

PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

1. Peter identifies eight steps in Spiritual Growth and Development:

2 Peter 1:5-8 ⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, **add** to your **faith virtue**; and to virtue **knowledge**; ⁶ And to knowledge **temperance**; and to temperance **patience**; and to patience **godliness**; ⁷ And to godliness **brotherly kindness**; and to brotherly kindness **charity**. ⁸ For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Class Overview

- **Week One:** Spiritual Growth Concepts
- **Week Two:** Principles of Faith (the first step in Peter's list)
- **Week Three:** Faith Expressed through Repentance
- **Week Four:** Faith Expressed through Baptism
- **Week Five:** Faith Expressed through Praise and Worship
- **Week Six:** Virtue (Principles of Purity, Morality, and Modesty)
- **Week Seven:** Knowledge (Effective Bible Study)
- **Week Eight:** Temperance (Self Discipline in Prayer, Fasting, Stewardship)
- **Week Nine:** Patience (Coping with Trials)
- **Week Ten:** Godliness (Personal Convictions and a Deepening Relationship with God)
- **Week Eleven:** Brotherly Kindness (Ministry)
- **Week Twelve:** Charity (Love that Exceeds Kindness and Denies Self)

3. Spiritual Growth

1 Peter 2:2 ² As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

2 Peter 3:18 ¹⁸ But grow in grace, and *in the*

knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. ² I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able. ³ For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

Hebrews 5:11-14 ¹¹ Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. ¹² For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. ¹³ For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

- a. Even Jesus grew

Luke 2:52 ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

- b. Every believer is at some point on the eight step plan of II Peter 1:5-8.

4. Growth rates vary from individual to individual; everyone is different

- a. Just as all children differ biologically, children of God differ spiritually
- b. Just as in the physical world, terms such as "normal" and "healthy" are relative to age.

2 Corinthians 10:12 ¹² For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves,

and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

- c. Don't compare yourself to others. Your growth rate is unique to you.

5. Spiritual growth is a lifelong process that starts with faith

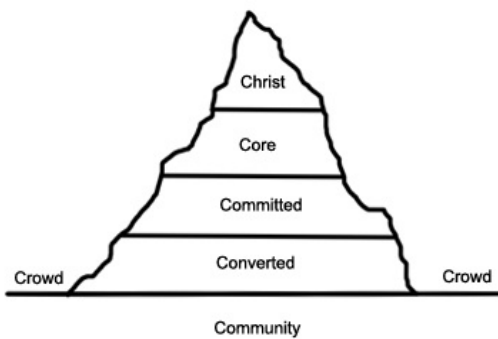
2 Peter 1:5-8 ⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, **add** to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge...

- a. Notice that faith and virtue **precede** knowledge

Proverbs 9:10 ¹⁰ The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding.

Proverbs 2:6 ⁶ For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding.

6. Another way of viewing Spiritual Growth is through the six "Cs" of Growth Mountain:



- a. **The Community** - those who either don't know the Gospel or don't care about it.
- b. **The Crowd** - those who express some degree of interest in the church. They visit either occasionally or regularly, but have not yet acted on their faith through repentance, or baptism.
- c. **The Converted** - those who have obeyed the Gospel through repentance, baptism, and have received the Holy Ghost.

- d. **The Committed** - those who are developing beyond a simple salvation experience. They have learned and are applying the basic principles of prayer, worship, the study of God's Word, stewardship (giving), and godliness in everyday living.
- e. **The Core** - those who have learned that a walk with God is far more than simply addressing our own personal needs; it is about service and ministry to others. Those in this group have been trained and are involved in some ministry within the church and may even be teaching others. **Note: "Ministry" in this context does not necessarily mean preaching or teaching from the pulpit. "Ministry" means service to others.**
- f. **Christ** - He is at the pinnacle of the mountain to illustrate the fact that our ultimate goal is to be like Him.

7. Each level of the mountain provides a different view.

- a. As you climb the mountain, the challenges are greater but so are the rewards.
- b. Notice that the higher you get on the mountain, the narrower it gets. There are fewer and fewer people at each level as you go up.

Mark 8:34 ³⁴ And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

FAITH

1. Faith is the beginning of the spiritual growth process
2 Peter 1:5 ⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, **add** to your faith...
Jude 1:20 ²⁰ But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,
2. Everyone is given some measure of faith at birth...
Romans 12:3 ³ ...God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.
A. It is natural to believe in a higher power or a God
3. ...Yet all people do not have faith.
2 Thessalonians 3:2 ² ...all *men* have not faith.
a. Our faith may be cast off, overthrown, or fail.
1 Timothy 5:12 ¹² Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.
2 Timothy 2:18 ¹⁸ Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.
Luke 22:32 ³² But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.
i. Jesus is speaking to Peter, who had faith but was not yet converted
b. One does not fall away from God because he or she stops working; one falls away because he or she stops *believing*
4. It is impossible to please God without faith
Hebrews 11:6 ⁶ But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.
5. Satan attacks our faith more often than any other aspect of our walk with God. He attacks our faith in two ways:
a. He attacks our faith in God to keep us from sin
b. He attacks our faith in God to forgive us of sin
i. It is man that puts degrees on sin, not God. Jesus commands us to forgive "seventy times seven." Would God ask us to do something for others that He Himself is not willing to do for us?
1 John 1:9 - 2:1 ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.
6. Faith may grow and may be increased.
2 Thessalonians 1:3 ³ ...your faith groweth exceedingly...
Luke 17:5 ⁵ And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.
Romans 10:17 ¹⁷ So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
a. This is one reason the preached Word is so important to us: our faith is increased every time we **hear** the Word.
B. Faith is also built up through exercising it.

Hebrews 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

7. Faith does not compel God to do *our* bidding; faith compels us to obey God

Hebrews 11:13 ¹³ These all died in faith, **not having received the promises**, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*...

- a. Had their concept of faith been the modern concept, they would have died saying God had failed them
- b. Hebrews 11, which lists the heroes of faith, is a chapter of *action*
 - i. Abel offered...
 - ii. Noah prepared...
 - iii. Abraham obeyed...
 - iv. Sara received...
 - v. Abraham offered...
 - vi. Isaac blessed...
 - vii. Jacob blessed...
 - viii. Joseph gave...
 - ix. Moses' parents hid...
 - x. Moses forsook...
 - xi. Israel passed...
- c. The faith of Hebrews is a faith that compels action on the part of the believer, not a faith that demands action from God

8. Child-like faith is not believing that one will receive everything one wants

- a. Even children often ask for things that they know they have little chance of receiving
- b. But their faith is “child-like” in the sense that their trust is absolute; even children from abusive homes will scream for their parents when separated

9. Faith is the beginning (conception) of the growth process

- a. If faith is not followed by action a spiritual abortion may occur

2 Peter 1:5 ⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, **add** to your faith...

1 John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born [Gr. *gennao*] of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

Matthew 1:2 ² Abraham begat [*gennao*] Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

- b. Clearly, Abraham did not “give birth” to Isaac; he caused Isaac to be *conceived*.
- c. The moment a person believes, a conception has taken place, but that growth can still be aborted
- d. It is normal to expect a conception to be followed by a birth

10. Faith that doesn't produce obedience is useless

James 2:17-26 ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. ¹⁸ Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. ¹⁹ Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. ²⁰ But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? ²² Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?...²⁴ Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only...²⁶ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

- a. Simply believing in God is not the same as following Him. Many people believe in God, yet do not serve Him, and in many cases are very evil in their deeds.
- b. Repentance is the process of changing direction – a decision to live for God and obey His Word to the best of our ability.

Faith Expressed through Repentance

1. We often hear people speak of “accepting Christ” or “accepting God.” What does the Bible say about acceptance?
 - a. While there are no verses that explicit speak of accepting God or Christ, there are dozens that speak of God accepting **us**.
 - b. Gen. 19:21; Exo. 28:38; Lev. 1:4, 7:18, 19:7, 20:20-21, 20:23, 20:25, 22:27, and 23:11; I Sam. 26:19; Deu. 33:11; II Sam. 24:23; Psa. 20:3, 119:108; Isa. 56:7, 60:7; Jer. 6:20, 14:12; Eze. 20:40-41, 43:27; Hos. 8:13; Amo. 5:22; Mal. 1:10, 13 all speak of God’s acceptance of us.

Genesis 4:7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door...

Job 42:9...the LORD also accepted Job...

Psa 19:14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD...

Pro. 21:3 To do justice and judgment is more **acceptable to the LORD** than sacrifice.

Ecc 9:7...for God now accepteth thy works.

Jer. 14:10 ...therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins.

Act 10:35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

Rom. 12:1-2 ¹I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, **holy, acceptable unto God**, which is your reasonable service. ²

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and **acceptable**, and perfect, will of God.

Rom. 14:17-18 ¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸ **For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God**, and approved of men.

Rom. 15:16...that the offering up of the Gentiles might be **acceptable**, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

2 Cor. 5:9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

Eph. 5:10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

Phil. 4:18 ...a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

1 Tim. 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

1 Tim. 5:4 ...for that is good and acceptable before God.

Heb. 12:28 ...whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

1 Pet. 2:5 ...offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

1 Pet. 2:20 ...if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

2. Does the Bible teach believing the Gospel, or does it teach believing *and* obeying the Gospel?

Rom. 10:16 But **they have not all obeyed the gospel**. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

2 Thes. 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and **that obey not the gospel** of our Lord Jesus Christ:

1 Pet. 4:17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, **what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?**

Rom. 1:5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for **obedience** to the faith...

Rom. 6:17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have **obeyed** from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

Heb. 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that **obey** him;

Acts 5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that **obey** him.

1 Pet. 1:22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in **obeying** the truth through the Spirit...

3. How does one *obey* the Gospel?

- a. The Gospel is the “Good News” of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4)
- b. The Gospel was obeyed through rituals in the Old Testament (see Fig. 2). These rituals were only symbolic of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ

Hebrews 10:1 For the law having a **shadow** of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

c. The components of the ritual were as follows:

- i. Animal Sacrifice = Death = Repentance
- ii. Laver of Water for washing = Baptism = Burial
- iii. Holy Place = Holy Ghost = Resurrection

d. We obey the Gospel through our own death, burial, and resurrection.

4. **Repentance** is the “death” of the old “you,” necessary before the new “you” can be resurrected.

Romans 6:6 ⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Galatians 2:20 ²⁰ I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Galatians 5:24 ²⁴ And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Galatians 6:14 ¹⁴ ...the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

5. Jesus demanded repentance throughout His ministry:

Mat 4:17 ...Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Mat 9:13 ...I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Mat 11:20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

Luke 13:3 ...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Luke 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations...

6. Jesus' disciples preached repentance:

Mark 6:12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...

Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

7. True repentance is not the same as feeling sorry for one's self:

2 Cor 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

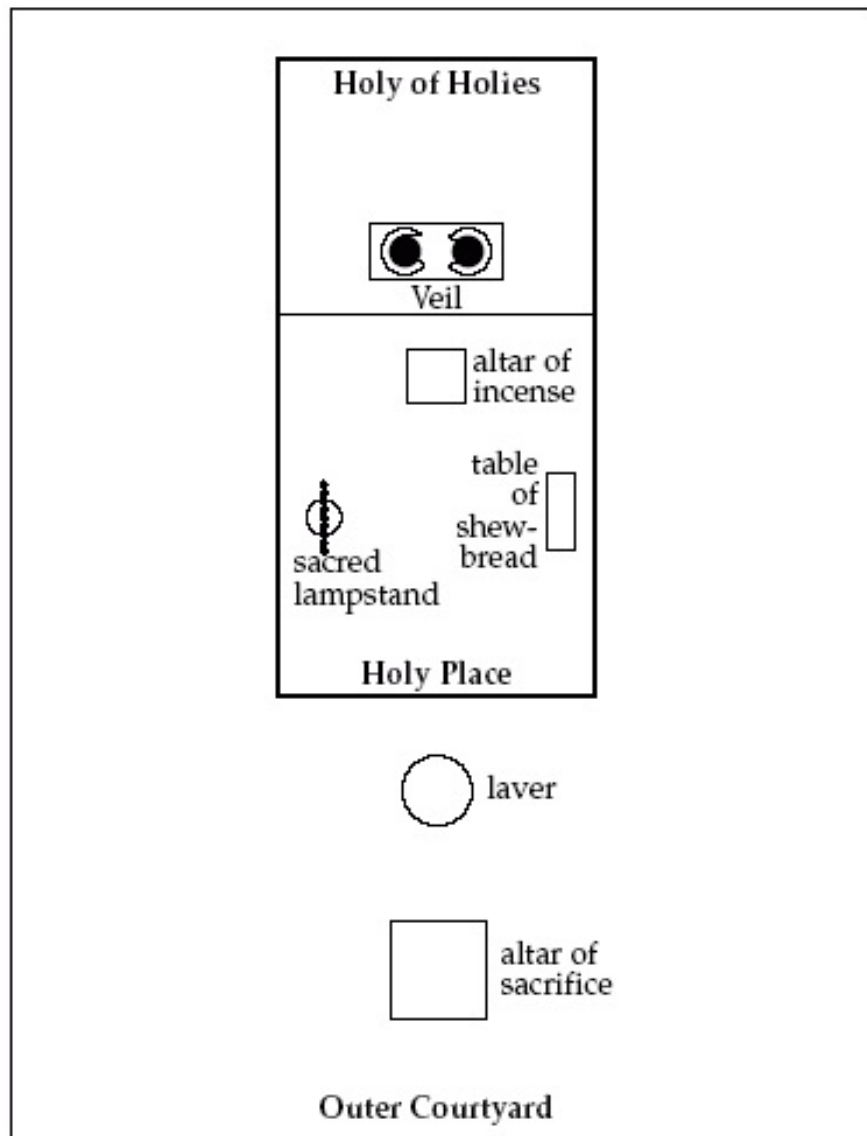


Figure 2

Faith Expressed through Baptism

1. What is the purpose of baptism?

The Bible commands us to **obey** (not just believe) the Gospel. The Gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:1-4).

We obey the death of Jesus through repentance, we obey His burial through baptism, and we obey His resurrection when we receive the Holy Ghost.

2. Is baptism a recommendation, suggestion, or command?

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be **born of water** and of the Spirit, he **cannot** enter into the kingdom of God.

- a. The “kingdom of God” is defined in Romans 14:17 as righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized **every one of you** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 10:48 And he **commanded** them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and **wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord.

1 Pet 3:21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,)...

Notice that baptism does not clean the body; it cleans the conscience.

Romans 6:4 ⁴ Therefore we are buried with

him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Colossians 2:12 ¹² Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Ephesians 5:25-26 ⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; ²⁶ That he might sanctify and **cleanse it with the washing of water by the word**,

3. In the Bible there is always a sense of urgency about baptism.

Acts 16:33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

Even though Paul and Silas had been beaten bloody, baptism was important enough that they baptized the Philippian jailor and his family immediately upon being miraculously delivered from prison, after midnight!

Perhaps Paul treated baptism so urgently because Ananias was just as urgent during Paul’s own conversion:

Acts 9:18-19 ¹⁸ And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. ¹⁹ And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.

What is sometimes overlooked in Paul’s conversion is the fact that he had been *fasting* without food or water for three days prior to receiving his sight, yet *was baptized before he ate or drank!*

4. **Is it important how I am baptized? Can I just be sprinkled?**

There is no record in the Bible of anyone ever being sprinkled in baptism. The practice of

sprinkling in baptism evolved in the years after the Apostles, and was not part of their teaching. Since we have already seen that baptism typifies burial, it is logical that one would be submerged in water just as one is completely covered with earth when one is buried. The very word “baptism” means to “submerge, immerse.” Everyone in the Bible who was baptized **went down** into the water:

Mat 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, **went up straightway out of the water...**

John 3:23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, **because there was much water there...**

Acts 8:38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and **they went down both into the water**, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

5. What about a baptismal formula?

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you **in the name of Jesus Christ** for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for **there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**

Acts 8:16 ...they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

Acts 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized **in the name of the Lord Jesus.**

The historical record of the Bible is that baptism was **always** in the name of Jesus.

6. Was anyone in the Bible baptized using the formula “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”?

No. This baptismal formula was adopted in the centuries after the Apostles, and was not used by the early church. It is based on Matthew 28:19:

Matthew 28:19 ¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

The disciples of Jesus understood that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are titles, not names. They understand that the only name that fits all three titles is Jesus. They understood that “name” is singular (not “names”) so Jesus was talking about one name, not three names. Since they understood all of these things, they always baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

7. **Was anyone ever rebaptized in the Bible?**

Acts 19:1-5 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, ² He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. ³ **And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.** ⁴ **Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.** ⁵ **When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.**

Faith Expressed through Praise and Worship

The importance of praise and worship

Our praise is a “God attractant.” God only responds to sincere, heartfelt worship. If you truly wish to communicate with God, the best approach is through praise and worship.

Psa 22:3 But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

There are numerous instances in the Bible where God responded to praise and worship

Uplifted hands

Lifting up hands toward God and heaven has been a common form of worship for centuries. Lifted up hands are symbolic of complete surrender.

Gen 14:22 ...I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD..

Neh 8:6 ...And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with **lifting up their hands**: and **they bowed their heads, and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.**

Psa 28:2 Hear the voice of my supplications, **when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands** toward thy holy oracle.

Psa 63:4 Thus will I bless thee while I live: **I will lift up my hands in thy name.**

Psa 134:2 **Lift up your hands in the sanctuary** [church], and bless the LORD.

Psa 141:2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and **the lifting up of my hands** as the evening sacrifice.

Lam 2:19 Arise, **cry out in the night**: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: **lift up thy hands toward him** for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street.

1 Tim 2:8 I will therefore that men pray every where, **lifting up holy hands...**

Leaping and Dancing

Exo 15:20 And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with **dances**.

2 Sam 6:14 And David **danced** before the LORD with all his might...

2 Sam 6:16 ...saw king David **leaping and dancing** before the LORD...

Psa 30:11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into **dancing...**

Psa 149:3 Let them praise his name in the **dance...**

Psa 150:4 Praise him with the timbrel [tambourine] and **dance...**

Ecl 3:4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to **dance...**

Jer 31:4 Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the **dances** of them that make merry.

Jer 31:13 Then shall the virgin rejoice in the **dance**, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy....

Luke 6:23 Rejoice ye in that day, and **leap** for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven:

Acts 3:8 And he **leaping** up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and **leaping**, and praising God.

Dancing is only potentially negative when God is not the object of the dance. The Bible tells us that everything should be done decently and in order, so dancing that is physically suggestive is never proper.

Falling on one's face

Ezek 11:13 ...**Then fell I down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice**, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?

Vocal prayer

1 Ki 1:40 And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, **and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.**

Ezra 3:11 ...And all the people **shouted** with a great **shout**, when they praised the LORD...

Ezra 3:13 So that the people could not discern the **noise** of the **shout** of joy from the **noise** of the weeping of the people: **for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.**

Neh 12:43 ...God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: **so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.**

Job 36:29 Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or **the noise of his tabernacle** [church]?

Psa 5:11 ...let them ever shout for joy...

Psa 32:11 ...shout for joy...

Psa 35:27 Let them shout for joy, and be glad...

Psa 47:1 ...**O clap your hands**, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

Psa 55:17 Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and **cry aloud**: and he shall hear my voice.

Psa 66:1 ...Make a joyful **noise** unto God...:

Psa 66:8 ... **make the voice of his praise to be heard:**

Psa 81:1 ...Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful **noise** unto the God of Jacob.

Psa 95:1 ...let us make a joyful **noise** to the rock of our salvation. ² Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful **noise** unto him with psalms.

Psa 98:4 Make a joyful **noise** unto the LORD, all the earth: **make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.**

Psa 98:6 With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful **noise** before the LORD, the King.

Psa 100:1 ...Make a joyful **noise** unto the LORD...

Psa 132:9 ...let thy saints **shout** for joy.

Psa 132:16 ...her saints shall **shout** aloud for joy.

Psalm 150:3-5 ³ Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. ⁴ Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. ⁵ Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.

Isa 12:6 **Cry out and shout**, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

Jer 31:7 ...thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations:

Zep 3:14 Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.

Zec 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem...

Luke 17:15 ...with a **loud** voice glorified God,

Luke 19:37 ...the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a **loud** voice...

Others: 1 Chr. 15:28; 2 Chr. 15:14; Neh. 9:4

The praise and worship of the 120 disciples of Jesus on the day of Pentecost appeared to some to be the actions of intoxicated individuals:

Acts 2:13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

Passionate preaching

Isa 58:1 **Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet**, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

Often when Jesus preached he cried out loudly:

John 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, **Jesus stood and cried**, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

So Acts 5:32 proves that the Holy Ghost comes not by simple acceptance, but by obedience.

Another example of this principle is found in the eighth chapter of Acts. In this chapter, we find that the people of Samaria heard Christ preached (verse 5), gave heed to preaching (verse 6), heard and saw miracles (verse 6), had joy (verse 8), believed the message (verse 12), and were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (verse 16). Yet in spite of all this, they did not have the Holy Ghost (verses 15 and 16). Clearly, none of these things in and of itself is proof of the Holy Ghost.

VIRTUE

2 Peter 1:5 ⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

1. Virtue Gr. ἀρετή {ar-et'-ay} - virtue, moral goodness; any particular moral excellence, as modesty, purity; holiness

a. It is the first witness you present to the world, and the life you live is more important than anything you say.

2. Virtue (holiness) involves:

a. **ATTITUDES** - the way we think

1 The 3:13 ¹³ To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God...

b. **ACTIONS** - the way we live

Rom 6:19 ¹⁹ I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members [body parts] servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members [body parts] servants to righteousness unto holiness.

1 Cor 3:17 ¹⁷ If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

i. Our bodies are the temple of God

1 Pet 1:15 ¹⁵ But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of **conversation**;

c. **APPEARANCE** - the way we look (not in terms of physical beauty or attractiveness, but in simplicity and modesty)

Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living

sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

1 Timothy 2:8-10 ⁸ I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. ⁹ In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness [Gr. αἰδώς *aidos* {ahee-doce'} - modest demeanor; ladylike] and sobriety; not with broided [elaborately decorated] hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

3. The importance of virtue (holiness)

Heb 12:14 ¹⁴ Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

a. However, we should never wear our good behavior or modesty as a badge of pride

4. Holiness is not a one-time occurrence; it is a never-ending process

2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, **perfecting** holiness in the fear of God.

a. Note that holiness is outward (flesh) as well as inward (spirit)

b. Our outward attitudes, actions, and appearance reflect what is in our heart

5. The works of the flesh

a. We are all born with a sin nature

i. Children do not have to be taught to be bad

ii. One person's sin nature may differ from another's, but everyone has one

Galatians 5:19-23 ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; **Adultery, fornication** [any sex outside of marriage],

uncleanness, lasciviousness [lustfulness], ²⁰ **Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance** [contention, argumentative], **emulations** [jealousy, envy], **wrath, strife** [overly ambitious], **seditions** [division, disunity], **heresies** [false doctrine], ²¹ **Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings** [drunken partying], and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³ Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 ⁹ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither **fornicators**, nor **idolaters**, nor **adulterers**, nor **effeminate**, nor **abusers of themselves with mankind** [homosexuals], ¹⁰ Nor **thieves**, nor **covetous**, nor **drunkards**, nor **revilers** [one who speaks evil of others], nor **extortioners**, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Peter 3:1-5 Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

- b. Lest some men get carried away, several points are in order regarding the wife's subjection to her husband:
 - i. It was only to her *own* husband, not every man;
 - ii. Husbands AND wives are commanded to submit to *one another* (Ephesians 5:21)
 - iii. All Christians are commanded to prefer others to themselves (Romans 12:10)
- c. In other words, Peter's point is that a woman stands a greater chance of winning her lost husband with the humility *all* Christians should exhibit to one another than with a belligerent, confrontational attitude.

² While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear. ³ Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; ⁴ But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. ⁵ For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

- 6. Does modesty matter to God at all?
 - a. Of course. If it did not, God would not have made clothes for Adam and Eve.

Gen 3:7 ⁷ And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

- i. Adam and Eve made aprons of fig leaves for themselves, but this was not satisfactory to God, who made coats for them:

Genesis 3:21 ²¹ Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

- 7. What about so-called "gray" areas?
 - a. First, the natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit:

1 Corinthians 2:12-14 ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. ¹³ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.
 - b. The Holy Ghost will guide us in such matters

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, {which is} the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach** you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

1. When in doubt, don't

1 Thessalonians 5:22 ²²
Abstain from all appearance
of evil.

VIII. Personal Convictions – areas of your life in which you make a personal commitment to God to either abstain from something or commit to something. Personal convictions are, by definition, “personal” and do not necessarily apply to others

- A. In Jeremiah 35, the Rechabites refused to drink wine or build houses. They lived in tents to symbolize their status as strangers in a strange land. God commended them for their commitment.
- B. A healthy prayer life is essential to accurate convictions. How can God speak to you about areas of your life that He wants to change if you never talk to Him?
- C. Preachers rarely have to preach rebuke to praying Christians, because the Holy Ghost convicts them long before the preacher does.

IX. The Principle of Gender Distinction

- A. God has ordained a clear distinction to be maintained between the sexes. He wants men to look clearly like men and women to look clearly like women.

Deuteronomy 22:5 ⁵ The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.

1 Corinthians 11:14-15 ¹⁴ Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a

man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? ¹⁵ But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering.

1 Corinthians 6:9 ⁹ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

X. The Principle of Separation from the World

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 ¹⁴ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ¹⁶ And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷ **Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate**, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, ¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

1 Peter 2:9-11 ⁹ But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a **peculiar** people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: ¹⁰ Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. ¹¹ Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as **strangers and pilgrims**, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

1 John 2:15 ¹⁵ Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. ² And **be not conformed to this world**: but be ye transformed by the renewing

of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

XI. Leaders within the Church must live a higher standard than the average Christian.

XII. Guarding our minds

Romans 12:2 ² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Matthew 6:22-23 ²² The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. ²³ But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.

Psalms 101:3 ³ I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes:

- A. David did not say that he would not see wickedness, but that he would not deliberately set it before his eyes
- B. If we want to live victoriously we have to guard our minds against evil intrusion via television, movies, magazines, etc.
 - 1. The state of your mind is determined by what you feed it.
 - 2. After a steady diet of wickedness you will come to accept it as normal.

Isaiah 33:15-16 ¹⁵ He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly...that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; ¹⁶ He shall dwell on high:

- C. Television – at it's best, television is a time-waster
 - 1. How many complain about not having any time to pray or study the Bible, then spend hours in front of the TV?

Romans 1:18-32 ¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness

and unrighteousness of men...they are without excuse: ²¹ Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools...²⁴ Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: ²⁵ Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator...²⁶ For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: ²⁷ And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. ²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind...²⁹ Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers [gossipers, slanderers], ³⁰ Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection [psychopathic, sociopathic], implacable [unreasonable, stubborn], unmerciful: ³² Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

XIII. Corrupt communication

Colossians 3:8 ⁸ But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

Ephesians 4:29 ²⁹ Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Ephesians 5:4 ⁴ Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting [suggestive jokes], which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

XIV. Yes, man looks on the outward appearance,

but the Bible says we are to let our
light shine before men

- A. Paul had Timothy circumcised strictly
for appearances (Acts 16:3)

KNOWLEDGE

2 Peter 1:5 ⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue **knowledge**;

- I. Biblical knowledge follows faith and virtue
- II. The Word accomplishes several things:

A. We will be judged by it.

John 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: **the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.**

B. We are sanctified (purified) and cleansed by it; it reveals hidden sin.

John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

C. Our faith is built by it.

Rom 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

D. We are comforted by it.

Rom 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

E. We are made wise by it.

2 Tim 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures,

which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

F. We are reprov'd and corrected by it.

2 Tim 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

G. We are equipped to witness when we have a knowledge of the Word.

Titus 1:9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers [those who contradict].

2 Tim 2:15 Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

H. It enables us to grow.

1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

III. The Major Divisions of the Bible

A. **The Pentateuch** - Genesis through Deuteronomy (five books)

1. Sometimes called "The Law"
2. Traditionally written by Moses
3. Genesis gives an early history of the Jews; Exodus provides a history of their enslavement plus legal code; Leviticus through Deuteronomy is almost all legal code.

B. **The Historical Books** - Joshua through Esther (12 books)

1. History of the Jews from the conquest of Canaan to their enslavement by the Assyrians and Babylonians.

C. **The Poetical Books** - Job through Song of Solomon (five books)

1. Primarily books of poetry, psalms (songs), and proverbs

D. **The Prophets** - Isaiah through Malachi (17 books)

1. Messages to the Jews in captivity, as relayed by the various prophets

E. **The Gospels and Acts** - Matthew through Acts (five books)

1. The life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus is found in the four Gospels (each presented from a different viewpoint)
2. The history of the early church is presented in Acts, including the teachings of the Apostles.

F. **The Epistles and Revelation** - Romans through Revelation (22 books)

1. The Epistles are letters on Christian living addressed to the churches from Paul, Peter, James, and John.
2. Revelation is a book of prophecy by John to the churches.

IV. Two components to effective Bible Study:

- A. Studying for information
- B. Reading for inspiration

V. Studying for information

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

1 Tim 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

2 Tim 2:15 Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

A. When studying for information or knowledge, in order to grow or be a more effective witness, there are two methods:

1. You can study a particular subject or person in the Bible, or
2. You can study a particular verse, chapter, or book.

B. Most of the time it is best when studying for information to study by subject.

1. An **exhaustive** concordance (either in book form or as a Bible program for a computer) is absolutely essential.
2. **Exhaustive** means it contains every word in the Bible and each location of each occurrence of this word.
3. Free, searchable Bible programs can be found at www.theophilos.sk, www.e-sword.net, and www.online-bible.com.
4. To study a particular subject (like baptism, for example) you would look up every form of the word "baptize" (baptize, baptized, baptizing, baptizeth, etc.) and any related words you can think of, such as "water" and "wash".
5. When using a Bible program, virtually all allow the use of "wild cards". Wild card searching is using an asterisk to search for all forms of a word. For example, entering bapt* in a search form in a program would search for all words beginning with the letters "bapt" with any ending.

C. When studying, always do your best to free your mind of any preconceived notions or biases about what the verse is saying

1. Never read something into it that isn't there – this is far more common than we realize – we subconsciously read things into verses all the time that are not there. In many cases we are carrying centuries of traditions that have to be discarded.
2. It **is** good, however, to try to put yourself in the time and culture of the writer in order to gain additional insight to the verse. For example, if we understand that Peter's audience on the day of Pentecost was returning to far-off homes after his sermon, never to hear or see him again, without a New Testament, we quickly see the enormous importance of Acts 2:38.

D. Thoroughly studying by subject is by far the best way to become an "expert" on that subject

1. Eventually you will know the verses by heart and be able to use them in a witnessing environment

VI. Reading for inspiration. Studying for information or to gain new knowledge is good, but everyone should also read the Bible just to allow the Lord to speak to you through it, without a particular intellectual goal in mind.

Heb 4:2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

- A. This will force you to cover books you might normally avoid
- B. It will give you insight as the Bible speaks to you from its pages
- C. A suggested reading plan:

1. One chapter from the Pentateuch
2. One chapter from the historical books
3. One chapter from the poetic books
4. One chapter from the prophets
5. One chapter from the Gospels and Acts
6. One chapter from the Epistles and Revelation

D. You can do one chapter total a day or one chapter from each section a day, depending on how much time you have.

E. The advantage of this reading plan is that it helps ease the boredom of reading through tedious passages

THE PERSONAL PRAYER CLOCK

(4 min. each = 28 minutes, or 9 min. each = 63 minutes)

PRAISE

All prayer should begin by praising God simply because of who He is. "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise." Praise may include singing, reading scripture from the Psalms, listening to music, etc.

FORGIVENESS

God will not forgive anyone who holds something against someone else. We must examine ourselves for bitterness or animosity toward others. Furthermore, the Bible teaches that the only way we will ever be held accountable for past sins is if we withhold forgiveness to others.

CONFESSION

All sins must be confessed to God. If sin remains in the heart, further prayer is useless.

INTERCESSION

This comes from the "us" and "we" of the Lord's prayer. This is prayer for all those who we know are lost or simply in need, and for the spiritual welfare of other saints.

PETITION

This is asking God for whatever we need in our lives. This, like all other aspects of prayer, must be done in faith and fervency to be effective.

THANKSGIVING

Here we thank God for His many blessings to us.

PRAISE

We open the prayer by praising God, and we close it the same way.

TEMPERANCE THROUGH FASTING

2 Peter 1:5-6 ⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ⁶ And to knowledge **temperance**; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

- **Temperance** comes from the Greek ἐγκράτεια *egkrateia* {eng-krat'-i-ah}; self-control; the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions
- Fasting— Heb. *tsuwm*, *tsoom*; to cover over (the mouth)
 - Fasting means to stop up something, usually the mouth
 - It generally means to do without food for a time

Judg 20:25 And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the sword. **26** Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and **came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 27** And the children of Israel **inquired of the LORD**, (for the ark of the covenant of God *was* there in those days,

- Fasting is generally associated with the following:
 - Very serious, troublesome times (eighteen thousand died in Judges 20:25)
 - Seeking at the house of God
 - Weeping
 - Sacrificial offerings

- Fasting is getting serious with God
- Effective fasting is accompanied by true repentance

1 Sam 7:6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, **We have sinned against the LORD**. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

- Fasting was sometimes the result of sorrow

1 Sam 31:13 And they took their bones, and buried *them* under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

2 Sam 1:12 And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.

- Fasting is sometimes the result of great need

2 Sam 12:16 **David therefore besought God for the child**; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

- David was fasting for his sick child

- Fasting is associated with humility

1 Ki 21:27 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he **rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh**, and fasted, and **lay in sackcloth, and went softly**.

- Ahab was fasting because he had received a message of judgment from a prophet
- Note that Ahab laid aside his royal robes and went softly

- It is possible to fast for the wrong reasons, and not be heard

Isa 58:3 Wherefore have we fasted, *say they*, and thou seest not? *wherefore* have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, **in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours**.

- Proper fasting should never be for attention

Mat 6:16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for **they disfigure their faces**, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

- Some demons are not easily cast out, and require much prayer and fasting

Mat 17:21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

- While fasting is usually associated with not eating, you can fast from anything that is enjoyable to you

1 Cor 7:4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. **5** Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, **that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer;** and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

TEMPERANCE IN FINANCES

2 Peter 1:5-6 ⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ⁶ And to knowledge **temperance** [Gr. ἐγκράτεια egkrateia {eng-krat'-i-ah}; self-control; the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions]; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

- Temperance is simply discipline and self-control. It covers financial discipline as well as physical discipline.
- I cannot say with certainty that it is God's will for you to be rich, but I can say with certainty that it is God's will for you not to be bound by financial difficulty
 - A person who is bound in financial difficulty cannot help the kingdom of God as much as they should or would like to
 - A person who is paying thousands of dollars more in interest each month than they should because of poor credit is giving money away that they could put into the work of God
 - They can't give offerings like they would like
 - A person whose finances are bound will be stressed out
 - They can't minister to others effectively because of the stress
 - They can't give to others in need
 - They can't have new converts over for dinner because they can't afford it
- It is God's will for you to not be stressed out over finances
 - This way you can be most effective in His kingdom

Deu 28:1-13 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. 3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. 4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. 5 Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store...

8 The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto...

9 ...if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.

11 And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee. 12 The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. 13 And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them:

Psa 94:12 Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;

- God's chastening does not always apply to sinners
- It is unwise to compare Christians with the ungodly in financial matters, since their steps are not ordered or directed by the Lord
- Obedience to the laws of God
 - Obedience does not guarantee material wealth; it simply guarantees that our needs will be met
 - It does not necessarily mean that we will get a raise on the job
 - It may mean that God will bless your health so you don't have as many doctor bills
 - He may bless your car so that you don't spend as much

- repairing it
- Your clothes will last longer
- Your house won't deteriorate as fast
- Some live better on half the income of others, because they are blessed

- **The first rule of financial discipline is to give God His portion faithfully**

Leviticus 27:30-32 And all the tithes of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD...And concerning the tithes of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.

Numbers 18:23-24 But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation...they have no inheritance. 24 But the tithes of the children of Israel...I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

- God's original plan called for the ministers of the temple (the Levites) to be supported by the tithe
- The tribe of Levi was the only one of the twelve tribes that received no inheritance (land) in the Promised Land
 - Their inheritance was a tenth of everyone else's
 - Rather than tend to crops and fields like everyone else, their job was to care for the temple
 - They were the singers, musicians, priests, etc.

Deuteronomy 12:19 Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth.

Numbers 18:26 Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe.

- The Levites, in turn, were to pay tithes themselves

Deuteronomy 14:28 ...thou shalt bring forth all the tithes of thine increase the same year...29 And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; **that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.**

- Because *everyone* in the entire nation tithed, even the poor and helpless were cared for.
- **Note that the blessings of God in the works of the hands of the Israelites were tied directly to their faithfulness in tithing**

Malachi 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. 10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. 11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. 12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the LORD of hosts.

- **The blessings of God on fields, harvests, grapevines, etc. were tied directly to tithing**

- **Was tithing strictly under the Law?** Some suggest that we are no longer obligated, as Christians, to offer tithes because they were commanded under the Law, portions of which we are no longer bound by. Is this true?

- Tithing, like the institution of marriage, pre-dates the Law. Both Abraham (Gen. 14:20) and Jacob (Gen. 28:22) paid tithes before the Law even existed.

- Jesus commanded his followers to pay tithes

Matthew 23:23 ²³ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and **not to leave the other undone.**

- Tithing was practiced in Paul's own day

Hebrews 7:8 ⁸ And here men that die receive tithes...

- **The second aspect to financial discipline is honesty and integrity in financial dealings**

Psalms 37:21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again:

- Those who borrow on credit without regard to repayment are called wicked

Psalms 37:25 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the **righteous** forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

Psalms 18:20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

Psalms 34:15 The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

Psalms 35:27 ...Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

Proverbs 10:3 The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.

Proverbs 10:24 The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.

Proverbs 13:25 The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want.

Proverbs 15:29 The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

Ephesians 6:5-9 ⁵ Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; ⁶ Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; ⁷ With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: ⁸ Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free. ⁹ And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

- Servants, both slaves and employees, were commanded to be obedient to masters
- Masters were commanded to be respectful to servants

- **The third aspect of financial discipline is hard work**

Proverbs 10:4 He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

- Tithe-paying and honesty cannot make up for laziness

Proverbs 12:24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.

Proverbs 12:27 The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.

- Wastefulness – too lazy to prepare his meat

Proverbs 13:4 The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be

made fat.

Proverbs 19:15 Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.

Proverbs 21:25 The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.

Proverbs 22:13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.

- The slothful (lazy) person always has an excuse

Proverbs 20:4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

Proverbs 22:29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

Proverbs 24:30-34 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; 31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. 32 Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. 33 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: 34 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

Proverbs 26:14 As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.

Proverbs 6:6-8 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: 7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, 8 Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

Romans 12:10-11 Be kindly

affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; 11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

2 Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

Hebrews 6:12-15 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. 13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, 14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

- The promises of blessing come to the diligent, the faithful, and the patient
- Often the promises of God are not fulfilled overnight

- **The fourth key to financial blessing is proper stewardship (managing your finances wisely)**

- If you follow the first three principles (tithing, honesty, and hard work), God will bless the fruit of your hands so that you receive plenty, but He will not stop you from squandering what He gives you

Proverbs 21:20 There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.

Proverbs 22:7 ⁷ The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower *is* servant to the lender.

- Failure in any one of the above principles can have a negative effect on your finances

PATIENCE

2 Peter 1:5-6 ⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ⁶ And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance **patience** [Gr. ὑπομονή hupomone {hoop-om-on-ay'} steadfastness, constancy, endurance]; and to patience godliness;

- Throughout the New Testament, this word is always used in the context of time
 - Patience is faith over time
 - We tend to think of faith as believing for instant gratification
- **Patience with God**
 - Timeline of Abraham's life:
 - 75 years old when he receives the promise "I will make of thee a great nation" (Genesis 12:2)
 - 86 years old (11 years after the promise) when he took matters into his own hands and fathered Ishmael
 - 99 years old (24 years after the promise) when God appeared to him to announce the impending birth of Isaac
 - 100 years old (25 years after the promise) when Isaac is born
 - 140 years old (65 years after the promise) when Isaac gets married
 - 160 years old (85 years after the promise) when his first grandsons, Jacob and Esau, are born
 - Dies at 175, when his two grandsons are 15 years old, never seeing the fulfilment of the promise
 - Is it any wonder Abraham is the archetype of faith?
 - Too many people are totally lacking in patience – long term faith
 - This is why some people

attend church for a few services or weeks or even months, then fall away – they are expecting immediate gratification

- True faith is not necessarily that God will deliver me out of my next mess; true faith is that, over time, if I obey the Lord and live according to His will all things will work together for my good.
- Over time you will find yourself in fewer and fewer messes that you need to be delivered out of

Romans 5:3-4 ³ And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; ⁴ And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

- Trials and tribulations will make us stronger, if we allow them – they develop patience in us
- Patience develops experience, and experience develops hope

Hebrews 6:12 ¹² That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Hebrews 10:36 ³⁶ For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

Hebrew 12:1 Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

- There are many things that are not sins, but are **weights** which keep us from being all that God would have us be
 - Some things in our lives may be a stumblingblock to others

James 1:2-4 ² My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; ³ Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. ⁴ But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

- **Patience with others**

Luke 8:15 ¹⁵ But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience.

- We bear fruit over time
 - Too often many mature Christians expect spiritual infants to bear fruit on their own time table
 - Not everyone bears fruit at the same rate
 - One sign of spiritual maturity is the ability to see long-term potential in others

1 Thessalonians 5:14 ¹⁴ Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, **be patient toward all *men*.**

2 Timothy 2:24 ²⁴ And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, **patient**,

2 Corinthians 6:4-6 ⁴ But in all *things* approving ourselves as the ministers of God, **in much patience**, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, ⁵ In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; ⁶ By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

GODLINESS

2 Peter 1:5-7 ⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ⁶ And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience **godliness**;

- Godliness - thinking like God thinks

1 Timothy 2:8-10 ⁸ I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting...

- Lifting up holy hands

⁹ In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; ¹⁰ But (which becometh women professing **godliness**) with good works.

- It is one thing to *profess* godliness; it is another for your life to reflect it to others

1 Timothy 6:3-4 ³ If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to **godliness**; ⁴ He is proud, knowing nothing...

- The importance of doctrine

2 Timothy 3:1-10 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. ² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy...

- Paul warns us that the last days would see a rise in those who are unholy

³ Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent [lacking self control], fierce, despisers of those that are good, ⁴ Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; ⁵ Having a form of **godliness**, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

- There is power in true godliness

⁶ For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ⁷ Ever learning, and never able to

come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸ Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. ⁹ But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all *men*, as theirs also was. ¹⁰ But thou hast fully known my **doctrine**, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,

- Doctrine again

Isaiah 55:8-9 ⁸ For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. ⁹ For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Malachi 3:6 ⁶ For *I am* the LORD, I change not...

Hebrews 13:8 ⁸ Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

- When we start thinking like God thinks, our thoughts will not change with the fads, fashions, politics, or society
- Our thoughts are influenced by what we allow ourselves to see and dwell on
 - The light of the body is the eye
 - It is the gateway to the soul
 - The things we look at, from television to magazines, influence our perception of right, wrong, beauty, etc.

- Some of God's thoughts on:

- **Age**

Proverbs 16:31 The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.

Proverbs 20:29 The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the grey head.

- Our society is obsessed with youth

- **Holiness**

1 Chronicles 16:29 ²⁹ ...worship the

LORD in the beauty of holiness.

2 Chronicles 20:21 ²¹...he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness...

Psalm 29:2 ²...worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Psalm 96:9 ⁹O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness...

○ **Praise and Worship**

Psalm 33:1 Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: *for* praise is comely for the upright.

Psalm 147:1 Praise ye the LORD: for *it is* good to sing praises unto our God; for *it is* pleasant; *and* praise is comely.

- Proper, biblical praise and worship is beautiful to God
 - It does not refer to “praise” that is designed to draw attention to the individual
 - It does not refer to “praise” that damages property or harms others

○ **The House of God**

Psalm 96:6 ⁶...strength and beauty *are* in his sanctuary.

- God considers His sanctuary beautiful, no matter how small
- It is good to keep respect for the house of God

○ **Salvation**

Psalm 149:4 ⁴For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.

○ **Evangelism**

Romans 10:15 ¹⁵ And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

- All of these things are things God loves and considers beautiful

BROTHERLY KINDNESS AND CHARITY

2 Peter 1:5-7 ⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ⁶ And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; ⁷ And to godliness **brotherly kindness** [φιλαδελφία *philadelphia*; generic love for others; brotherly love]; and to brotherly kindness **charity** [ἀγάπη *agape*; Christian love; love that makes one willing to die for another.

- “Philadelphia” love is found just five times in the NT

Romans 12:10 *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

- Philadelphia love is the general love that all Christians should cultivate for one other, a love that prefers others to ourselves

1 Thessalonians 4:9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

- Philadelphia love is the most basic form of Christian love. Paul said it ought to be self-evident to every child of God.

1 Peter 1:22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently:

- Philadelphia love is a command, not a feeling. It is acts of love, not an emotion one feels toward others.
- Agape love often refers to the love God has for us and the love we should have for Him

John 15:13 Greater love [agape] hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

- It is a stronger love than Philadelphia love

John 13:35 By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

- People can see your acts of kindness, but they can *feel* the agape love you have for others

John 15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

- We abide in the agape of God by keeping His commandments

1 John 2:5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

2 John 1:6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

- You cannot separate the love of God from obedience to His commandments

Romans 14:15 But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

- Agape love always puts souls ahead of our own desires
- I Corinthians 13 is the “love” or “agape” chapter

1 Corinthians 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. ² And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

- Paul acknowledges the possibility of miracles in the absence of true love, and states that such miracles are worthless

³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

- Giving to the poor is philadelphia love, not agape love
 - The problem with philadelphia love in the absence of agape love is that it does not lead people to real change in Jesus Christ
 - Even atheists can have philadelphia love

⁴ Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, ⁵ Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; ⁶ Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; ⁷ Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. ⁸ Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. ¹³ And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity.