does it talk about sexual sin?

(www.biblestudytools.com)

Amiantos (Greek) – UNDEFILED (English), free from that by which the nature of a thing is deformed [Heb 13:4 (marriage bed), 7:26 (high priest), James 1:27 (pure religion), 1 Peter 1:4 (spiritual inheritance)]

Adikos (Greek) - UNRIGHTEOUS (English), wicked, unjust (1 Cor 6:1,9)

Akatharsia (Greek) – IMPURITY (English), uncleanness, lustful (2 Cor 12:21, Gal 5:19, Eph 4:19, 5:3, Col 3:5, 1 Thess 4:7)

Epithumia (Greek) – LUST (English), desire, craving, longing, desire for what is forbidden (37 times in NT!)

Porneia (Greek) – SEXUAL IMMORALITY (English), illicit sexual intercourse, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, w/animals metaphor: the worship of idols (Matt 15:19 and Mark 7:21 ‘out of the heart’, accusation against Jesus’ birth John 8:41, Acts 15:20,29, 21:25, 1 Cor 5:1, 6:13,18, 7:2, 2 Cor 12:21, Gal 5:19, Eph 5:3, Col 3:5, 1 Thess 4:3, Rev 9:21)

- **Pornos** – sexually immoral, a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse, a fornicator, a male prostitute (1 Cor 5:9-11,6:9, Eph 5:5, 1 Tim 1:10, Heb 12:16, 13:4, Rev 21:8, 22:15)
- **Porne** - any woman indulging in unlawful sexual intercourse, whether for gain or for lust, harlot, prostitute (1 Corinthians 6:15-15, Babylon (Revelation), Rahab, Prodigal Son (Luke 15:30), Parable of the Two Sons (Matthew 21:28-32))

Moicheia (Greek) – ADULTERY (English), (Matthew 15:19 and Mark 7:21 ‘out of the heart’)

- **Moichao** - to have unlawful intercourse with another's wife, to commit adultery with (used four times, all regarding remarriage after divorce - Mark 10:11-12, Matthew 5:32, 19:9)
- **Moichos** – an adulterer, metaphor: one who is unfaithful to god, ungodly (Luke 18:11, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Hebrews 13:4)

HOMOSEXUALITY – Where does the Bible talk about homosexuality?

- Romans 1:24-32, Genesis 19, Leviticus 18:22, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:3-3, 1 Timothy 1:9,10, Jude 7
- 1 Corinthians 6:9 – ESV “nor men who practice homosexuality” (refers to passive & active partners in homosexual acts)

- *Malakos* (Greek) – effeminate, of a boy kept for homosexual relations with a man, submits his body to unnatural lewdness
- *Arsenokoites* (Greek) – homosexual, one who lies with a male as with a female, sodomite, homosexual (1 Tim 1:10, 1 Cor 6:9)

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 6:11 ESV)

“If your opinion about anything contradicts God’s Word, guess which one is wrong?” Rick Warren

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.” (Proverbs 14:12)

Living in a Sex-Saturated World: Our Response

“But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ... 5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” (Ephesians 5:3-6)

“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” (Colossians 3:5)

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS

Unmarried? Stop Choosing & Embracing Sexual Activity/ Thoughts, Wait Until You Are Married

Married? Stay Married, Sexual Activity/Thoughts Only With Your Spouse, “Best defense is a good offense,” have a “Song of Solomon,” passionate, regular, loving sex life in your marriage!

HOW CAN I LIVE PURELY IN A SEX-SATURATED WORLD?

MEN & WOMEN – GUARD your eyes, ears, mouth, mind, heart, hands, fingers, & feet

“I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin?” (Job 31:1)

Cautions & Safeguards In Marriage

- Open sharing of all communication avenues (email, Facebook, text messaging, IM, Twitter, etc.)
- Never be alone with someone of the opposite sex
- Are you hiding something? Not telling the whole story? Why?
- Talk with your spouse & share any struggles or needs that you feel aren’t being met.
- Bounce your eyes. If you find yourself looking at someone lustfully, bounce your eyes another direction.
- Understand the needs and love language of your spouse.
- If someone is attractive to you, put up safeguards in your interactions with them.

Cautions & Safeguards Outside of Marriage

What is the Bible’s stance on sex? Sex is good, when it is done God’s way. Sex is designed by God for a picture of the Gospel union, for pleasure, and for procreation...but His plan is for it to only happen in marriage...and marriage is always defined by God’s voice as between a man and a woman, for life (Romans 7:1-3, 1

Corinthians 7:39).

“If anyone says that sex in itself is bad, Christianity contradicts him at once.” C.S. Lewis

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world - the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life - is not from the Father but from the world. (1 John 2:15-16)

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

Is sexual sin really that serious? Yes, it is much more serious than we realize. 1 Corinthians 6:18 tells us to flee sexual immorality. Sexual sin is different because it is a sin against our body, inside our body. We are not designed by God for multiple sexual partners or relationships. We must acknowledge and confess that we are all sexual sinners.

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.” (Proverbs 14:12)

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 describes God’s plan for us...to please Him and not ourselves. His will is for us to be sanctified, to be made more holy. One main avenue of sanctification is seen, or not seen, in how we control our bodies sexually. God warns that He is the avenger of sexual sin and how it harms not just you, but others. Ignoring the seriousness of sexual sin is not a matter of personal opinion. It is not simple opposition to a particular viewpoint, pastor, Christian, church, or denomination, but ignoring God’s plan for sex means ignoring God himself & His Holy Spirit that He gives to Christians.

“While sex is not the only aspect of physical relationship in a

marriage, it is in most cases the most important one, the touchstone for everything else from smiles and daily gestures of tenderness to deeds of kindness and sacrifice...the whole challenge of marital life is simply to catch up in all other departments with the pure rapture of the physical relationship at its best.” Mike Mason

How do I know is something is sexually immoral? How much can I do? Are you at peace with what you are doing? Are you ashamed? Do you hide it? Do you justify or minimize it? Does it affect your witness? Do you have doubts? (and Romans 14:23)

- “But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.” (Ephesians 5:3)
- “But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.” (Romans 14:23)

Is it right to “force” biblical beliefs on a nation that is primarily non-Christian? The Bible is described as God’s voice. Even though our nation and others are not primarily Christians, God is sovereign over them. When a nation’s leaders or people disregard, disrespect, and disobey God, there are consequences. When we ignore the Bible it shows we are ignoring God by shutting our ears to His voice.

God tells us through the prophet Samuel that: (1 Samuel 12:14-15) “If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well. [15] But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king.”

We (Christians) want it to go well for America, its people and its leaders. We don’t want our God against our nation. Moralism will not save our nation. A God-centered heart will rescue our

nation from further consequences of our sin. We need to pray that our nation begins to fear, serve, and obey the Lord and stop rebelling against His good plan.

“A married couple gives a severe blow to the head of that ancient serpent when they aim to give as much sexual satisfaction to each other as possible. Is it not a mark of amazing grace that on top of all the pleasure that the sexual side of marriage brings, it also proves to be a fearsome weapon against our ancient foe?... Marriage at its exquisite peak of pleasure speaks powerfully the truth of covenant-keeping love between Christ and his church. And that love is the most powerful force in the world.” John Piper

What should Christians do right now as our beliefs continue to be attacked and legislated against?

Pray. Our problem is not ultimately with our government. Our problem is with our hearts. God is in the business of changing hearts so we need to fervently, passionately, and continuously beg our God to change the hearts of Americans away from self-love and towards Christ.

Model. Walk in God’s commandments. Let people see the Gospel in your marriages, your lives, and your words. When people see and hear of God’s working in you, they will hopefully be changed from the inside out.

Love. We are to model Christ-like love. That means loving people with our thoughts, words, and actions even when they don’t deserve it. Sometimes love is patient, gentle, and kind, but Proverbs 27:5 tells us that “open rebuke is better than hidden love.” Let’s lovingly shower people with God’s truths in our words and actions.

How should we treat family and friends who are in heterosexual or homosexual sin?

Love them. Do not hide the truth from them. Do not avoid them,

but be careful not to be drawn into whatever sins they are in love with. Show them you care for them. Be compassionate. Be humble. Be prepared to give answers to the questions they may have about God and His good plan of sexuality. Pray for them. Intercede to God on their behalf, that God changes their hearts.

What should I do if I am struggling with heterosexual or homosexual sin?

- Trust in Christ if you never have. Moralism, or being good, does not save you. Only an ongoing, trusting relationship with Jesus can save you.
- Test yourself to ensure you are in the faith. If you have a habitual, ongoing sin read the book of 1 John. If you say you are a Christian, but you continue to walk in sin and show you love the darkness and the world more than you love the light & Christ, you may not be a Christian at all.
- If you are a Christian and are struggling with sin seek help:
 - Confess – Confess your sin. Be honest and open with God.
 - Repent - Turn from the evil you’ve been practicing.
 - Be In God’s Word – It has all the answers. Discover them.
 - Be In Prayer – Ask God for help. You have God’s Spirit alive in you. Stop grieving Him and start talking to Him.
 - Be In Church – Connect with a local, Bible-teaching church. Outside of the church is referred to “Satan’s realm.” Be connected with Christ through a local body of believers.
 - Be With Believers – Confess your sin struggle with a Christian. Ask them to pray for you. Ask them to help you. Seek their encouragement.

God “desires that all people to be saved and to come to the

knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:4)

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)

HELPFUL RESOURCES

www.covenanteyes.com

www.gotquestions.org

- “10 Myths About Lust” by Jared Moore (<http://cbmw.org/men/manhood/10-myths-about-lust>)
- *Intended for Pleasure: Sex Technique & Sexual Fulfillment in Christian Marriage* Ed & Gaye Wheat
- *A Celebration of Sex: A Guide to Enjoying God's Gift of Sexual Intimacy* By Douglas E. Rosenau
- *For Women Only: What You Need to Know about the Inner Lives of Men* By Shaunti Feldhahn
- *For Men Only: A Straightforward Guide to the Inner Lives of Women* By Shaunti and Jeff Feldhahn
- *Winning the Battle Within: Realistic Steps to Overcoming Sexual Strongholds* By Neil T. Anderson
- *Sex Is Not the Problem (Lust Is): Sexual Purity in a Lust-Saturated World* By Joshua Harris

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY FROM PORN

www.trustworthyword.com/protect-from-porn

Understand the Dangers for Everyone

from: Pornography Statistics” - www.covenanteyes.com/pornography-facts-and-statistics/

When a child or adolescent is directly exposed to pornography the following effects have been documented:

- Lasting negative or traumatic emotional responses.
- Earlier onset of first sexual intercourse, thereby increasing the risk of STDs over the lifespan.
- The belief that superior sexual satisfaction is attainable without having affection for one’s partner, thereby reinforcing the commoditization of sex and the objectification of humans.
- The belief that being married or having a family are unattractive prospects.
- Increased risk for developing sexual compulsions and addictive behavior.
- Increased risk of exposure to incorrect information about human sexuality long before a minor is able to contextualize this information in ways an adult brain could.

Pornography consumption is associated with the

following six trends, among others:

- Increased marital distress, and risk of separation and divorce
- Decreased marital intimacy and sexual satisfaction
- Infidelity
- Increased appetite for more graphic types of pornography and sexual activity associated with abusive, illegal or unsafe practices
- Devaluation of monogamy, marriage and child rearing
- An increasing number of people struggling with compulsive and addictive sexual behavior

“Your Brain on Porn: 5 Ways Porn Warps Your Brain and Biblical Ways to Renew It”

- www.covenanteyes.com/brain-ebook/

“When Children View Pornography”

- www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/sexuality/when-children-use-pornography/when-children-view-pornography

Recognize the Prevalence of the Problem

- 64% of self-identified Christian men and 15% of self-identified Christian women view pornography at least once a month (compared to 65% of non-Christian men and 30% of non-Christian women).
- The average of first time pornography exposure is estimated to be down to 8 years old.
- 93% of boys and 62% of girls were exposed to pornography before 18.
- 66.5% of young men and 48.7% of young women said viewing pornographic materials is an acceptable way to express one’s sexuality.
- Men who admit to masturbating once a week or more: Single Men - 48%, Married Men - 44%, Divorced Men - 68%
- The following percentages of men say they view

pornography at least once a month: 18-30-year olds, 79%; 31-49-year-olds, 67%; 50-68-year-olds, 49% (Barna, 2014)

- 63% of adult men and 36% of women have looked at pornography at least on time *while at work* in the past 3 months
- “Pornography Statistics” - www.covenanteyes.com/pornography-facts-and-statistics/

Admit the Seriousness of the Sin: We Must Answer to God

- “33 Reasons I Need to Abstain from Porn” - 33 Reasons Why I Need to Abstain from Porn” by Jason George - www.covenanteyes.com/2013/05/29/33-reasons-to-abstain-from-porn/
- (Hebrews 13:4 ESV) 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 6:9) Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality
- (1 Corinthians 6:11) 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.
- (Ephesians 5:3-6) But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ... 5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.
- (Colossians 3:5) Put to death therefore what is earthly

in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

•(1 Thessalonians 4:3-8) For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. 8 Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.”

How to Protect Yourself and Your Family

•“Before the Birds and the Bees” www.challies.com/articles/before-the-birds-and-the-bees

•“The Porn Free Family Plan” www.challies.com/articles/the-porn-free-family-plan

•“Protect Your Family with the Circle” www.challies.com/resources/protect-your-family-with-circle

• **Have an Internet Filtering Plan - Covenant Eyes** - covenanteyes.com/signup/

• **Buy & Use this App!** “Overcome Porn: 40 Day Challenge” by Covenant Eyes

• www.covenanteyes.com

• **Read and Find Help** - Covenant Eyes - E-Books - a wide collection of helpful resources! www.covenanteyes.com/singles-guide/

•“What Does the Bible Say about Sexual Sin?” www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sexual-sin

•“What Does the Bible Say about Homosexuality?” www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-homosexuality

Cautions & Safeguards In Marriage

1. Open sharing of all communication avenues and conversations
2. Never be alone with someone of the opposite sex
3. Are you hiding something? Not telling the whole story? Why?
4. Talk with your spouse & share any struggles or needs that you feel aren't being met.
5. Bounce your eyes. If you find yourself looking at someone lustfully, bounce your eyes another direction.
6. Understand the needs and love language of your spouse.
7. If someone is attractive to you, put up safeguards in your interactions with them.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY AND GENDER IDENTITY?

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

“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, ESV)

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality”
(1 Corinthians 6:9)

“If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination”
(Leviticus 20:13)

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”
(Proverbs 14:12)

Is God anti-gay?

No, but God is against everyone who lives for and values themselves more than God (Ezra 8:22). For those who embrace the identity of “homosexual,” “lesbian,” “gay,” “bisexual,” “transgender,” or “queer,” they have chosen an identity apart from God (1 John 3:9-10). God is against their sin (Romans 3:10-12,23), and they are storing up His wrath for themselves (Romans 2:5). The good news is that God is patient towards us, “not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” (2 Peter 3:9, 1 Timothy 2:4). God shows us His amazing love through the sacrificial, substitutionary death of His Son Jesus on the Cross while we were still choosing to live life our own way (Romans 5:6-11). God wants everyone who has chosen the identity of gay to admit and turn from their sin, believe He lovingly died on the Cross and rose from the grave, and confess Christ as Lord (Romans 10:9-10).

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

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)

What does the Bible say about homosexuality?

Homosexuality is repeatedly condemned as sin without qualification or nuance. Romans 1:24-32, Genesis 19, Leviticus 18:22 ; 20:13, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:3-6, 1 Timothy 1:9,10, Jude 7.

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)

Homosexuality is the embracing and practice of same-sex lusts, desires, acts, pride, and identity. Homosexuality is contrary to God's portrayal of the Gospel in marriage and is contrary to His creation of nature, physically, anatomically, reproductively, and a perversion of His plan for sexual pleasure.

- 1 Corinthians 6:9 – ESV “nor men who practice homosexuality” (refers to passive & active partners in homosexual acts)
- *Malakos* (Greek) – effeminate, of a boy kept for homosexual relations with a man, submits his body to unnatural lewdness
- *Arsenokoites* (Greek) – homosexual, one who lies with a male as with a female, sodomite, homosexual (1 Tim 1:10, 1 Cor 6:9)

This is not a new or modern-day issue. Paul writes to Christians in Corinth, saying (to include reference to the sin of homosexuality), “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 6:11).

Is someone born gay? Does God create homosexuals?

No, someone is not born gay or created by God to be homosexual. God does not tempt anyone with sin or evil (James 1:13-15), such as the sin of homosexuality (Romans 1:24-32, Genesis 19, Leviticus 18:22; 20:13, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:3-3, 1 Timothy 1:9,10, Jude 7). Just as there is no genetic excuse for anger, murder, lust, adultery, greed, theft, or lying, there is no genetic excuse for homosexuality or any other sin.

Everyone is born with inherited sin with both guilt of and

inclination towards sin (Romans 5:12, Jeremiah 17:9, Psalm 51:3-5). We all then choose to sin against our Creator by failing to treasure and value God above any other thing. We all morally rebel against God's commands and will be held accountable according to His perfect, Holy standard (Romans 3:10-12, 23).

Our family and cultural environment may influence us toward a particular type of sin, but sin is ultimately a personal choice of law breaking that we make. We should not be surprised or shocked when non-believers do not understand God's truths or yield to obey His plans. Such ongoing submission to and choice of sin as their practice and identity reveals their lost state.

Is same-sex attraction a sin?

No. Same-sex attraction describes the temptation towards choosing the sin of homosexuality. When homosexual attraction is embraced as an acceptable desire, action, or identity, then it becomes sinful intent. When same-sex attraction is recognized as leading towards sin, dishonorable passions, and unnatural actions, it can be resisted through the power of a relationship with Christ. Thus, same-sex attraction is not a sin in itself, but is a temptation that must be resisted. Accordingly, it is often more helpful to refer to people as experiencing same-sex attraction rather than to identify them by the sin of homosexuality.

In a similar way, heterosexual attraction is not sinful in itself. When heterosexual attraction is embraced as an acceptable desire, action, or identity outside of God's plan of marriage between one man and one woman for life, it becomes lustful and adulterous sin (Romans 1:24-32, James 1:12-15, and Matthew 5:27-32).

Can someone be a gay Christian?

No. It is not possible to simultaneously embrace or identify with a sin while simultaneously claiming to have yielded their lives to Christ's lordship. It is possible to be a Christian who struggles with same-sex attraction yet recognizes homosexuality as sin

and actively resists their fleshly desires.

No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. [10] 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 3:9-10 ESV)

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

Should Christians be for or against homosexual marriage, unions, and adoptions? Is it right to “force” biblical beliefs on a nation that is primarily non-Christian?

The Bible is described as God's voice. Even though our nation and others are not primarily Christians, God is sovereign over them. When a nation's leaders or people disregard, disrespect, and disobey God, there are consequences. When we ignore the Bible it shows we are ignoring God by shutting our ears to His voice.

God tells us through the prophet Samuel that: (1 Samuel 12:14-15) “If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well. [15] But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king.”

We (Christians) should want it to go well for our country, its people and its leaders. We don't want our God against our nation. Moralism will not save our nation. A God-centered heart will rescue our nation from further consequences of our sin. We need to pray that our nation begins to fear, serve, and obey the Lord and stop rebelling against His good plan.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world - the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life - is not from the Father but from the world. (1 John 2:15-16)

How should we treat family and friends who are in homosexual sin?

Love them. Do not hide the truth from them. Do not avoid them, but be careful not to be drawn into whatever sins they are in love with. Show them you care for them. Be compassionate. Be humble. Be prepared to give answers to the questions they may have about God and His good plan of sexuality. Pray for them. Intercede to God on their behalf, that God changes their hearts. It is never too late for the Gospel.

What should I do if I am struggling with same-sex attraction or homosexual sin?

- Trust in Christ if you never have. Moralism, or being good, does not save you. Only an ongoing, trusting relationship with Jesus can save you.
- Test yourself to ensure you are in the faith. If you have a habitual, ongoing sin read the book of 1 John. If you say you are a Christian, but you continue to walk in sin, you show you love the darkness and the world more than you love the light & Christ, and you are not be a Christian at all. (1 John 1:6)
- If you are a Christian and are struggling with sin, seek help.
- Recognize that your sexual feeling is not your identity, you are much more than your sexuality.
- Confess – Confess your sin. Be honest and open with God. (1 John 1:9)
- Repent - Turn from the evil you've been practicing.
- Be In God's Word – It has all the answers. Discover them.

- Recognize that singleness is a gift from God (1 Corinthians 7). Ask God to remove your same-sex attractions and to change your desires and attractions towards the opposite-sex.
- Be In Prayer – Ask God for help. You have God’s Spirit alive in you. Stop grieving Him and start talking to Him.
- Be In Church – Connect with a local, Bible-teaching church. Outside of the church is referred to “Satan’s realm.” Be connected with Christ through a local body of believers.
- Be With Believers – Confess your sin struggle with a Christian. Ask them to pray for you. Ask them to help you. Seek their encouragement.

What about gender identity issues?

Similar to same-sex attraction, gender confusion itself is not a sin. When someone embraces a gender identity apart from their biological, genetically verifiable, God-given identity, it is sin. God created mankind “male and female” (Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139, 1 Corinthians 6:9). When someone identifies, acts, or dresses contrary to their biological gender, they have rebelled against God’s creative plan.

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

Promoting gender as a choice does great harm with both earthly and eternal consequences (Jeremiah 7:23). Rejecting God’s plan and instead choosing to trust in one’s feelings (Jeremiah 17:9-10) and following one’s fleshly desires (1 John 2:15-16) results in eternal death (Proverbs 14:12).

“A woman shall not wear a man’s garment, nor shall a man put on a woman’s cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God.” (Deuteronomy 22:5 ESV)

“But this command I gave them: ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.’” (Jeremiah 7:23 ESV)

What about polygamy? Pedophilia? Bestiality?

Although these issues may not be widespread in our current days, there has been both previous cultural embracement of such sin and clear biblical condemnation of such sin (Deuteronomy 17:17, Genesis 2:24, 1 Timothy 3:2,12, Titus 1:6, Ephesians 5:22-33; Galatians 5:16-21, Romans 1:31, 2 Timothy 3:2, Matthew 18:1-14; Exodus 22:19, Leviticus 18:23, Leviticus 20:15-16, Deuteronomy 27:21). We are warned by Scripture that history repeats itself so we must be prepared for such a repetition of unlawful and unholy sexual activity.

“What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.” (Ecclesiastes 1:9 ESV)

HELPFUL RESOURCES

www.covenanteyes.com

www.gotquestions.org

- “10 Myths About Lust” by Jared Moore (<http://cbmw.org/men/manhood/10-myths-about-lust>)
- *Is God Anti-Gay? And Other Questions about Homosexuality, the Bible, and Same-Sex Attraction* by Sam Allberry
- *God and the Gay Christian? A Response to Matthew Vines*, Edited by R. Albert Mohler, Jr.
- *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert : An English Professor’s Journey into Christian Faith* by Rosaria Champagne Butterfield
- *Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexual Identity and Union with Christ* by Rosaria Champagne Butterfield

A BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO PRIDE MONTH

Have you noticed the increased emphasis on validating, affirming, and encouraging LGBTQ+ in America, especially during “Pride Month” (June)? Rainbow flags at U.S. Embassies. Company logos changed to a rainbow pattern. An onslaught of advertising campaigns. Products created to celebrate a sexual revolution. Such rapid and radical changes in our society can often overwhelm us. How should a biblical Christian understand our culture? What should followers of Jesus do?

1 Chronicles 12:32 “Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do”

1. Love God - Understanding False Religion. Read 1 John. Just because someone calls themselves a Christian doesn’t make them a genuine believer. Rebellion against God’s authority and Biblical commands reveals both a false religion and a false conversion. If God’s voice in Scripture is not one’s authority, Jesus is not one’s Lord and Savior. A true love of God is evidenced in obedience and submission to His Word.

Matthew 15:8 “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me”

2. Practice Self-Control - Understanding Cultural History. Be slow to speak. The sexual revolution in America didn’t happen overnight, and was overwhelmingly found in heterosexual sin before LGBTQ+ sin. Decades of sensuality, pornography, no-fault divorce, serial marriage, fornication,

adultery, prostitution, abuse, and more have led us to the LGBTQ+ rebellion against God. We are all broken sexually in our sin. This cycle of sexual sin has happened repeatedly in many other cultures. We are on a historical and moral path towards even more destructive sexual immorality: polygamy, polyamory, pedophilia, bestiality, virtual sex, and sex bots.

Ecclesiastes 1:9 “What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.”

3. Be Kind to LGBTQ+ People - Understanding Relationships. Many who identify as lesbian, gay, transgender, bi-sexual, queer, or any number of evolving labels have suffered intense hatred, insults, abuse, and attacks. Get to know your LGBTQ+ neighbors. Listen to their stories. Weep with their hurts. Find ways to show them genuine, Christian love without condoning or approving their sinful choices and self-identification.

Luke 6:27–28 “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.”

4. Exhibit Faithfulness - Understanding Spiritual Truths. The increasingly rampant heterosexual, homosexual, and gender identity sins are “false to the truth...earthly, unspiritual, demonic” (James 3:14–15). Validating, affirming, approving, accepting, endorsing, encouraging, supporting, promoting, and celebrating LGBTQ+ is foolish, unnatural, dishonorable, impure, and offensive to our Holy God (Romans 1:18-32). Watch out! Before you form or share your opinion on LGBTQ+, examine the Scriptures in the pursuit of faithfulness to God’s truth (Romans 1:24-32, Genesis 19, Leviticus 18:22; 20:13, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:3-6, 1 Timothy 1:9-10, Jude 7). Do not bend the knee to the false god of LGBTQ+ pride.

Romans 1:24, 26-27, 32 “Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their

bodies among themselves...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. ...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."

The world says "love is love," but God explains that "God is love" (1 John 4:8,16); He is the definition and definer of true love.

The world encourages "love yourself" while God warns of the danger of being deceived to follow "the course of the world" in pursuing the "desires of the body and the mind" (Ephesians 2:1-3).

The world advertises "you be you", but God says "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

The world teaches you to follow your "own truth" and understanding of god, while God proclaims "whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him"(1 John 2:4-6).

Isaiah 5:20 "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!"

5. Be A Joy-Filled Presence - Understanding Eternal Consequences. Those who continue in sexual sin, whether heterosexual or homosexual, have chosen a path to Hell. When surrounded by cultural evil, may be choose to be like Noah, Daniel, Paul, the church in Philadelphia, and so many more faithful saints, keeping God's Word and not denying His name

(Revelation 3:8). We must choose to be an evangelistic, joy-filled presence among those who are perishing.

1 Corinthians 6:9 "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality."

6. Endure - Understanding God's Plan. Don't be surprised when people hate you for standing on God's Word concerning the sinfulness of LGBTQ+ (1 John 3:13-14). Some might falsely accuse you of being homophobic or a bigot. Others may threaten and attack you (Matthew 5:10-11). Stand firm (Ephesians 6:10-20). Turn the other cheek (Luke 6:29). When possible, speak truth, with humility, as an act of love. Live in righteousness, evidencing the bright light of true love to a dark world. Practice genuine love.

Romans 12:9 "Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good."

Here are some helpful biblical resources for you to consider!

- **What does the Bible say about homosexuality?** - <http://www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-homosexuality>
- **How can I be sure I'm a Christian?** - <http://www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian>
- **How can I become a Christian?** - <http://www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian>
- **Evidence for Jesus** - <http://www.trustworthyword.com/evidence-for-jesus>

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT VOTING AND POLITICS?

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

Why is this issue important? Regardless of our political party persuasion, we must consider the issues and character behind the often emotional and misleading political process. How we conduct ourselves through the political season is just as important as the ballots we cast on Election Day.

What does the Bible teach?

Ignore Human Opinions about Government. Don't be swayed by appearances or opinion in politics. We must put aside our tradition and political upbringing, and ensure that our identity is more rooted in Christ than it is in our political party. Our loyalty must be higher to Christ's way, purpose, and truth so that we are not swayed by mere human opinion.

(Mark 12:14) "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God."

Understand God's Purpose in Government. God's "kingdom rules over all" (Psalm 103:19) so we must be not lose hope

in the midst of the ups and downs of political life. One day, "every knee will bow...every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:10-11), but until that day, God has instituted government as a form of common grace to both believers and unbelievers. Along with the family, it is a form of societal organization. Government is designed to restrain and deter evil, but also is designed to be a proponent of good (Romans 13:4). Even when governmental authority acts evil, it is still ultimately under God's authority.

(Romans 13:1) "For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God."

John MacArthur - "In whatever of the many forms it exists, civil authority derives directly from God ... No matter what form it takes, no human government at any time in history, at any place on earth, among any people on earth, at any level of society, has ever existed or will ever exist apart from the sovereign authority of God"

- No exceptions. Hitler, Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Middle Ages, Tribes led by Shamans

Know God's Role in Government.

(Hosea 8:4) They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not.

When governments fear, follow, serve, and obey the Lord "it will be well" (1 Samuel 12:14). When governments disobey and rebel against God's good plans, "the hand of the Lord will be against you and your king" (1 Samuel 12:15).

Biblical Examples of Political Rule.

- Old Testament Law – Moral, Ceremonial, Governmental
 - Theocracy – God rules through the prophets
 - (in a Democracy the people rule)
- Moses – setting up judges over the tribes
- Joshua 24 – elders, heads, officers, judges

- Joshua v.15 “choose this day whom you will serve”
- v.15 “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”
- people v.24 “The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey.”
- Kings – people rebelled against God’s plan
- Nation of Israel – conquered Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome
 - “hand of the Lord will be against you and your king”
- King Nebuchadnezzar

(Daniel 5:18, 21) O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. ... He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will.

- King Belshazzar – Babylon - hand writing on the wall – brought down

(Daniel 5:23-26) but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored. Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN. This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end;

- King Cyrus – Persia – used by God to release the people of Israel

2 Chronicles 36:22-23, Ezra 1 – King Cyrus - Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up.’”

The Politician’s Role in Government.

(Romans 13:3) For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.

- (Isaiah 5:20 ESV) [20] Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!
- (Romans 13:4) he is God's servant for your good.
- Joseph in Egypt, Daniel in Babylon, Esther in Persia
- (Romans 13:6) For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.
- President = God’s servant, a minister of God
- Regardless of his policies, regardless of his faith or lack thereof

Our Role in Government.

(Romans 13:1) Let every person be subject to the governing authorities

- v.6 To avoid God’s wrath – for the sake of conscience
- Attempt to influence government to be more in line with God’s timeless truths and principles
- Our battle is a spiritual, unseen battle, not merely a battle with flesh and blood
- Fixing governments is not evangelism or discipleship, yet it is a loving action to seek the good of your neighbor, the

defenseless, and where you live.

(1 Corinthians 10:24) Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.

(Proverbs 31:8) Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute.

(Jeremiah 29:7) But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Pay Your Taxes, Register to Vote, & Inform Yourself. No matter how our taxes are spent, we have an obligation to diligently pay our taxes. When equipped with the ability to influence one's government by voting, one should make the effort to register and be informed as to the facts. Prayer should be the underlying and foundational approach to seeking a God-honoring government (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

(Mark 12: 17) "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's."

(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."

Obey the Authorities. Do you find yourself complaining more or praying more for your leaders? We are reminded of the influence of honor, obedience and submission to even secular and oppressive authorities (Titus 3:1, 1 Peter 2:13-17) so "that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people" (1 Peter 2:15).

The only allowance for governmental disobedience is when governmental law directly opposes the worship and obedience of God (i.e., Jewish midwives in Egypt refusing to murder newly born male babies, Exodus 1:17; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refusing to worship idols, Daniel 3; Daniel's steadfast

praying to God, Daniel 6; Peter & John's refusal to stop preaching the Gospel, Acts 4:18-20).

(Romans 13:2,5) "Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment... Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience."

Vote Wisely. When voting, be sure to avoid decisions based on tradition, stereotypes, emotions, or pride. Instead embrace God's truth and wisdom and make decisions that value the kingdom of God more than the kingdom of man. Realize that neither moralizing society nor politicizing the church is the solution to the world's problems.

The world does not change from the outside in, but from the inside out – through the Gospel (Mark 12:17) "Render...to God the things that are God's."

- Do you spend more effort, time, passion, energy, money, and devotion to convincing others to follow your political persuasion...or to follow your Christ?
- Do you get more worked up watching a debate between politicians...than watching a neighbor, coworker, friend, or family member rebel against God and run full throttle for hell?
- Do you place more hope in America? Or in Christ?

(Matthew 6:33-34) "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN VOTE?

Don't you wish God made it more clear how you should vote? Here are some biblical principles to consider before, during, and after you cast your ballot for Governor, President, or any politician.

Prayerfully. Pray more, politick less. Our nation and state are divided greatly with polarizing views between political parties. What is a Christian to do? Pray first. Pray continually. Pray consistently. Pray equally for those leaders you agree with and also for those with whom you disagree.

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." (ESV)

Biblically. The Bible has a lot to say about Biblical issues. God cares about the poor, immigrants, marriage, dignity of life at all stages (including unborn babies, terminally ill, and elderly), racial equity, religious liberty, sexual ethics, war, economics, international relations, women's rights, children's rights, education, housing, and criminal justice.

Which politicians, if any, model a genuine trust in Jesus? Which party's policies and platforms are most in line with God's plan for humanity? These questions are important in clarifying how to vote in complicated and contentious times. Know what God says before you vote.

1 Samuel 12:14-15 "If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well. But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king."

Privately. Why advertise your vote? Is pride tied to your partisan politics? Do you honestly think that your social media posts make people change their votes? Would you change your vote or position because of someone else's yard sign, t-shirt, bumper-sticker, hat, or social media post?

Many Christians have done great damage to their Christian witness through political bias, pride, snarkiness, mockery, and endorsement of ungodly characters. Go private with your political persuasions during this polarized season.

Proverbs 10:19 "When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent."

Wisely. Are you willing to reconsider your vote? Would you reevaluate your opinions? Have you listened closely and considered the positions of all sides? Do you understand the perspectives of those with a different political persuasion? Do your homework before you cast your ballot and don't just trust the sound bites and media moments.

Proverbs 11:14 "Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety."

Selflessly. Do you vote only for what is in your best interest and agenda? Or are you voting in the best interest of the common good? Vote in a way that benefits and prioritizes others more than yourself.

Philippians 2:3-4 "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit,

but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Humbly & Respectfully. Your vote is important, but what changes a nation ultimately is the Gospel. Are you more passionate and public about your politics or about your Jesus? Do you put more hope in the next election cycle than you do in Jesus’ return?

Godly Christians often feel led to vote in different ways. Some may vote Republican. Others feel led to vote Democrat. Still others choose to vote for a third-party candidate that might never win. Others Christians may feel called not to vote at all. You may be right in the choice you make, but then again, you could be wrong. Be humble.

People will view issues differently than you. Be kind. Friends, family, coworkers and neighbors will vote differently than you. That’s their prerogative, stay calm. Don’t let discussions devolve into arguments. Know where you stand but be respectful towards others.

Romans 14:1 “As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.”

May these truths and principles guide us into, through, and beyond our election seasons.

A PRAYER FOR OUR NATION

I wrote this on the occasion of visiting the White House, the United States Capitol, and the Supreme Court. Regardless of the nation in which you live, may this prayer be a help to guide you to prayer for your leaders, government, and nation.

Have you ever thought about how you would pray over our nation’s leaders if you had the opportunity? How you would lead them into the presence of our Creator and pray on their behalf?

Here is an idea of how I might pray in the White House, Capitol, or Supreme Court if I had the chance:

“As we prepare to converse with our Creator, I invite you, if you are physically able, to join me on our knees in speaking to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Father God, Lord Jesus, Holy Spirit. You are amazing. You are wonderful. You are powerful. There is no-one like you God.

Thank you for who you are and for the privilege of another day of life. Thank you for the ability to even have access to you right now through prayer.

You have told us that...

“if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal

their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14 ESV)

So here we are now before you. Humbled in hearts. On our knees.

Please forgive us. So much wickedness has passed through our minds, hearts, lips, and our lives. We are guilty. As individuals. As leaders. As a nation. Forgive us.

We need you. We love you. We want you. We trust you. Jesus, lead us into your presence. Give us your wisdom for the daily decisions that we encounter today and everyday as your servants and representatives.

God, heal us as only You can. Our nation is hurting. Our people are divided. Our world is in chaos. Thank you for sending your Son to save us from Satan, sin, and Hell. Help us to “be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.” Help us to “shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15 ESV).

Jesus, I lift up these leaders to you. Thank you for giving them to our nation. Protect their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. If any have not received and submitted to you as Lord and Savior, I pray for you to save their souls. Guard their minds from Satanic and worldly deception and focus their minds on your truth. Keep their hearts from the Evil One and guide their affections to your throne-room. Encourage and strengthen their marriages and families with the love you have for us. Use these men and women greatly for the welfare of their hometown communities and states. Unite them together under your commands for the sake of our nation.

In the name of the Jesus we pray, amen.”

1 Timothy 2:1–5 “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. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (ESV)

CHRISTIANS, WE MUST STOP OUR PARTISAN POLITICS!

Dear Reverend Franklin Graham and Pastor Robert Jeffress (and many of us Christians),

I see that you love Jesus, but I'm concerned about your apparent love of partisan politics. Please stop promoting the President and endorsing the Republican party, but choose instead to focus on promoting Jesus and endorsing His Word. **Love on and pray for both parties and endorse neither.** Each partisan political statement you make diminishes and dampens your Gospel reach and impact. True and lasting change is not found in the power or influence of a politician or a party. Gospel power transforms in ways that governments never can, so please stop compromising and limiting your Christian witness. You can better use your platform to speak biblical truth and to show Jesus' love across party lines if you communicate in a non-partisan manner.

- Matthew 5:44 "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (ESV)

Stop Politicking. Most of us have gotten sucked into the drama of politics. We need to be more biblical and less political. I write this openly and publicly, because the message is not only to you, but for me and for every pastor. This advice is not just for us pastors, but for all of us who identify as followers of

Jesus. Our partisan political involvement is having a negative gospel impact. People are not hearing our spiritual Good News because they are deafened and distracted by the political news we are promoting with a self-righteous spirit. Martin Lloyd-Jones explained it well that "a demonstration of great interest in political and social matters never succeed in attracting people to Christianity." We have a higher calling. Put the humble beauty of Jesus in front of us and move away from the ugly arrogance of modern politics.

- 1 Peter 5:5 "Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Quit Playing Party Politics. I need this reminder about my ultimate allegiance. You should hear this. We should not be partisan Republicans, Democrats, or any other political party. As Tim Keller shares, "The historical Christian positions on social issues do not fit into contemporary political alignments." We are called to talk about Jesus to both sides and not isolate our audience with our political dispositions and opinions. We cannot present a distorted view of Christianity that identifies the Christian faith with a particular political party. Christian nationalism in America is advertising that one must vote Republican or you are not really a Christian. Republicans are now unlikely to hear about Jesus from Democrats and Democrats probably will not hear about Jesus from Republicans. This compromise of our Gospel witness should disturb us.

Franklin, We all would do well to heed the sage advice of your parents. Your dad, Billy Graham, wisely shared that "evangelicals can't be closely identified with any particular party or person. We have to stand in the middle, to preach to all the people, right and left. I haven't been faithful to my own advice in the past. I will in the future." Your mom, Ruth Graham, responded to President Lyndon B. Johnson's request for political advice from your dad with boldness and clarity saying,

“Billy ought to limit his advice to you to religious and spiritual matters.”

We need to stop our public political flag waiving, skip political rallies, put down our posters, remove our campaign hats, and pull out our yard signs. People don’t need our polarizing and biased opinions; they need the truth of our King Jesus. Our hope, passions, resources, and focus should be prioritized on the return of the King of Kings and not on the next election cycle. Our identity is in Jesus not in our party affiliation. Put the Kingdom of God in front of the kingdom of man.

- 2 Timothy 2:4 “No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.”

You Have Lost Perspective. I’ve lost focus at times too. We’ve put too much trust in manmade systems. Partisan politics are man-created forms of pollution that cloud out the deeper and more urgent realities. Governments offer nationalistic hope and purpose, and are God-ordained for our good, but can never fully deliver on their promises. The world doesn’t need to hear about our party affiliation or our political endorsements, so don’t tweet and post like they do. We can take a stand on issues in a biblically nonpartisan manner. We must avoid being labeled by (or identifying as) a particular political party whenever possible. Put eternal hope in front of us instead of hope in the next set of polls.

- Colossians 3:2 “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.”

Acknowledge Your Hypocrisy and Hatred. We’ve all played the hypocrite and spoken unkindly towards those different than us. It may not be intentional but it is a reality nonetheless for all of us. We are all more blind to our predispositions and biases than we realize. We often sin similarly to those we critique. The world doesn’t need our snarkiness or sarcasm. They need our love. We should be gentle and kind with our “opponents.”

If we lend our public endorsement of a politician or party, then we should commit to consistently speak to the seriousness of their sin and future failures as well. John Calvin, when teaching about John the Baptist’s confrontation of King Herod, explains that “John has thus, by his example, furnished an undoubted rule for pious teachers, not to wink at the faults of princes, so as to purchase their favor at this price, how advantageous soever that favor might appear to be to the public interests.” We must not overlook the sin of some while attacking the sin of others. Moral inconsistency is hypocrisy.

Our countrymen need our meekness, love, and prayers. We can engage those we disagree with with compassionate conviction but we must be consistent across the political spectrum. Put a humble peacemaking spirit in front of us in place of argumentative arrogance.

- 1 Timothy 2:8 “I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling”

You Are Being Manipulated. I’ve been co-opted too. We all have been used. We may not realize it but while politicking we are frequently being maneuvered like a pawn by savvy press and powerful politicians. When we publicly jump on a political band-wagon we will likely travel further than we ought to ride. We need to dismount and follow Jesus more closely instead of getting visibly sidetracked by earthly matters. Put God’s platform in front of us and push away governmental partisanship.

- Philippians 3:20 “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”

You Aren’t As Right As You Think You Are. I am not either. None of us are. We often think too highly of ourselves. The more we speak, the greater potential we have to sin. In the complex day and age we live in, it is difficult to speak to all of the

platforms, policies, and issues accurately and comprehensively. We are typically misinformed, under-informed, imbalanced, partial, and overwhelmed. We need to behold the biblical truth more than we notice the national news. Very few of us have the ability and humility to speak well publicly to the many issues filling our feeds. Put biblical truth in front of us in lieu of human opinions.

- 1 Corinthians 3:7 “So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”

You Can't Fix This Nation. Neither can I. None of us can. Only Jesus is able. Often, we think and talk like we are more important and capable than we actually are. Partisan politics makes life about us when life is actually about God: Father, Son, & Holy Spirit. We are His mouthpiece to the world. We need to stick to His truth. We need to be faithful to the time He has given us. We need to prioritize Jesus in our lives, our love, and our hope. We need to remember the primary need of our society is not a political victory, but a spiritual victory in Christ.

- James 3:13–15 “Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.”

Christians, we need quit our partisan politicking but not our political engagement. It's not too late to change. We can do better. There is a way to engage our culture without compromising our Gospel witness. Tim Keller explains that “while believers can register under a party affiliation and be active in politics, they should not identify the Christian church or faith with a political party as the only Christian one.” Here are some guidelines that may help us all in the future.

12 Rules of Political Engagement for Christians

- 1. God First** - God's truth is always above man's opinions. Reevaluate your political positions with the Bible in hand.
- 2. Others Second** - We must put the needs of others before our own agendas. We can better love our neighbors with tangible actions rather than just trusting in our cast ballot.
- 3. Self Less** - We need humility in all our communications and attitudes. Before we post or speak we should consider the tone and approach we choose. Our daily decisions should demonstrate a care for those different than us.
- 4. Default to Non-Partisan** - Unless our profession requires it, most Christians should strongly consider the wisdom of being publicly nonpartisan. In these divisive times it may be best to stay away from partisan political posts, rallies, posters, yard signs, and headgear.
- 5. Your Vote Is Important** - You have the responsibility and privilege to be politically informed and go to the polls whenever you have the opportunity.
- 6. Private Persuasion Is Often Better** - Some issues deserve our public discussion and commentary. More may be gained through private, personal conversations without the rhetoric found in many public forums.
- 7. Humble & Respectful Disagreement** - We are all created in the image of God. We ought to speak kindly to all with the reminder that no-one is beyond the life-changing hope of Christ. We must love our political “enemies.”
- 8. Avoid Absolutes** - Recognize our temptation towards sound bites and the demonization of others. Avoid over-simplifying situations and categorizing groups with stereotypes.
- 9. Pray More than You Speak** - We often fall into the trap of believing that our voices to mankind make a bigger difference than our prayers to the Creator of the Universe. Prayer is our primary political calling.
- 10. Share the Gospel More than Your Political Persuasions** -

Elections and governments come and go. True and lasting hope is only found in the Kingdom of God through Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Live and speak in light of these priorities. Be more passionate about winning souls than winning arguments or elections.

11. Resist as a Last Resort - Rare biblical and historical examples exist to show and prepare us for times where courageous rebellion is called for in order to remain faithful to God. The broad biblical guidance is to honor and submit to the authorities whenever possible.

12. The 1% Exception - Although 99-ish% of us should probably be nonpartisan monarchists (prioritizing the Kingdom of God), 1% of us may be called by God into service within a partisan political sphere. If that is you, please stay faithful to God's truths in your policies and platforms no matter the personal cost. Speak to the good, without flattery or partiality, in both parties. Confront the bad, with love and humility, in both parties. Practice the fruits of the Holy Spirit at all times towards your political opponents talking with "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22).

Christians, we can do better. Let's love on and pray for those we disagree with.

In Christ,

Jonathan Carl, A Monarchist Pastor Waiting for the King of Kings to Return and Make All Things New

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."

Helpful Perspectives on the Topic

- "How Do Christians Fit Into the Two-Party System? They Don't" by Tim Keller

- "The Non-Partisan Politics of Jesus" by Scott Sauls
- "The Church, Politics, & Bonhoeffer's Way Forward" by Steve Bezner (Part 1)
- "Faith and Healthy Democracy" by Paul D. Miller
- "How Christians Can Prepare for the 2020 Election" by Daniel Bennett
- *A Prophet with Honor: The Billy Graham Story* by William Martin

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ABORTION?

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

Six Scriptural Reasons Abortion is a Problem

- (Exodus 20:13) You shall not murder.
- (Proverbs 31:8) Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute.
- (Jeremiah 1:5) Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.
- (Psalm 22:10) On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God.
- (Psalm 139:13) For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
- (Exodus 21:22-25) When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. [23] But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, [24] eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, [25] burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

Three Statistical Reasons Abortion is a Problem in the United States

- # of American deaths in US military conflicts, 1776-present(236yrs)= 1,326,626; # of American lives aborted from 1973-2008(35yrs)=~50million
- # of homicides in US from 1973-2008 = 589,945; # of abortions in US from 1973-2008, ~50,000,000
- # of homicides in 2008 in US = 16,442, # of abortions in 2008 in US = ~1.21million

Three Statistical Reasons Abortion is a Problem in Kentucky

(the state I live in...for perspective)

- In Kentucky in 2005 the #1 cause of death was heart disease (10,572), #2 was cancer (9,943), & #3 cause of death was abortion (3,870).
- In Kentucky (2005) there were 3,870 abortion deaths; more than due to stroke (2,103), accident (2,264), flu/pneumonia (996) or suicide (548)
- In Kentucky in 2005, there were 3,870 deaths due to abortion; more than all of the combined deaths of those aged 0-44 (3,361).

The Impact of Abortion on our Population

Here are some tragic abortion statistics of how many adults we are missing in our adult population.

- 30,006,290 US Citizens cannot vote today...because they were killed by abortion from 1973-1993 (12%+ of the US Voting-Age Population).
- 230,000+ Kentucky Citizens cannot vote today because they were killed by abortion from 1973-1993 (7% of Kentucky Voting-Age Population).

HELPFUL RESOURCES

www.gotquestions.org www.ccel.us/

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT MULTI-LEVEL OR NETWORK MARKETING?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-multi-level-or-network-marketing

Over the years I've been asked good questions about Amway, Zija, Team National, etc. (all with at least 4 out of 5 characteristics of an MLM: <http://www.mlm-thetruth.com/evaluating-mlms/list-mlms-evaluated/>). Here is what the Bible says about MLMs (multi-level marketing) or network marketing. Oftentimes these companies offer ways to supplement income from home and offer enticing stories of people who have made significant amounts of money through their business model. God directs pastors to "teach these things" (1 Timothy 6:3-10) about the dangers of pursuing wealth and desiring to be rich: (Timothy 6:10) "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs."

Some people's motives are genuinely focused on providing income for their family (which is a good thing). Many people in regular, wage/salary-earning jobs can encounter the same temptations as those in MLMs. We must be careful, because the ends (earning an income) do not justify every means (how one

goes about working/earning a living). Count the cost of your time and methods and its effect on your relationships.

Dr. Jon Taylor shares some helpful resources at www.mlm-thetruth.com evidencing his research of over 500 MLMs (including Amway, Team National, and Zija) that supports his claim that "approximately 99.9% of ALL recruits (including dropouts) lost money, after subtracting ALL expenses, including minimum operating expenses and "incentivized purchases" (needed to qualify for commissions or bonuses) of goods and services from the company. ...the odds of profiting from gaming tables in Las Vegas are far better."

What is multilevel or network marketing?

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission explains: "In multilevel or network marketing, individuals sell products to the public — often by word of mouth and direct sales. Typically, distributors earn commissions, not only for their own sales, but also for sales made by the people they recruit. Not all multilevel marketing plans are legitimate. If the money you make is based on your sales to the public, it may be a legitimate multilevel marketing plan. If the money you make is based on the number of people you recruit and your sales to them, it's not. It's a pyramid scheme. Pyramid schemes are illegal, and the vast majority of participants lose money. If you're considering buying into a multilevel marketing plan, get the details." (<https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/guidance/multilevel-marketing>)

How do I know if _____ is multilevel or network marketing?

Do your research before you spend any money or make any sort of commitment. Here is a good resource for comparing characteristics of the company and business model you are considering with established patterns of MLMs and network marketing. www.mlm-thetruth.com/evaluating-mlms/

What does the Bible say about the ethics of our workplace?

We must not seek to covet the possessions of others (10th commandment), steal or defraud others (8th commandment), or lie and deceive others through misinformation or disinformation (9th commandment). Jesus summarizes the law, sharing that the second greatest commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:30-31, Exodus 20:1-17). We must consider if our workplace motives are self-focused or others-focused, that "whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

What do I do if I am already involved with an MLM and am convicted about its business model? Prayerfully consider: 1) Quitting your MLM and distancing yourself from its name and reputation 2) Apologizing to anyone you may have wronged 3) Seeking godly council and accountability when making future business/investment decisions 4) Cautioning others who may be considering MLM involvement.

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

In all things I have shown you that 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.' Acts 20:35

TOP 5 BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES AND VERSES ON PROSPERITY

- **Be Content With What You Have** – 1 Timothy 6:6-8 "But godliness with contentment is great gain, 7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of

the world. 8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content." *Are you pursuing more stuff? Are you content now?*

- **The Love of Money = Roots Of All Kinds of Evil** – 1 Timothy 6:9-10 "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." *Do you love money? Are you tempted for more? What consumes your thoughts & wants?*
- **Loving & Trusting In Wealth = Impossible to Enter Into God's Kingdom** – Mark 10:17-31 "And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!'" *Do you see wealth as dangerous or desirable?*
- **Store Up Treasures in Heaven** – Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." *What do you treasure and value? How would you respond if you lost all your possessions?*
- **Riches Never Satisfy** – Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. 11 When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes?" *What makes you happy? How do you find satisfaction in life?*

(two close runners up...Don't Associate with Greedy People who Claim to be Christians (1 Corinthians 5:11) & An Entitlement Attitude is a Deadly Attitude - Achan (Joshua 7:10-26))

TOP 5 QUOTES ON MONEY & PROSPERITY

- "The most obvious lesson in Christ's teaching is that there is no happiness in having or getting anything, but only in giving." Henry Drummond
- "Nothing I am sure has such a tendency to quench the fire of religion as the possession of money." J.C. Ryle
- "God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving." Randy Alcorn
- "It is prosperity that we cannot endure." Martin Luther
- "Few are made better by prosperity, whom afflictions make worse." William Gurnall

TOP 5 BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES AND VERSES ON FINANCES

- 1. It Is His Money: It All Belongs to God.** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)
- 2. Budget & Be Responsible.** For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' (Luke 14:28-30)
- 3. Spend Less than You Earn: Pay Your Bills.** 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). 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)
- 4. Work Hard To Live.** Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord

with the tradition that you received from us. ...10For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. 11 For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. (2 Thessalonians 3:6,10-12)

5. Work Hard to Give. In all things I have shown you that 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.'" (Acts 20:35)

The bottom line? Anyone considering MLMs needs to know the facts about their chances of actually realizing a profit for their time/effort and consider the truthfulness of MLM and Network marketing claims and the ethical concerns with MLM methodology and business practices. *Christians need to consider the reputation of the companies they associate with and consider the implications and effects such participation may have on their Christian witness among the friends they solicit and in their community.*

HELPFUL RESOURCES

www.mlm-thetruth.com/tools1/consumerguides/typical-mlm-deceptions/
www.gotquestions.org/multi-level-marketing.html
www.desiringgod.org/sermons/magnifying-god-with-money
www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-booby-trap-in-the-christian-budget

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jeremiah 17:9 ESV)

God's description of idolatry?

"The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play."

(Exodus 32:6, 1 Corinthians 10:7)
Don't waste your life!

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT MONEY?

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

1. **Everything Belongs to God** – Genesis 1:1, Psalm 24:1, Haggai 2:8, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
2. **God Makes It Possible for You to Earn Money** – Deuteronomy 8:18
3. **An Entitlement Attitude is a Deadly Attitude** - Achan (Joshua 7:10-26)
4. **Prioritize God and Give to Him Before Anyone Else** - Proverbs 3:9-10
5. **God Blesses Those Financially Who Honor Him Financially** – Proverbs 3:9-10
6. **Don't Work Hard to Get Rich** – Proverbs 23:4-5
7. **Desire Only Your Daily Needs** – Proverbs 30:8-9
8. **Riches Never Satisfy** – Ecclesiastes 5:10-11
9. **Not Giving to God = Robbing From God** - Malachi 3:8
10. **Stealing A Little Leads Towards Stealing A Lot** - Judas (John 12:6, Matthew 26:15)
11. **Do Not Give to Receive Praises of Men** – Matthew 6:1-4
12. **Store Up Treasures in Heaven** – Matthew 6:19-20
13. **Can't Serve God and Money** - Matthew 6:24
14. **Pay Your Bills, As You Expect To Be Paid** – Matthew 7:12
15. **You Must Be Willing To Abandon Everything to Follow Jesus** - Matthew 19:6-19, Mark 10:21
16. **Investing In God Reaps Immense Dividends** – Matthew 19:27-29
17. **Faithfulness With Little Will Result In Being Entrusted With Much** – Matthew 25:21
18. **Impossible for Money-Lovers to Enter Into God's Kingdom** – Mark 10:25
19. **Lavish Giving Out of Poverty – Poor Widow** - Mark 12:43-44
20. **Giving and Blessing Are Connected** - Luke 6:38
21. **Be Rich Toward God** – Luke 12:19-21
22. **Don't Financially Commit to Something You Can't Financially Finish** — Luke 14:28-30
23. **Must Give Up Rights Over Everything to Follow Jesus** – Luke 14:33
24. **Heart Change Results In Giving Change** – Zacchaeus – Luke 19:8
25. **What You Treasure, Reflects Your Heart's Health** – Luke 6:45, 12:34
26. **The Early Church Shared Everything they Possessed** – Acts 4:32, 2:44
27. **Work Hard Because It Is More Blessed to Give than to Receive** – Acts 20:35
28. **Christians Ask and Contribute On Behalf of Other Christians and Missions Work** – Acts 11:29-30; 12:25; 20:3-4; 24:7, Galatians 2:10, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 8-9, Romans 15:25-33
29. **Ananias and Sapphira Die for False Giving** – Acts 5:1-11
30. **God Knows What We Give** – Cornelius & Memorial Offering – Acts 10:2-4
31. **We Will One Day Give An Account of Our Lives to God** - Romans 14:10, 12

32. **Don't Associate with Greedy People who Claim to be Christians** - 1 Corinthians 5:11
33. **God Commands the Support of Gospel Ministers** – 1 Corinthians 9:9,14
34. **Give When You Get Paid and In Proportion to What You Get Paid or Given** - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2
35. **Given Even When You Are Extremely Poor, Sacrificially Beyond Your Means** - 2 Corinthians 8:2-3
36. **Equal Sacrifices Among All Believers** – 2 Corinthians 8:7,13-14
37. **Sow Little, Reap Little; Sow a Lot, Harvest a Lot** – 2 Corinthians 9:6-9
38. **Give With A Cheerful Heart** - 2 Corinthians 9:7
39. **Lavish Giving Pleases God** - Philippians 4:18
40. **Giving Generously Reflects A Trust in God's Provision** – Philippians 4:19
41. **Stay Away from Lazy People** – 2 Thessalonians 3:6
42. **People Unwilling to Work Should Not Benefit (Eat) At Others' Expense** – 2 Thessalonians 3:10
43. **Work Hard & Quietly; Earn Your Own Living** – 2 Thessalonians 3:11-12
44. **Not Providing for Your Family & Household = A Denial of Faith** —1 Timothy 5:8
45. **Be Content With What You Have** – 1 Timothy 6:6-7
46. **Love of Money = Roots Of All Kinds of Evil** – 1 Timothy 6:9-10
47. **Rich Need to Be Humble and Generous** – 1 Timothy 6:17-19
48. **Everything Good You Have is From God** – James 1:17
49. **Lay Down Our Lives for Christ** – 1 John 3:16-19
50. **Not Giving to Meet Needs = Reason to Question One's Salvation** — 1 John 3:17

Questions on Money and Giving

How often do I need to give? As often as you are paid or receive money or income.

How much do I need to give? The tithe is a consistent biblical, joyous standard for giving, but the Christian should desire and seek to give offerings that go beyond it. Give proportionately to what you receive.

Do I tithe before (gross income) or after taxes (net income)? Scriptural giving always gives God the best, and gives to Him first. We should give proportionately to what we earn before taxes (gross income).

Is it ok to give to Christian charities instead of the church? Is it ok to designate my offering instead of giving to the "general fund"? Committed giving through the local church is the common theme of Scripture. This allows the church to prayerfully and corporately decide priorities and avenues of Gospel ministry through budgeting. Offerings beyond the tithe should be encouraged to go through designated offerings & charities.

I don't have enough money to give. Can I just wait to have enough? God consistently tells us to prioritize him first in our giving. Often times our issue is not money flow in, but the money we've overspent or over committed. We must live within our means and be both faithful to give to God and faithful to pay our debts.

Quotes on Money and Giving

"Never be afraid of giving up your best, and God will give you His better."

James Hinton

"The most obvious lesson in Christ's teaching is that there is no happiness

in having or getting anything, but only in giving."

Henry Drummond

"The cistern contains: The fountain overflows."

William Blake

"Get all you can, save all you can and give all you can."

John Wesley

"Give according to your income, lest God make your income according to your giving."

~Unknown

"You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving."

Amy Carmichael

"Feel for others – in your pocket."

Charles Spurgeon

"Nothing I am sure has such a tendency to quench the fire of religion as the possession of money."

J.C. Ryle

"It is prosperity that we cannot endure."

Martin Luther

"God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving."

Randy Alcorn

"When blessed with wealth, let them withdraw from the competition of vanity and be modest, retiring from ostentation, and not be the slaves of fashion."

William Wilberforce

"Few are made better by prosperity, whom afflictions make worse."

William Gurnall

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT IDOLS?

www.trustworthyword.com/idols

Exodus 20:3–6 "You shall have no other gods before me. 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. 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, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments." (ESV)

Characteristics of Idols - What are they like?

Man Created

- Acts 7:41 "And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands."

Part of the Creation, Inanimate (without life)

- Isaiah 44:15 "Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it."
- Jeremiah 10:5 "idols...Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good."
- 1 Corinthians 8:4 "Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that 'an idol has no real existence,' and that 'there is no God but one.'"

Dedicated to Demons, Continuing to the Last Days

- Revelation 9:20 “The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk”

Counterfeit of God-Worship and God-Directed Sacrifices

- 2 Corinthians 11:14–15 “And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. [15] So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.” (see Matthew 4:9, Satan’s desire to be worshiped)

Purposes of Idols - Why are they made and worshiped?

- **Fake Religion**
- **Self-Control**
- **Self-Worship**
- **Ancestor Worship**
- **Fearful Avoidance of Suffering**
- **Covetous Desire for Pleasures**

Examples Of Idols

1 Corinthians 8:5–6 “For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—[6] yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist”

- **Ancestor Worship** - dedicated to family members who have died as a form of worship & respect
- **Animism/Spiritism** - crafted in tribal religions in varying forms dedicated to either named or unnamed spirits for specific purposes or protections
- **Polytheism** - common in formal religions to named deities, sometimes particular “gods” are assigned to certain families, villages, or people groups
- **Occult** - more overtly connected to demonic worship with the desire for demonic wisdom, empowerment, or protection
- **Atheism** - objects of materialism or self-knowledge that bring temporary comfort or relief from the fear of death or for a greater sense of self-identity, self-satisfaction, or self-empowerment
- **Nominal Christianity** - health, wealth, status, materialism, family, sports, entertainment, substances, appearance, work, education, food,

Dangers of Idols

Evidence of Lostness, Destined to Hell

Galatians 5:19–21 “Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 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.”

Connected to the Demonic

1 Corinthians 10:14–22 “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. [15] I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. [16] The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? [17] Because there is one bread, we who are many are one

body, for we all partake of the one bread. [18] Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? [19] What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? [20] No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. [21] You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

Provoking the One, True God to Anger

- 1 Corinthians 10:22 “Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?”

Just Wrath and Punishment

- Acts 7:42 “But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets”

Cycle of Enslavement

- 1 Corinthians 12:2 “You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led.”

Commands from God about Idols

Avoid Idols & Idolatry-Connected Items & Practices

- Acts 15:20 “but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.”
- 1 John 5:21 “Little children, keep yourselves from idols”
- 1 Corinthians 10:14 “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry”

Be Bothered By Them: Cannot Serve Both Idols and God

- Acts 17:16 “Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.”
- 2 Corinthians 6:16 “What agreement has the temple of God with idols?”
- 1 Thessalonians 1:9 “how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (see Eze 23:29)

Share the Gospel with Idol Worshipers

- Acts 17:22–23 “Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I

found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.”

Avoid Behaviors Similar to Idol-Worship: Avoid Hypocrisy

- Romans 2:22 “You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?”

Destroy Your Idols

- Colossians 3:5 “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

Food Sacrifices - Be Careful and Wise

- Acts 15:29 “you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols”
- 1 Corinthians 8:9–13 “But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. [12] Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.”
- 1 Corinthians 10:27–28 “If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. [28] But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience”
- Revelation 2:14, 20 rebuke for “eating food sacrificed to idols”

Worship Services - Avoid Them Altogether

1 Corinthians 10:21 “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.”

Run from the Most Common Form of Idolatry Today: The Idol of Self

As a child, I remember learning the Ten Commandments. When I heard of the second commandment, about not making,

serving, sacrificing to, or bowing down to idols, I thought that would be the easiest commandment to obey.

Exodus 20:4–5 “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...You shall not bow down to them or serve them.”

As I grew older, I traveled across America and to Asia, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and Africa and saw many instances of devotion, veneration, prayer, and sacrifices to images, icons, relics, sites, statues, charms, the dead, and idols in Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Mormonism, ancestor worship, Catholicism, and tribal religions. These practices seemed so foreign to me that I continued in my confidence that I would never struggle with the sin of idolatry.

Deuteronomy 4:16–19 “beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female”

But then, when I read the definition of an “idol” (“an object of extreme devotion; a greatly loved or admired person”) I realized that I may be more guilty of idolatry than I cared to admit. What is the most common form of idolatry today? The idolatry that you and I have all been guilty of?

The idolatry of self.

Colossians 3:5 “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

Why is covetousness equated with idolatry? Idolatry happens when we treat anyone, including ourselves, as a replacement to God. When we desire something that God hasn’t provided, and seek to obtain it apart from His sovereign hand, we commit idolatry. When treat something that God has provided with greater love, trust, and commitment than towards our Creator,

we commit idolatry. When we try to find a way out of suffering, or avoid it altogether, apart from seeking the Lord’s deliverance, we commit idolatry. When we love, trust, and obey ourselves more than God, we commit idolatry.

Isaiah 2:8 “Their land is filled with idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made.”

Our culture encourages us to worship and trust ourselves. You be you. You only live once. Your truth. Our culture daily feeds the idol of self: health, wealth, status, image, vanity, reputation, materialism, family, sports, entertainment, substances, appearance, work, education, & food. Billboards. Commercials. Ads. Social Media. Entertainment. Everywhere we look we see the encouragement to prioritize and love ourselves.

Romans 1:22–25 “Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man”

Many “good things” can become “God things” in our life if we are not careful. The book of 1 John, which distinguishes true faith from false faith, ends with an important warning to born-again followers of Jesus: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21).

May we repent of and run from the idolatry of self.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SECRET SIN?

All of us face a common temptation to sin, especially in secret. Our particular temptations may be different, but our struggle with sin is real. God has a lot to say to help us as we struggle with secret sin.

Romans 7:15 "For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate."

Secret Sin Is Common. In the story of Moses, before he commits murder, he looks around to see if he is alone. His hope, as he sinned, was to keep his sin secret. Do you have a struggle that you are seeking to keep secret? You are not alone in this temptation and struggle.

Exodus 2:12 "He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."

Secret Sin Gets Exposed. Even if we feel we have hidden our sin from others, God wants us to know that He knows. God warns us because he wants us to confess our sin, change direction with our life, and to find healing and restoration with Him and others. Ultimately all sin is against God, so we must take it seriously and take proper steps of repentance towards Him.

Numbers 32:23 "behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out."

Secret Sin Has External Consequences. When Moses murdered, very real consequences followed with him being forced to flee the home and people he had known for his whole life. Our sin has real, life-impacting consequences. The quicker we confess and repent, the quicker the healing and relief can occur.

Luke 12:2 "Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known."

Secret Sin Has Internal Consequences. When you carry around your sin, it tears you up on the inside. When you confess your sin and carry it to Christ, you realize and enjoy such a relief from the burden. Are you ready for relief?

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."

Confession Leads to Healing. Secret sin Has relational consequences. When we sin, our relationships with God and others are damaged. Our God is so merciful and gracious to offer us a way back to Him and, as best as possible for us, to try to restore our human relationships.

James 5:16 "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed."

Repentance Leads to Restoration. Without confession to, repentance towards, and trust in Jesus we remain under condemnation. In Christ, we will be convicted to confess and repent in such a way that we experience and enjoy His goodness in an amazing way. Is there a sin you need to confess? Go to Jesus and go to those you've hurt and experience the goodness of Jesus.

Romans 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

BEST CHILDREN'S BIBLE APPS

www.trustworthyword.com/childrens-bible-apps

Children's Bibles

- **Bible for Kids** (FREE) - LifeChurch.TV , YouVersion
BEST FREE Children's Bible App!!!
- **The Beginner's Bible** (some is free) - HarperCollins Christian Publishing
◦ *BEST PAID Children's Bible App!!!*
- **Bible.is KIDZ** (FREE) - Faith Comes by Hearing - Listen. See. Grow.
- **God's Love: A Bible Storybook** - Positive Action for Christ

Bible Verse Memory

- **God's Word: Hide It!** (FREE) - Kingdom Media, LLC
- **Verses - Bible Memory** (cost varies based on translation) Verses, Ltd. Co. (under iPhone apps)

Bible Trivia

- **Superbook Bible Trivia Game** (FREE) - The Christian Broadcasting Network
- **Scripture Champion** (FREE) - Kingdom Media LLC

Bible Songs

- **Cubbies Bible Verse Music:** Sing Along with Scripture Songs from AWANA - Kingdom Media
- **Bible Songs: Sing Along with Noah and other Bible Heroes**

for Children - Kingdom Media

- **GarageBand** (FREE) - Apple (to play along with Christian music)

Various Bible Apps

- **Got Questions?** (FREE) Got Questions Ministries
- **Superbook Kid's Bible, Videos, and Games** (FREE - videos can be downloaded if you are a subscriber) - The Christian Broadcasting Network
Best Bible Video Series for Kids!!
Subscribe at: <https://www.cbn.com/giving/special/sbdvdclub.aspx>
- **Owlegories** (FREE - full videos can be purchased) - Spy House, LLC

Bibles for All Ages

- **ESV Study Bible** - Crossway
BEST PAID Study Bible
Also get as an in-app purchase within the ESV Bible
- **Gideons** (FREE) - Faith Comes by Hearing
BEST FREE Audio Bible
Also can get through Bible.is App
Multiple languages to read or listen!
- **YouVersion Bible** (FREE) - LifeChurch.TV , YouVersion
#1 Rated and Downloaded Bible App

Bible Characters

4soils.com has a collection of Bible Characters apps (a few are free, but most have various prices with bundled prices having the most value) - Kingdom Media

Life of Jesus Bundle, Miracles of Jesus bundle, Parables of Jesus bundle, Bible Heroes bundle, Esther, David, Joseph, Noah, Jonah, Daniel

FUN IDEAS ON HOW TO USE CHILDREN'S BIBLE APPS

- 1. Trivia Contest:** Pair up or have a group competition using a trivia app!
- 2. Bible Verse Lookup:** Have a race to see who can find a verse first!
- 3. Character Discovery:** Challenge your child to find a particular character or story on the SuperBook or another app.
- 4. Scripture Artwork:** Use an app to draw out a Scripture or color a story activity.
- 5. Music Play Along:** Use GarageBand to play instruments & sing a song or hymn.
- 6. Find and Listen:** Use Bible.is KIDZ or ESV Study Bible to play the Bible out loud.
- 7. Bible Memory:** Memorize a verse for a prize using an app to help!
- 8. Got Questions:** Find some challenging and interesting questions with Bible answers!
- 9. Sing Along:** Sing loud and proud as you place a Bible song!
- 10. Church Happenings Exploration:** Use your church's app to explore activities.
- 11. Language Lookup:** Use the Gideons app to read a Bible

verse in another language.

- 12. Verse Connections:** Use the ESV Study Bible to use notes to find corresponding verses or Bible references.

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT THE TOUGHEST TOPICS

www.trustworthyword.com/tough-topics-kids

6 Tips on “The Talks”

- **Just Do It** - Yes this is a tough (and super awkward!!!) topic. But if you don't teach your child, someone else will. If you don't protect your child, someone may harm them. So don't wait for your kid's friends, teachers, TV or the internet to “educate” your children. Take the initiative. The best offense is a good defense! So stay ahead of the game with age appropriate books and resources as shared below.
- **Speak Simply & Shortly** - See what questions your kids ask and give brief, easy to understand answers. Think through short answers. Use good clarifying questions to create dialogue. Here are some free (from FocusOnTheFamily.com), age-appropriate biblical responses, questions, wisdom, and prayers to help prepare to respond on the issues of:
 - *Transgender*: <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/socialissues/sexuality/talking-to-your-children-about-transgender-issues>
 - *Homosexuality*: <http://media.focusonthefamily.com/free-downloads/pdf/2017-htttycam-online.pdf>
 - *Sex*: <http://media.focusonthefamily.com/free-downloads/pdf/The-Talk.pdf>
 - *Marriage*: [http://media.focusonthefamily.com/fotf/pdf/channels/social-](http://media.focusonthefamily.com/fotf/pdf/channels/social-issues/2017_tv_htttycam_printready.pdf)

- **Tell the Truth** - Try to incorporate Bible truths wherever you can. You may not remember all the details of a Bible story or verse, but start with what you remember. Be honest if you don't know but commit to help find a good answer later on. Try GotQuestions.org or GQkidz.org
- **Keep the Conversation Going** - Be sure not to shut down the conversation. Use open ended questions. Thank your kids for bringing up tough situations and tell them how much you enjoyed talking with them. Share that you hope that you want to continue to safely answer their questions anytime they desire. Affirm how proud you are of them for wanting to know God's answers.
- **Be Nice** - Encourage your child. Be kind in your tone of voice. Don't be defensive or argumentative. Don't insult or condescend to others. Avoid anger when you hear what your child may have seen, heard, or experienced elsewhere. Help your child to see people's main need as Jesus, not moralism (being a good person).
- **Pray, Pray, Pray!** - Preparing for, starting with, and ending conversations with prayer is crucial. We need God all the time, but asking for His wisdom and help in such difficult discussions is essential. Praying in such situations models godly humility and God-dependence to your kids, showing them that Jesus and the Bible are our authorities and not merely human opinions.

Top 6 Parenting Resources for “The Talks”!

To Guide & Equip Your Kids On Gender, Sex, & Purity

- “The Talks” by Barrett and Jenifer Johnson (on RightNow Media)
- “How and When to Tell Your Kids About Sex” – by Stan and Brenna Jones
- “Six Ways to Keep the “Little” in Your

Girl” (SecretKeeperGirl.com)

- “Six Ways to Keep the “Good” in Your Boy” by Dannah Gresh
- “Raising a Modern-Day Knight” – by Robert Lewis
- “Raising a Modern-Day Princess” - by Pam Farrell and Doreen Hanna
- “Stepping Up: A Call to Courageous Manhood” – by Dennis Rainey
- “Letters to My Daughters: The Art of Being a Wife” - by Barbara Rainey

TOP RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN (BY AGE)

Ages 3-7:

- *The Princess and the Kiss and The Squire and the Scroll* by Jennie Bishop
- *The Story of Me* by Stan and Brenna Jones (“God’s Design for Sex Series #1”)
- *Before I Was Born* by Carolyn Nystrom (“God’s Design for Sex Series #2”)
- *Good Pictures Bad Pictures Jr.: A Simple Plan to Protect Young Minds* by Kristen A. Jenson

Ages 8-12:

- *Good Pictures, Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today’s Young Kids* by Kristen A. Jenson and Gail Poyner
- *What’s the Big Deal? Why God Cares About Sex* by Stan&Brenna Jones (“God’s Design for Sex Series #3”)
- *The Ultimate Girls’ Body Book* by Walt Larimore & Dr.Mari Wohlever
- *The Ultimate Boys’ Body Book* by Walt Larimore, MD
- *It’s Great to Be a Guy* by Jarrod Sechler with Dannah Gresh
- *It’s Great to Be a Girl* by Dannah Gresh and Suzy Weibel
- *Passport2Purity* by FamilyLife
- *So You’re About to Be a Teenager* by Dennis, Barbara, Samuel, and Rebecca Rainey

Ages 13+:

- *Facing the Facts: The Truth About Sex and You* by Stan and Brenna Jones (“God’s Design for Sex Series,” #4)
- *Every Young Man’s Battle: Strategies for Victory in the Real World of Sexual Temptation* by Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker

- *Every Young Woman's Battle: Guarding Your Mind, Heart, and Body* by Shannon Ethridge and Stephen Arterburn
- *Passport2Identity* by FamilyLife
- *Aggressive Girls, Clueless Boys & Interviewing Your Daughter's Date* by Dennis Rainey

TOP 6 MOST HELPFUL ONLINE RESOURCES

- www.familylife.com - Biblical resources especially focused on strengthening marriages.
- www.focusonthefamily.org - Biblical equipping with an excellent emphasis on parenting.
- www.gotquestions.org - Biblical answers to over 500,000 life questions.
- www.familymatters.net - Great small group resources for marriage and parenting.
- www.covenanteyes.com - Pornography accountability software.
- www.livingout.org - Biblical help to those experiencing same-sex attraction.

Circle Home & CircleGo - www.meetcircle.com - This is the best way for families to manage content and time online, on any device. (\$99 for home version & \$5/month for up to 10 devices on CircleGo)

- **CircleGo** - Your family's mobile devices, now managed across all networks. Everything covered, now everywhere. Apps are the new Internet, and managing them wherever your kid goes is a must for parents. Filters and Time Limits apply anywhere and everywhere, even for apps like Snapchat, Instagram, and YouTube.

Bark: www.bark.us The best way to have your child's text

messages, images, emails and social media communications scanned and categorized for concerning content. Includes many other features with controlling access, managing time online, and providing location updates.

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

enjoy spending every spare minute they can.

BOOKS BY THIS AUTHOR

A Biblical Study Of The Catechism Of The Catholic Church: Bible Answers To The Most Frequently Asked Questions About Catholic Beliefs And Practices

Do you have questions about Catholic beliefs and practices? Would you like more information or a refresher on The Catechism of the Catholic Church? 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.

Top 10 Questions answered in this book!

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?

A free PDF is available at: www.Catholic.blog

Spiritual Warfare In The Early Church: The History Of Demonic Activity Among The Ante-Nicene Church Fathers And Beyond

Did the early church experience demonic activity? What did they do with those who were possessed or oppressed by demons? Which early church fathers spoke about spiritual warfare and which ones seldom referenced the subject?

See for yourself. This book concisely presents the primary source evidence from the early church for your consideration to see how the earliest Christian leaders thought of and engaged in spiritual warfare.

A free PDF copy is available at www.SpiritualWarfare.blog

These kindle and print editions have been priced as low as Amazon allows to help people find God's answers about the battle of the followers of Christ against the unseen spiritual forces of evil. As a bonus, the appendix contains the most important biblical passages that reference Spiritual Warfare.

Week By Week Bible Reading: 5 To 30 Minute Bible Reading Plans To Help You Hear God's Voice

This book is the formulation of years of guiding myself and my church family through Bible reading. It is a simple but helpful tool to help with the discipline of drawing near to God through regular Bible reading and listening.

5-30 Minute Plans

How much time would you like to spend reading or listening to the Bible each day? Whether you would like to read Psalms/ Proverbs, the New Testament, the Old Testament, or the whole Bible there is a plan to carry you through the year.

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

encounters with your Lord through His Word!

A free PDF copy is available at www.TrustworthyWord.com

Dr. Neil T. Anderson & Spiritual Warfare: A Summary And Evaluation Of His Writings

What is spiritual warfare? What do we know about it from the Bible and early church history?

This book takes one of Christianity's most popular and prolific authors, Dr. Neil T. Anderson, and summarizes his understanding of spiritual warfare. As you read, you'll discover what the Bible, church history, and modern global theologians teach us about Satan's attacks and our response. You'll see that while Anderson's understanding of spiritual warfare in evangelism and discipleship is generally correct, there are some areas of his approach that could be improved. You will also learn the lasting value of Anderson's works and personal applications for your battles against the demonic.

A free PDF copy is available at www.SpiritualWarfare.blog

The Trustworthy Word: God's Truths For Your Daily Battles

All four volumes of The Trustworthy Word series combined!

Volume 1 - Christianity Questions, Prayer, & Fasting

Volume 2 - Theology & Church Life

Volume 3 - Spiritual Warfare, Evangelism, & Missions

Volume 4 - Life Issues

Life is hard, full of struggles and suffering. Our primary battles are not merely physical, financial, emotional, or mental, but spiritual. We ultimately are in an ongoing spiritual battle. We need spiritual solutions. We need spiritual answers.

This series is different than many others that you might read. The vast majority of the content is Bible verses and references. This approach is intentional in order to help you clearly hear and see God's truths and not merely human opinion. Get God's answers to some of your toughest questions!

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)

Download & share this book via a free PDF download @ www.TrustworthyWord.com

Proof