

FAITH TEST

Grace Mercy Ministry

Faith Test

Copyright 2013 by **GraceMercyMinistry.com**

Published by Truth Life Publishers

Fourteenth Edition: February 2021

ISBN: 978-1-940241-92-0

Printed in the United States of America

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to our Lord and Savior Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah who inspired Paul to exhort all who claim to be disciples of Jesus to examine their faith.

INVITATION

We invite all believers in Jesus the Messiah to take the Faith Test to see if you are in the Faith.

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FOREWORD

If you have doubts about your salvation you can never be effective in sharing the gospel and you will never be able to make disciples, which is our Lord's last command (Matthew 28.19-20; Acts 1.8).

The Lord Jesus said "*If you love me keep my commandments.*" We should desire to keep His commandments, but not in a legalistic way thinking that if we keep every commandment to the letter as the Pharisees did that we will be true disciples. We should serve Jesus from a true love for what He did on the cross – shedding His blood to cleanse us of our sins and rising from the tomb to give us neverending life with Him.

Take the Faith Test and prove to yourself that you are a dedicated disciple of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 13.5).

GMM
September 2013

PREFACE

This book is designed to make believers examine their faith. Far too many “Christians” coast through life never considering their faith and salvation. They are content with the idea that if they pray before meals, read the Bible once a week, go to church regularly and give some money to the church they are secure. They never consider the possibility that they are not truly born from above.

The marks of a true believer are:

1. **Pray** (Deuteronomy 9.25-26; 1 Samuel 15.11; 1 Chronicles 16.11; Psalm 88.9; Proverbs 15.29; Isaiah 56.7; Matthew 5.44; 6.5-6; 7.7-11; 26.41; Luke 11.5-10; 18.1-8; John 14.13-14; 15.16; 16.24; Acts 1.14; 2.42; 4.31; 6.4; 1 Corinthians 7.5; Ephesians 6.18; Philippians 4.6; Colossians 4.2; 1 Thessalonians 5.17; 1 Timothy 2.1-2; 5.5; 2 Timothy 2.8; James 1.5; 1 Peter 3.7).
2. **Listen** to Scripture (Deuteronomy 4.10; Proverbs 8.34; 22.17; 23.12; Luke 8.15, 21; 11.28; James 1.22; Revelation 1.3).
3. **Read** Scripture (Deuteronomy 17.19; Isaiah 34.16; Revelation 1.3).
4. **Study** Scripture (Proverbs 2.1-5; 8.34; John 5.39; Acts 17.11; Romans 15.4; 2 Timothy 2.15).

5. **Memorize** Scripture (Deuteronomy 6.6; 11.18; 30.14; Psalm 37.31; 40.8; 119.11; Proverbs 2.1; 3.1, 3; 4.1, 21; 6.21; 22.18; Isaiah 51.7; 59.21; Ezekiel 3.10; Romans 10.8; Colossians 3.16).
6. **Meditate** on Scripture (Joshua 1.8; Job 22.22; 23.12; Psalm 1.2; 4.4; 19.14; 63.6; 77.12; 104.34; 119.15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148; 143.5; Colossians 3.16).
7. **Fellowship** with the brethren (Psalm 22.22; 119.63; Proverbs 13.20; Acts 2.42, 46-47; 5.42; Hebrews 3.13; 10.24-25; 1 John 1.7).
8. **Worship** with the brethren and privately (Deuteronomy 6.13; 26.10; 1 Chronicles 16.29; Psalm 2.11; 29.2; 96.9; 99.5, 9; 132.7; Jeremiah 7.2; Matthew 4.10; John 4.23-24; Romans 12.1; Philippians 3.3; Revelation 4.10; 14.17; 19.10; 22.9)
9. **Do good works** (Matthew 5.16; Galatians 6.9-10; Ephesians 2.10; 1 Timothy 6.18; Titos 3.14; Hebrews 10.24)
10. **Love others** (Exodus 23.4; Leviticus 19.18; Matthew 5.48; Mark 12.31; John 13.34-35; 15.12-13; Romans 12.9-14, 21; 1 Thessalonians 3.12; Hebrews 10.24; 1 Peter 1.22; 4.8; 1 John 3.16-18)
11. **Live a holy life** (Leviticus 11.44-45; 19.2; 20.7; Romans 6.5-7, 11-14; 2 Corinthians 7.1; 1 Peter 1.15-16; 2 Peter 3.11; 1 John 3.6-10).
12. **Share the Gospel** (Psalm 9.1; 26.7; 35.28; 96.2; Proverbs 11.30; Mark 16.15; Acts 2.47; 1 Peter 3.15).

13. **Be disciplined** (Proverbs 1.8; 4.1; 6.20; Eph. 4.11-13).
14. **Make disciples** (Deuteronomy 4.9-10; 6.5-7; 11.18-19; 32.46; Psalm 78.3-7; Proverbs 1.8; 4.1; 6.20; 22.6; Joel 1.3; Matthew 28.19-20; Ephesians 4.11-13; 2 Timothy 2.2).

If you have no marks or just a few marks of a true believer you need to diligently study this book and the Bible until you have all of the marks.

INTRODUCTION

Very few pastors exhort church members to examine their faith, even those who they know are living in a backslidden condition.

Paul warned the believers in Corinth to examine themselves because they were the most carnal church and they were steeped in pride:

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you unless indeed you fail the test? (2 Corinthians 13.5)

Every pastor in the world should regularly warn the congregation that if they are living in a backslidden condition they need to examine their faith. Since few pastors ever give this warning, there was a strong need for a book to do just that.

In the last century a few brave pastors warned believers that church membership is not a guarantee of salvation. Consider what Dr. Jim Binney wrote in the last year of that century:

Dr. Rod Bell, president of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship of America, estimates that **50% of church people are without Christ**. His estimate concurs with that of **Bob Jones, Sr.** ...in the 1940's he also fixed the estimate at **50%**. **Dr. B. R. Lakin** estimated that **75% are lost**. **W. A. Criswell** would be surprised to see even **25%** of his church members in heaven. **Dr. Bob Gray**, longtime pastor of the prestigious Trinity Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida, once said that probably **75% of**

those he baptized were not saved. Billy Graham puts the figure at **85%** while A. W. Tozer and Southern Baptist consultant **Jim Elliff** raise it to **90%**. These are shocking figures to be sure, but not surprising...many such lost people find their way into the roles of the church through evangelism methods that are less than thorough...In a country boasting of coast to coast Christianity with thousands of church buildings and millions of members, it is hard to realize the depth of the problem...The reason that so many who think they are saved may actually be lost is traceable to a misunderstanding about the means of salvation. Many religious people are misled into believing they are genuine Christians because of some external criteria. This may be the form of their prayer at the time of salvation. It can also include a dependence upon feelings, going forward at a public meeting, or meeting someone's expectations in any regard about the means of salvation. The Bible warns against dependency upon the wrong things for salvation (Dr. Jim Binney, *Issues of the Heart*, Fall 2000, p. 4).

Notice that some of the respected preachers cited above lived in the first half of the 20th Century (Lakin, Jones, Criswell, Graham and Tozer). If they thought most members of fundamental churches were not saved then you can be certain that even more are not saved today.

Paul warned people who thought they were born from above to check their faith. Jesus also warned people that many who think they are saved will be turned into Hell (Matthew 7.13-14, 21-23; Luke 13.24). Everyone who claims to be saved should examine their faith.

Read this book with your Bible in hand and examine your faith. You may be surprised at what you learn even if you are a dedicated disciple of Jesus.

ONE

WHY TAKE THE FAITH TEST?

Neverending Life

The primary reason why every believer should read this book is Neverending Life. This book is designed to show you how you can know for 100% certainty that you are born from above and you have Neverending Life. If Neverending Life is not important to you, you do not need to read this book.

When a person trusts in Jesus the Messiah to save him by His sacrifice on the cross, His burial and bodily resurrection three days later he is given Neverending Life:

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, **has eternal life**, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”* (John 5.24)

Yet when a person is saved his behavior, thoughts and attitudes change:

*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.* (2 Corinthians 5.17)

One’s thoughts will change from sinful ones to holy ones. A true believer will not become angry every time something goes

wrong. He will not want to get even every time someone does him harm. He will be more forgiving, thoughtful, loving and want to help others get ahead before him.

A true believer will not become a perfect angel overnight. We all struggle with sin as the Bible says:

For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. (Galatians 5.17)

Yet we will have a strong desire to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6.33) and to live a holy life:

But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." (1 Peter 1.15-16)

We will also not love the world and all of the sinful pleasures that it has to offer:

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2.15-17)

And instead of being conformed to the world and all of its fads and trends, we will be transformed by the renewing of our minds through constant study of Scripture:

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12.2)

Ultimately we will come to the place where we will daily present our bodies a “*living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God*” (Romans 12.1). Even when we get to that place in our spiritual development we will not live perfect lives. We will sin and stumble, but we will always get up, ask God for forgiveness and press on.

During our long, spiritual journey there will be peaks and valleys and there may be times when we wander away from the Lord for a season. Yet if we are truly born from above we will always come back as the prodigal son did (Luke 15.11-32). If you are a habitual prodigal son where you stray away and come back over and over something is wrong. It is strong evidence that you may not be born from above.

The only way anyone can have full assurance of one’s salvation is to see spiritual growth. A child of God will see spiritual growth, will develop strong spiritual habits and disciplines, become humble, loving, joyful, faithful, kind, merciful, gentle and charitable to the poor and needy (Galatians 5.22-23; 1 John 3.16-18). He will not have a love of the world, especially money, be proud, arrogant, boastful, angry, hateful, bitter and selfish. He will have a greater desire to see others get ahead than himself.

*“But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be **your servant**; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be **slave of all**. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*
(Mark 10.43-45)

This means the way to the top is to start at the bottom and remain at the bottom until God promotes you. There is no guarantee that believers who are truly slaves of all will be promoted to a chief position in this life. Most will be slaves of all until they die and go to be with the Lord. Then they will be promoted to a high rank and hold that position for all eternity (Luke 19.11-27).

Remember the statement by James concerning our faith:

*Even so **faith**, if it has no works is **dead**, being by itself. But someone may well say, “You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” (James 2.17-18)*

Some believers think they have faith greater than the apostles, but if that faith does not produce good deeds (fruit) it is useless. God saves people so they can do the good deeds that He has prepared for them to do (Ephesians 2.10).

Take the faith test and then set up your spiritual fitness program. Make every day of your life count for God and you will have full assurance that you are born from above and have Neverending Life.

TWO

FAITH TEST

Self examination

Loving God

The main way of knowing whether your faith is real is your love for God:

*“You shall love **the LORD your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”*
(Deuteronomy 6.5)

*“AND YOU SHALL **LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD** WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.”* (Mark 12.30)

If you truly love God that love will be demonstrated in your life. You will do all of the things in this chapter on a daily or regular basis.

Brotherly love

Another way of knowing if you have true faith and not a said faith is the love you show to the brethren:

*“A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.** By this all men will know that you are My disciples, **if you have love for one another.**” (John 13.34-35)*

*“This is My commandment, that you **love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that **one lay down his life for his friends.**** (John 15.12-13)*

***Let love be without hypocrisy.** Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. **Be devoted to one another in brotherly love;** give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, **contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.** (Romans 12.9-13)*

*For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but **through love serve one another.** (Galatians 5.13)*

*And may the Lord cause you to **increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people,** just as we also do for you. (1 Thessalonians 3.12)*

*Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are **taught by God to love one another.** (1 Thessalonians 4.9)*

*And let us consider how to **stimulate one another to love and good deeds,** not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. (Hebrews 10.24-25)*

*Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a **sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.** (1 Peter 1.22)*

Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4.8)

The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. (1 John 2.10)

*We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but **in deed and truth**. (1 John 3.16-18)*

These passages all talk about loving the brethren. True love of the brethren is not saying you love them – it is doing something.

Here is a short list of the things we can do and not do to show our love for the brethren:

1. Do no wrong to them (Romans 13.10).
2. Do not show partiality (Leviticus 19.15; 1 Timothy 5.21; James 2.1-9).
3. Do not lie or bear false witness (Proverbs 6.17, 19).
4. Do not cause strife (Proverbs 6.19).
5. Do not be a gossip (Proverbs 20.19).
6. Do good to all (Psalm 34.14; Isaiah 1.17; 1 Timothy 6.18; Hebrews 13.16).
7. Seek justice for all (Proverbs 21.3; Isaiah 1.17).
8. Defend orphans, widows, the poor and the helpless (Psalm 41.1; 82.3; Isaiah 1.17).
9. Reprove the ruthless (Isaiah 1.17)

10. When angered by a brother do not sin and be reconciled that day (Ephesian 4.26).
11. Give just wages (Colossians 4.1)
12. Be a servant (Mark 9.35; 10.43-45)
13. Encourage each other to love one another and do good works (Hebrews 10.24).
14. Encourage them to remain faithful so they are not deceived by sin (Hebrews 3.13).

All of these things except the last two are things we should also do or not do to the unsaved.

Loving your neighbor

Your neighbor is not just the people who live next door to you or down the street. Everyone you come in contact with is your neighbor. We see this in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.29-37).

So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 10.19)

“The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’” (Matthew 22.39)

Here are some things we can do to love our neighbors besides the ones listed in the previous section so that the lost will believe the Gospel:

1. Love your enemies (Matthew 5.43-48; Luke 6.27, 35)
2. Pray for your enemies (Matthew 5.44; Luke 6.28).

3. Do unto others as you would have them do to you (Matthew 7.12; Luke 6.31).
4. Feed the hungry (Proverbs 25.21; Romans 12.20)
5. Do not take revenge when wronged (Matthew 5.38-42; Romans 12.19; 1 Thessalonians 5.15)
6. Do not commit murder (Exodus 20.13).
7. Do not commit adultery (Exodus 20.14).
8. Do not steal (Exodus 20.15)
9. Do not bear false witness (Exodus 20.16)
10. Do not covet (Exodus 20.17)
11. Do good works (Matthew 5.16; Luke 6.35)
12. Lend without expecting repayment (Luke 6.35)
13. Be merciful (Matthew 5.7; Luke 6.36).
14. Seek peace (Psalm 34.14; Matthew 5.9).

Showing love by giving

One way we can love our brothers and our neighbors that most of us neglect is by giving to them:

*Now in case a countryman of yours becomes **poor** and his means with regard to you falter, then you are to **sustain him**, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. (Leviticus 25.35)*

*There is **one who scatters, and yet increases all the more, and there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want. The generous man will be prosperous, and he who waters will himself be watered.*** (Proverbs 11.24-25)

*He who despises his neighbor sins, but happy is he who is **gracious to the poor.*** (Proverbs 14.21)

*He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, but he who is **gracious to the needy** honors Him.* (Proverbs 14.31)

*One who is **gracious to a poor man** lends to the LORD, And He will repay him for his good deed.* (Proverbs 19.17)

He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be answered. (Proverbs 21.13)

*He who is **generous** will be blessed, For **he gives some of his food to the poor.*** (Proverbs 22.9)

*He who **gives to the poor** will never want, But he who shuts his eyes will have many curses.* (Proverbs 28.27)

She extends her hand to the poor, and she stretches out her hands to the needy. (Proverbs 31.20)

*“Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she **did not help the poor and needy.**”* (Ezekiel 16.49)

*"Is it not to **divide your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into the house; when you see the naked, to cover him; and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light will break out like the dawn, and your recovery will speedily spring forth; and your righteousness will go before you; the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.**"* (Isaiah 58.7-9)

“Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure -pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.” (Luke 6.38)

*Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, “One thing you lack: go and **sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.**” (Mark 10.21)*

*“**Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**” (Luke 12.33)*

*And all those who had believed were together and **had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.** (Acts 2.44-45)*

*And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to **send a contribution for the relief of the brethren** living in Judea. (Acts 11.29)*

*Contributing to the **needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.** (Romans 12.13)*

*They only asked us to **remember the poor** – the very thing I also was **eager to do.** (Galatians 2.10)*

*Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, **to be generous and ready to share.** (1 Timothy 6.18)*

Let love of the brethren continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13.1-2)

*And do not neglect doing good and **sharing**, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. (Hebrews 13.16)*

*What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? **Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.** (James 2.14-17)*

***Be hospitable to one another without complaint.** (1 Peter 4.9)*

*For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of **equality** – at this present time **your abundance being a supply for their need, so that their abundance also may become a supply for your need, that there may be equality;** as it is written, "HE WHO gathered MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO gathered LITTLE HAD NO LACK." (2 Corinthians 8.13-15)*

*"If I have kept the **poor** from their desire, Or have caused the eyes of the **widow** to fail, Or have eaten my morsel alone, And the **orphan** has not shared it (But from my youth he grew up with me as with a father, And from infancy I guided her), If I have seen anyone perish for **lack of clothing**, Or that the **needy had no covering**, If his loins have not thanked me, And if he has not been warmed with the fleece of my sheep, If I have lifted up my hand against the **orphan**, Because I saw I had support in the gate, Let my shoulder fall from the socket, And my arm be broken off at the elbow. For calamity from God is a terror to me, and because of His majesty I can do nothing." (Job 31.16-23)*

*However, **there will be no poor among you**, since the LORD will surely bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, if **only you listen obediently to the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all this commandment which I am commanding you today.** For the LORD your God will bless you as He has promised you, and you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; and you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you. If there is a **poor man** with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; **but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need** in whatever he lacks. Beware that there is no base thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,' and your eye is hostile toward your poor brother, and you give him nothing; then he may cry to the LORD against you, and **it will be a sin in you. You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings.** For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore **I command you, saying, 'You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.** (Deuteronomy 15.4-11)*

Virtually all pastors and believers ignore these commands by God to care for the poor even in their own congregation. Sure, all churches have deacon funds and supply some food for the poor, but very few congregations put the poor in the congregation first. The pastors and staff get their salaries first and if there is any money left over the poor “might” get some. The Fathers of the Church did things a different way. They made sure the orphans, widows and poor were taken care of first and if there was any left over they got it (Acts 2.44-45).

If pastors were to take a salary of whatever was left over each month there would be a revival in America greater than that of the First and Second Great Awakenings.

If you believe that God will bless those who give to the Lord why do pastors NOT give to the poor in their own congregation? There is only one answer – they are so greedy they are fearful they will not get their share.

All rich believers hate to give to the poor brethren because they think they are lazy and do not want to work yet they will not give them any work or help them get a job. Instead they pay professional gardeners, handimen, etc. to do work for them at \$20.00 or more an hour. They refuse to let starving brothers in the church do the work for even minimum wage.

WAKE UP RICH BELIEVERS!

If you have poor, unemployed men and women in your church give them work. Let them do your yards, wash your cars, do handiman work, haul trash, clean your house, paint your house, shop for you, baby-sit, etc.

If you teach a Bible class and have a poor brother who knows Scripture inside and out, pay him to do studies for you which you can use in your class. Pastors are paid to study the Bible and teach (1 Timothy 5.17) so put the poor brother to work. Spend time in Bible study with him and let him teach you.

Virtually all rich believers think they are rich because they are smarter, harder-working, more talented and have more financial skills than their poor brothers. Even if they are they did not accumulate their wealth all by themselves. God gave them their smarts, their desire to work hard, their talents and their financial skills. He gave them their ability to accumulate wealth for one reason – so they can support the poor brethren in the church, missionaries, pastors and the poor in their community. He did NOT give them their wealth so they can live high on the hog spending the wealth God gave them to satisfy their worldly desires!

Instead of pastors showing partiality to the rich in the congregation they should challenge them to help the poor in

the church or find another church to play big shot in. Pastors will not do this because they are afraid of losing their job.

Most believers ask God for more money so they can spend it on their worldly desires – not so they can help the orphans, widows, poor and needy.

You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.
(James 4.3)

Televangelists make millions every year by promising people a 10-fold to 100-fold blessing if they give to them. The suckers who watch them think they will get ten times or more back when they give to those scammers. They give to get more so they can spend the money on their sinful desires.

All televangelists would go out of business if the people who listened to them gave to the poor and needy in their church and community instead of the televangelists. According to their own belief they would get their 10-fold to 100-fold blessing if they gave to the poor and needy. Sadly, the televangelists preach that believers will only get the blessing if they give to them, the televangelists, and not to the church they belong to or to the poor and needy.

Live a holy life

Sanctification is a fancy biblical word that means “to be set apart.” A believer is sanctified when he decides to serve his Savior with all his soul, heart, mind and body (Deuteronomy 6.5; 2 Chronicles 6.14; Mark 12.30). It means to love God, the brethren the lost and living a holy life.

All believers are commanded to live holy lives:

*‘For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and **be holy, for I am holy.** And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth. For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God;*

thus you shall be holy, for I am holy.” (Leviticus 11.44-45)

*“Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘**You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.**’* (Leviticus 19.2)

*“**You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the LORD your God.**”* (Leviticus 20.7)

*Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us **cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*** (2 Corinthians 7.1)

*Pursue peace with all men, and the **sanctification** without which no one will see the Lord.* (Hebrews 12.14)

*But like the Holy One who called you, **be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”*** (1 Peter 1.15-16)

*Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people **ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness.*** (2 Peter 3.11)

Total sanctification (holiness) involves not committing sins that the lost do on a daily basis such as lying, deceiving, sexual sins, jealousy, envying, worshipping celebrities, taking drugs, drunkenness, carousing, causing strife:

*Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that **those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*** (Galatians 5.19-21)

It also means living a holy lifestyle overflowing with the fruit of the Spirit:

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5.22-24)

We refrain from committing worldly sins by denying (crucifying) our flesh and daily presenting our bodies as a sacrifice:

*For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that **our old self was crucified with Him**, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would **no longer be slaves to sin**; for he who **has died is freed from sin**.* (Romans 6.5-7)

*Even so consider yourselves to be **dead to sin**, but **alive to God in Christ Jesus**. Therefore **do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts**, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but **present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead**, and your members as **instruments of righteousness to God**. For **sin shall not be master over you**, for you are not under law but under grace.* (Romans 6.11-14)

*Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have **crucified the flesh with its passions and desires**.* (Galatians 5.22-24)

*Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice**, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.* (Romans 12.1)

Another term describing self-denial is taking up one's cross:

*“And he who does not **take his cross and follow after Me** is not worthy of Me.” (Matthew 10.38)*

*Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must **deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me**. (Matthew 16.24; Mark 8.34; Luke 9.23)*

Once we learn how to crucify our sinful flesh and daily present our bodies to God as a sacrifice we will lose our desire to seek after worldly desires, goods, fame and glory:

*But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the **world has been crucified to me, and I to the world**. (Galatians 6.14)*

***Do not love the world nor the things in the world.** If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the **lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life**, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2.15-17)*

Instead of seeking after the world and all the riches and pleasures in it we will seek after the Kingdom of Heaven:

*“But **seek first His kingdom and His righteousness**, and all these things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6.33)*

*Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, **keep seeking the things above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth**. (Colossians 3.1-2)*

*But those who **want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires** which*

plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. (1 Timothy 6.9-11)

After you have lost your desire for the world and the lusts in it you will stop sinning and will be a witness to the lost by your behavior:

Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation. (1 Peter 2.12)

Jesus also placed another demand on all who wanted to follow Him. They had to give up all they had:

“So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.” (Luke 14.33)

This does not mean we must sell everything we own except the clothes on our bodies to be able to follow Jesus. It means that if we have anything that will hold us back or keep us from following Him fully we must sell it. Some things that might rob us of time in serving Jesus can be an oversized home, numerous cars, motorcycle, a boat, an airplane, excessive clothes and jewelry or an excessive amount of worldly goods that cannot be used in serving God. Everything we have should be things that are necessary for survival or a tool that can be used in serving the Lord and the brethren.

If you have excessive wealth and possessions make them available to the members of the church you attend. Invite members to vacation with you letting them use your boat, jet ski, dirt bikes, off-road vehicle, vacation home, motorhome, airplane, etc. Pay the way of the poor in the church to go on vacation with you and spend time in fellowship.

Walking in the Light and by the Spirit

Another way to determine if you have true faith is whether or not you are walking in the Light and by the Spirit:

*If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but **if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light**, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1.6-7)*

*But I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. (Galatians 5.16)*

*If we live by the Spirit, let us also **walk by the Spirit**. (Galatians 5.25)*

If you are walking in the Light and by the power of the Holy Spirit you will be doing certain things every day. These are just a handful of them:

1. Praying always (Ephesians 6.18; 1 Thessalonians 5.17)
2. Putting on the armor of God (Ephesians 6.10-18)
3. Fighting the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6.12; 2 Tim. 2.3)
4. Being content in your circumstances (Philippians 4.3; 1 Timothy 6.6-8; Hebrews 13.5)
5. Giving thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5.18)
6. Continually offering praise to God (Hebrews 13.15)

7. Submitting to others (Ephesians 5.21)
8. Obeying your spiritual leaders (Hebrews 13.17)
9. Being rich in good works (1 Timothy 6.18; Galatians 6.10; Ephesians 2.10; 2 Timothy 3.17; Hebrews 13.16)
10. Not growing weary in doing good works (2 Thess. 3.13)
11. Leading a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity (1 Timothy 2.1)
12. Not taking revenge when wronged (Romans 12.20).

Abiding in Christ

All believers are commanded by Jesus to abide in Him:

*“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. **Abide in Me, and I in you.** As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so **neither can you unless you abide in Me.** I am the vine, you are the branches; **he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.** If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.”* (John 15.1-6)

Abiding in Jesus Christ is the same as walking in the Light and walking by the Spirit. It is not attending church services

on Sunday and Wednesday, giving a tithe, reading a chapter a day in the Bible and praying a few minutes each day. It is much more than that.

It means you are minute-by-minute trusting the Lord through each day; you are praying throughout the day and you set aside time each day to read, study, memorize and meditate on Scripture; you also fellowship with the brethren as often as possible, not just on Sunday or Wednesday; you share the Gospel with people whenever you go out into the public arena; and you also find a pastor or believer who can disciple you so you in turn can disciple your wife, children and others.

Walking in the Light and walking by the Spirit and abiding in Christ is something that very few believers do on a regular basis and virtually none do on a daily basis, including pastors and evangelists.

Are you being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ?

*For those whom He foreknew, He also **predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son**, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren. (Romans 8:29)*

Are you being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ? Has there been a noticeable change in your likes and dislikes since you trusted Jesus to save you?

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

Everyone who is truly born from above will change. You will stop doing certain things and start doing things you did not do previously. Your thought life will also change.

To determine whether something is good (honoring to God), pray, read the Bible and ask yourself if Jesus would join you.

There are a few things we know are not of God, and must be avoided at all times and at all costs such as illegal drugs and getting drunk:

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5.18)

The next time you listen to secular music, watch television and movies ask yourself if you think Jesus would enjoy spending the day listening to that music and watching those shows and movies. Not all movies and television shows are bad. Exercise great discernment in watching them. Stick to news and documentaries. The next time you watch a Hollywood production imagine Jesus is sitting next to you. Do you think He would sit through a Hollywood trash movie or television show? By the way, Jesus is with you at all times.

Sleeping, eating, moderate exercise and working are not on this list because they are pursuits of the flesh that are necessary. It is your free time that you are to examine.

All believers should spend more of their free time each day feeding their soul than feeding their flesh. Sadly, few do that. Worse yet, few believers spend more time feeding their souls than they do eating.

If you are not spending more time in spiritual activities (feeding your soul) than you do in eating (feeding your flesh) you are backslidden. Since most people take time to feed their flesh should you also take an equal amount of time in feeding your soul?

If you spend more time each day exercising the flesh (working out) than you do exercising your soul (prayer, studying the Bible and fellowship) which is more important to you – your sinful body or your eternal soul?

If you have never considered these truths it is time to examine your spiritual life. Take stock of your soul and then take action. Set up a Spiritual Fitness Program.

The Spiritual Man versus the Natural Man

Take a few minutes to examine your daily walk with Jesus:

Spiritual activities **Average time spent weekly**

Prayer _____

Reading and studying the Bible _____

Memorization and meditation _____

Worship/devotions with family _____

Fellowship/worship with believers _____

Helping others _____

Sharing the Gospel _____

Being discipled/discipling others _____

Total time serving Jesus _____

Worldly activities **Average time spent weekly**

Watching TV and movies _____

Internet _____

Reading (secular books/magazines) _____

Hobbies _____

Recreation _____

Attending sporting events _____

Socializing (in person/by phone) _____

Shopping _____

Other non-spiritual activities _____

Total time serving yourself _____

If you spend more time in worldly activities than you do in spiritual ones you have a problem. You need to reset your priorities. Set aside a specific amount of time each day to pray, read the Bible, study the Bible, and memorize and meditate on Scripture.

Fellowship with the brethren is also important. Attending church services on Sunday and Wednesday is not enough fellowship to keep a believer spiritually healthy. Everyone needs fellowship more frequently. Seek out a home Bible study or start one yourself. The first believers of the Church Age fellowshiped every day:

Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2.46-47)

God's examination of your faith

God commands all believers in His Son, Jesus Christ, to test their faith (2 Corinthians 13.5), yet He also tests all believers. He does not test us to see if we will pass or fail. He knew that before He created the Universe. He tests us periodically to show us and those around us how strong our faith in Him is.

The testing of our faith can come in various ways. The most common ways are trials and tribulations:

*And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that **tribulation brings about perseverance**; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5.3-5)*

*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the **testing of your faith produces endurance**. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1.2-4)*

If we go through the trials and tribulations that test our faith with flying colors it means our faith is strong. If we cry and whine and complain through those trials and tribulations it means our faith and love of God is weak.

If you think you have endured more trials and tribulations than most other believers study the trials that some of the great heroes of faith endured:

1. **Job** (Job 1.1-2.13; 42.10-17).
2. **Joseph** (Genesis 37.1-36; 39.1-41.57).
3. **Moses** (Exodus 16.35; 18.13-18; 24.18; 34.28 Hebrews 11.24-25).
4. **Elijah** (1 Kings 17.1-7)
5. **David** (1 Samuel 10.8-30.31).
6. **Daniel** (Daniel 6.1-28).
7. **Daniel's companions** (Daniel 3.1-30).
8. **Heroes of faith** (Hebrews 11.36-40).
9. **John the baptizer** (Mark 1.6; 6.23-29).
10. **Paul** (2 Corinthians 11.23-27).
11. **Apostle John** (Revelation 1.9).

We all go through severe trials and tribulations. The greater the trial or tribulation the greater our reward will be when we go through them praising God. We must also remember that only strong believers are put through severe trials and tribulations. So when you go through them it is a way that God shows you that you are a beloved child of His.

This may sound like an odd way for God to show his love to us, but it is one way He does. He also shows His love for us by discipling us when we disobey Him:

And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT

**REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD,
NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM.
FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE
DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON
WHOM HE RECEIVES.”** (Hebrews 12.5-6)

Loving fathers discipline their children so they do not grow up to be spoiled brats who hate God, authority and people. Likewise God disciplines His children so they do not spiritually grow up to hate Him, authority and people.

He also shows His love by giving us spiritual and physical blessings. Yet he does not shower down on us endless physical blessings because that would spoil us and turn our attention toward the world and the things in the world, something which He warned us about:

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2.15-17)

The greatest heroes of the faith have been for the most part men who were not wealthy and who endured great trials and tribulations:

1. **Job** was wealthy but he lost everything except his wife. After his trial he was given back more than he had before.
2. **Joseph** had nothing until he went through the trial of prison. He was elevated by God to the second wealthiest man in Egypt.
3. **Moses** was adopted by the wealthiest family on Earth, but lost everything when he killed an Egyptian slavemaster. He never had anything after that except trials and tribulations. His greatest trial

was babysitting the Hebrew people for forty years in the wilderness.

4. **David** was born into an average family of shepherds. He had virtually nothing until he became a captain in Saul's army. His battle victories caused King Saul to become jealous of him and finally sought to kill him. He hunted David for eight years. The first four years David eluded Saul with 600 men and the last four years he took refuge in Ziklag.
5. **Daniel** was born into a wealthy family but he was taken into Babylonian captivity. He had nothing until he was elevated to the third ruler of the empire.
6. **Daniel's companions** also had nothing until they were promoted by Daniel.
7. Some of the **heroes of faith** of the Old Testament were wealthy, but all of the prophets were poor. Elisha was offered a fantastic sum by Naaman and turned it down. Ten talents of silver and 6,000 shekels of gold (2 Kings 5.5) would come to approximately **\$182,240** (silver) plus **\$2,400,000** (gold) for a total of **\$2,582,240** in today's money. The Hebrew shekel was about 11 grams or .35 troy ounces (about 1/3 of an ounce). If we divide 6,000 shekels by 3 we have 2,000 ounces of gold. Multiply them by \$1,500 (ounce of gold) and we come up with **\$3,000,000**. The talent was 67 pounds. Ten talents of silver (670 pounds times 16 ounces) is 10,720 ounces equal to **\$182,240** at \$17 per ounce.
8. **John the Baptist** had nothing his entire adult life and died a martyr. He was the greatest person to live in the Old Testament dispensation – greater than Enoch, Job, Noah, Abraham, Issac, Jacob, Joseph, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and all the prophets.

9. **Paul** was born into a wealthy family, but once he was chosen of God he gave up his inheritance and made tents for a living (Acts 18.3).
10. **Apostle John** was born into a very wealthy family. His father Zebedee was one of the richest fishermen in Galilee if not the richest. We do not know if he inherited his father's property. He may have and he might have forsaken it when he became a disciple.

No believer should seek after the riches of this sin polluted world. Those who seek first the riches of the world and all of its pleasures rather than the Kingdom of God may not be truly born from above. If they are born again they are backslidden and the love of God is not in them (1 John 2.15-17).

Instead of seeking after the riches which will pass away forever we should seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness:

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6.33)

Remember, we must all keep our eyes on the things above and not on the things on Earth:

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3.2)

For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. (Romans 8.5)

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12.2)

As we focus on the things of the God and Heaven by being in prayer, the Word, fellowship and worship of YAHWEH every day we purify ourselves.

Jesus said the Word of God is what purifies (sanctifies) believers:

“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.” (John 15.3)

“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.” (John 17.17)

*So that He might sanctify her, having **cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.*** (Ephesians 5.26)

The Bible (Scriptures, Word of God) is truth (Psalm 119.142, 151, 160). It contains all spiritual truth that a believer needs to live a holy life for the glory of God. That is why a believer must burn the Bible into his soul – hearing, reading, studying, memorizing and meditating on It every day as often as possible. Study Chapter Three diligently and set up your Spiritual Fitness Program.

God also uses trials and tribulations to sanctify His children:

*Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because **he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin**, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you. (1 Peter 4.1-4)*

Study these passages to learn more about suffering for God:

1. Matthew 5.11
2. Matthew 10.22
3. 1 Peter 2.18-25

4. 1 Peter 3.14-17
5. 1 Peter 4.12-19

Remember this truth:

*Indeed, **all** who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus **will be persecuted.*** (2 Timothy 3.12)

Never forget that God will not let you go through any trial or tribulation by yourself. He is with you all the time through every hardship and He will bring you through them all:

*After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself **perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.*** (1 Peter 5.10)

Memorize Romans 8.18 and recite it when you encounter various trials and tribulations. It will help you through them.

*For I consider that the **sufferings of this present time** are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

Let the Word of God comfort you when you suffer for Him. Read, study, memorize and meditate on the Word as much as you can.

Conclusion

If you have been faithful in one or more of these aspects of living a life that brings glory to God it is a good sign that your faith is real, but no one can have full assurance until he does the following on a daily/regular basis:

1. Love God.
2. Love the brethren.
3. Love your neighbor.
4. Give to the poor and needy.
5. Live a holy life.

6. Walk in the Light.
7. Walk by the Spirit.
8. Abide in Christ.
9. Be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.
10. Endure trials and tribulations.

If you have asked Jesus Christ to save you relying on His blood to cleanse you of your sins and His physical resurrection from the dead and ascension to Heaven and you do the things noted previously on a daily and regular basis you have full assurance you are saved. If you are lacking in any of these things you cannot have full assurance you are born from above.

If you have any doubts about your salvation examine your confession of faith:

1. Do you believe that Jesus died for your sins on the cross? (1 Corinthians 15.3)
2. Do you believe He rose bodily on the third day? (1 Corinthians 15.4)
3. Do you believe His blood cleanses you of all of your sins? [past, present, future] (Ephesians 1.7; Revelation 1.5).
4. Have you called on His name asking Him to save you? (Romans 10.13)

If you believe the first three things noted above and have not called on the name of Jesus Christ asking Him to save you – do it now.

If you believe the above things concerning Jesus and have called on Him to save you, but have had doubts about your salvation call on Him now and ask Him to save you.

If you call on Him now write down on a piece of paper the date, the location and the names of those who are with you. Put it in your Bible and every time Satan attacks you with doubt pull it out and say, “I have trusted in Jesus as my Savior and I am still trusting in Him. Begone, Satan!”

THREE

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I PASS?

God commands every child of His to be spiritually fit. This includes denying oneself of the pleasures of the world, living a holy and disciplined life, daily study of Scripture, living by every Word that proceeds from His mouth and then teaching others:

*But like the Holy One who called you, **be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”*** (1 Peter 1.15-16)

*Be diligent to present yourself **approved to God** as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.* (2 Timothy 2.15)

Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, **examining the Scriptures daily** to see whether these things were so. (Acts 17.11)

*But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘**MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.**’”* (Matthew 4.4)

*They were **continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*** (Acts 2.42)

Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart (Acts 2.46)

*And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, **not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some**, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. (Hebrews 10.24-25)*

*"Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28.19-20)*

*"These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. **You shall teach them diligently to your sons** and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." (Deuteronomy 6.6-7)*

Set up your Spiritual Fitness Program

God commands every child of His to be spiritually fit. This includes denying oneself of the pleasures of the world, living a holy and disciplined life, daily study of Scripture, living by every Word that proceeds from His mouth and then teaching others:

Therefore since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. (1 Peter 4.1-2)

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"These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." (Deuteronomy 6.6-7)

There are a few basic things that a believer in Jesus Christ must do to become a faithful *disciple*:

- 1. Pray** (Deuteronomy 9.25-26; 1 Samuel 15.11; 1 Chronicles 16.11; Psalm 88.9; Proverbs 15.29; Isaiah 56.7; Matthew 5.44; 6.5-6; 7.7-11; 26.41; Luke 11.5-10; 18.1-8; John 14.13-14; 15.16; 16.24; Acts 1.14; 2.42; 4.31; 6.4; 1 Corinthians 7.5; Ephesians 6.18; Philippians 4.6; Colossians 4.2; 1 Thessalonians 5.17; 1 Timothy 2.1-2; 5.5; 2 Timothy 2.8; James 1.5; 1 Peter 3.7).
- 2. Listen** to Scripture (Deuteronomy 4.10; Proverbs 8.34; 22.17; 23.12; Luke 8.15, 21; 11.28; James 1.22; Revelation 1.3).
- 3. Read** Scripture (Deuteronomy 17.19; Isaiah 34.16; Revelation 1.3).

4. **Study** Scripture (Proverbs 2.1-5; 8.34; John 5.39; Acts 17.11; Romans 15.4; 2 Timothy 2.15).
5. **Memorize** Scripture (Deuteronomy 6.6; 11.18; 30.14; Psalm 37.31; 40.8; 119.11; Proverbs 2.1; 3.1, 3; 4.1, 21; 6.21; 22.18; Isaiah 51.7; 59.21; Ezekiel 3.10; Romans 10.8; Colossians 3.16).
6. **Meditate** on Scripture (Joshua 1.8; Job 22.22; 23.12; Psalm 1.2; 4.4; 19.14; 63.6; 77.12; 104.34; 119.15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148; 143.5; Colossians 3.16).
7. **Fellowship** with the brethren (Psalm 22.22; 119.63; Proverbs 13.20; Acts 2.42, 46-47; 5.42; Hebrews 3.13; 10.24-25; 1 John 1.7).
8. **Worship** with the brethren and privately (Deuteronomy 6.13; 26.10; 1 Chronicles 16.29; Psalm 2.11; 29.2; 96.9; 99.5, 9; 132.7; Jeremiah 7.2; Matthew 4.10; John 4.23-24; Romans 12.1; Philippians 3.3; Revelation 4.10; 14.17; 19.10; 22.9)
9. **Do good works** (Matthew 5.16; Galatians 6.9-10; Ephesians 2.10; 1 Timothy 6.18; Titos 3.14; Hebrews 10.24)
10. **Love others** (Exodus 23.4; Leviticus 19.18; Matthew 5.48; Mark 12.31; John 13.34-35; 15.12-13; Romans 12.9-14, 21; 1 Thessalonians 3.12; Hebrews 10.24; 1 Peter 1.22; 4.8; 1 John 3.16-18)
11. **Live a holy life** (Leviticus 11.44-45; 19.2; 20.7; Romans 6.5-7, 11-14; 2 Corinthians 7.1; 1 Peter 1.15-16; 2 Peter 3.11; 1 John 3.6-10).

12. Share the Gospel (Psalm 9.1; 26.7; 35.28; 96.2; Proverbs 11.30; Mark 16.15; Acts 2.47; 1 Peter 3.15).

13. Be discipled (Proverbs 1.8; 4.1; 6.20; Eph. 4.11-13).

14. Make disciples (Deuteronomy 4.9-10; 6.5-7; 11.18-19; 32.46; Psalm 78.3-7; Proverbs 1.8; 4.1; 6.20; 22.6; Joel 1.3; Matthew 28.19-20; Ephesians 4.11-13; 2 Timothy 2.2).

1. **PRAY:** Pray often for your family, friends, fellow employees, employer, church members, pastors, and city, state and federal politicians. Pray with your family daily and with church members on a regular basis. Begin and end each day in prayer, and pray throughout the day. Pray that God teach you each day as you study His word.

2. **LISTEN TO SCRIPTURE:** Play recordings of the Bible and listen to sermons and Bible studies.

3. **READ SCRIPTURE:** Make a reading program and stay with it. If you read three chapters a day in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament you will read the Bible through in one year. It is also important to read one chapter of Proverbs each day. It does not take more than a half-hour a day to read five chapters. If you watch TV have your Bible handy and read a chapter during commercial breaks. Anyone could read ten chapters a day by just taking a Bible break during commercials.

4. **STUDY SCRIPTURE:** Choose a book of the Bible or a topic to study, and stay with it until you finish it.

5. **MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE:** Memorize key verses from both the Old and New Testaments.

6. **MEDITATE ON SCRIPTURE:** Once you have a few verses memorized you can meditate on them any time of the day, and wherever you are. Until then keep a pocket Bible or pocket New Testament handy. Keep a Bible and a few New Testaments in your car at all times for yourself and others. Get into the habit of giving out Bibles and pocket New Testaments.

7. **FELLOWSHIP WITH THE BRETHREN:** Become an active member of a church. Support the church with your time, talents, treasure and spiritual gifts. If you cannot find a real church meet with believers in a home.

8. **WORSHIP:** It is so important that there are more commands to worship God than to pray, study the Bible, memorize Scripture or meditate on the Word. Every believer should spend time each day worshipping God. We worship God by being silent and meditating on the blessings He has given you; by thanking and praising Him by rejoicing and singing.

9. **DO GOOD WORKS:** Believers are commanded and encouraged to do good works to fellow believers, but everyone they come in contact with. Those good works can be giving them a cup of cold water to giving them enough money to solve a problem they face.

10. **LOVE OTHERS:** All believers in Jesus Christ are commanded to love fellow believers, but also the lost. We do that by helping others when they need help. Giving them money, doing work for them, taking them places, listening to them, encouraging them, praying and studying the Bible with them, worshipping God together and forgiving them are just a few things we can do to love others.

11. **LIVE A HOLY LIFE:** We are commanded in the Old and New Testaments to live a holy life. Everything we do is done to bring glory to God (1 Corinthians 10.31) rather than to

ourselves. We practice righteousness and keep the commandments of God (1 John 3.7). We also do not practice sin (1 John 3.8-9) – that is commit one or more sins willingly on a regular basis rather than unintentionally. We all sin every day, but those who live a holy life take steps to limit their sins of commission.

12. SHARE THE GOSPEL: Once you learn how to share the Gospel be ready to do so 24/7. Be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit to share the Gospel. Carry tracts with you and hand them out as you are prompted by the Holy Spirit. If the person(s) wants to talk – speak with them, but if they do not want to talk ask them to read the tract, and pray as you walk away. Keep a diary of your witnessing. When you lead someone to the Lord invite them to church and make sure they become an active member. If you are not mature enough to disciple them ask your pastor(s) to find someone to disciple them.

13. BE DISCIPLED: Find someone to disciple you or find a good book on discipleship such as *Make Disciples of all the Nations*.

14. MAKE DISCIPLES: Once you have been discipled, start to disciple others. If you are a husband disciple your wife. If you are a father disciple your children. If you are a mother disciple your children with your husband. If you are single lead a person to the Lord and disciple him/her. Never disciple a person of the opposite sex unless you are engaged.

If one develops a discipline in these basics of holy living he will become a *disciple* of Jesus Christ. It does not happen overnight. It takes many years to become a mature *disciple*, but it starts with the daily discipline of being in prayer, in the Word and in regular fellowship with other believers.

Pray in the morning, throughout the day and before you go to sleep. Set up a daily Bible reading program. If you read 4 chapters a day you will read through the Bible in a year. Read 3 chapters in the Old Testament each day and 1 chapter in the

New Testament. Buy an audio copy of the Bible, and listen to it at home and in the car. Buy DVDs of movies about the Bible and watch them often (*The Gospel of John, Peter and Paul, The Greatest Story Ever Told, King of Kings*, etc.). Memorize Scripture. If you memorize one verse a week you will have 52 verses memorized in one year. Meditate on Scripture and let the Holy Spirit teach you. Learn how to share the gospel. Ask your pastor to train you, and then share your personal testimony and the gospel as the Lord leads.

As you grow in the Lord you will pray more, and listen to, read, study, memorize and meditate on Scripture more and more. You will share your gospel more often, and spend more time in fellowship with other believers.

Verses that every believer should have memorized are those dealing with the Gospel and evangelism:

1. **All have sinned** – Romans 3.23.
2. **The wages of sin is death** – Romans 6.23.
3. **Judgment** – Mark 8.36-37; Hebrews 9.27.
4. **Jesus is the only way** – John 14.6; Acts 4.12; Romans 5.12.
5. **Gift of eternal life** – John 1.12; John 3.16; Rom. 6.23.
6. **Faith in Jesus** – Romans 10.9-10, 13; Ephesians 2.8-9.
7. **Evangelism** - Matthew 28.19-20; Acts 1.8.

Choose verses on specific topics that help you in your daily walk. Here are some examples:

1. **Eternal security** – John 5.24; 6.37; 10.27-29; 20.31; 1 John 5.10-13.
2. **Holiness/Sanctification** – Psalm 119.11; Prov. 8.13; Romans 12.1-2; 1 Cor. 10.31; 2 Corinthians 5.17; 6.14-18; Galatians 5.13-26; Colossians 3.16; James 4.1-10; 1 Peter 1.15-16; 1 John 2.15-17.
3. **Love** – Matthew 5.43-48; 1 Corinthians 13.1-13.

4. **Blessed hope** – 1 Thess. 4.16-18; Tit. 2.13; 1 Jn. 3.2-3.
5. **Brotherly love** – John 13.34-35; 1 John 3.16-18
6. **Peace** – Philippians 4.7.
7. **Prayer** – Matt. 7.7; John 14.13-14; 1 John 3.22; 5.14.
8. **Prosperity** – Psalm 1.
9. **Protection** – Psalm 23.
10. **Spiritual warfare** – Ephesians 6.10-18.
11. **Strength** – Isaiah 40.29-31; Eph. 3.16; Phil. 4.13.
12. **Sufficiency** – Philippians 4.19.
13. **Temptation** – 1 Corinthians 10.13.
14. **Tongue** – James 3.1-18.

As you grow in the Lord you will pray more, and listen to, read, study, memorize and meditate on Scripture more and more. You will share your gospel more often, and spend more time in fellowship with other believers.

ALL believers in Jesus should want to please their Savior every day of their life. We should be eager to study His Word daily to take in as much wisdom as possible so we can present to Him a “*heart of wisdom*” (Psalm 90.12) so when He calls us home He will say to us, “*Well done good and faithful servant*” (Matthew 25.23).

Conclusion

The more you pray, study the Bible, fellowship, worship God and share the Gospel the closer you will grow to Him. You will lose your desire for the lusts of the flesh and the world and focus on spiritual things. It will take time to give up the world, but after several years you will see that everything the world has to offer is meaningless. The riches, fame, glory, power and pleasures of this life are for a moment:

*Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a **vapor** that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.* (James 4.14)

Consider carefully what is more important to you and we pray you follow the example of Moses:

*By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, **choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.*** (Hebrews 11.24-25)

Also consider the truth that the greatest man to live in the Old Testament dispensation was also the poorest. Jesus said John the Baptist was the greatest man to ever live up to that time (Matthew 11.11).

All the things the world offers will be gone when you die and life is very brief when compared to eternity. The choice is yours:

Riches, fame, glory, power and pleasures in this very short life.

Riches, fame, glory, power and pleasures for all eternity with Jesus Christ.

If you are thinking you can have both you are wrong. If you made a confession of faith just to get fire insurance and then live the rest of your life like the wicked you have been deceived:

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” (Matthew 6.24)

FOUR

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I DO NOT PASS?

If you fail the Faith Test it could mean your confession of faith was not real. You may have made a profession of faith to please a loved one or because of an emotional high.

Saying a prayer does not save. Most people who recite a prayer that a televangelist or pastor leads them to say are not born again because they were not sincere. If there is no change in one's life their confession was not real.

A people who are truly born from above see a dramatic change in their life. They suddenly have a change in likes and dislikes. They have a desire to read and study the Bible. They desire to pray and fellowship with other believers. They also develop a love for the lost and share the Gospel with them as the Holy Spirit leads.

If you failed the Faith Test and you have a desire to know for certain that you are saved you should make a public profession of faith. Tell the pastor of the church you attend that you want to make a profession of faith before the brethren. Explain to the pastor that you thought you were saved, but realized there was no change in your life. Tell him you want to make certain that you are saved and you desire to make a public profession.

Once you have declared your trust in Jesus Christ before others set up a spiritual fitness program. Go back to Chapter Three.

We must remember that there will be billions of people come judgment day who thought they were saved, but were not:

*“Enter through the **narrow gate**; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the **gate is small** and the **way is narrow that leads to life**, and there are **few who find it.**”* (Matthew 7.13-14)

*“**Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven**, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, **‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.**”* (Matthew 7.21-23)

Some of the people who will be cast into the Lake of Fire will have truly sought to be saved, but they searched for salvation through the wrong door:

*“Strive to enter through the **narrow door**; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will **not be able.**”* (Luke 13.24)

Come judgment day there will be millions of Roman Catholics, Orthodox Catholics, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists and Armstrongites who will be cast into the Lake of Fire. The overwhelming majority of them will think they were saved. They sought salvation through a false gospel (Galatians 1.6, 9).

There will also be millions of Protestants of all denominations who will join them. The vast majority of them will also think they were saved because they were a member of a church, they attended services regularly, they tithed and

pitched in whenever the church needed help. Yet they never had a personal relationship with Jesus and they never fellowshiped with them.

Judas was a disciple who looked like he was a very dedicated follower of Jesus. He was entrusted with the money bag and sat next to Jesus at the Last Supper (John 13.26). He also cast out demons, raised the dead and healed people when the twelve were sent out (Matthew 10.1, 7-8). Yet he betrayed Jesus for money and later hung himself (Matthew 27.3-5). He was never saved. He was a false believer and there have one of millions throughout the Church Age who departed from the faith for he never had faith (1 John 2.19).

A person can say a prayer, live a holy life, fall away and come back and always have been saved. Yet if one falls away and does not have a desire to come back that is strong evidence they never were truly saved. So-called “Christians” who live like the wicked are fooling themselves. No one can serve God and mammon (Matthew 6.24).

When a person trusts Jesus to save them from eternal punishment they become a new person:

*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.** (2 Corinthians 5.17).*

Christians who claim to be born again, but live a life of sin are in grave danger of hellfire. If you have a besetting sin you need to overcome it by the power of the Holy Spirit:

*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also **lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.** (Hebrews 12.1)*

If you overcome it that is a strong proof that you are born from above. If you do not overcome it that could be evidence that you are not saved.



DISCIPLESHIP 101-501

The five discipleship books are designed to take a newborn babe in Christ to full spiritual maturity. They are so comprehensive that every man called to be a pastor can use them to be fully trained to be a pastor. They are not study books designed to indoctrinate the reader into the dogmas of a specific denomination or church. They only help the student of the Bible study the Bible inside and out and burn the Scriptures into his soul. These workbooks can be used by any and all denominations and churches.

Read them online at GraceMercyMinistry.com or order a copy from – dovbooks@yahoo.com

AFTERWORD

NO one should take their salvation for granted. You may have said the sinner's prayer while watching a televangelist, or at church, a crusade, a conference, a retreat, with a friend or by yourself, but saying a sinner's prayer does not save you. Billions of people have said a sinner's prayer, but they will be cast into the Lake of Fire come judgment day.

It is not the act of praying that saves. God the Father draws a person to Jesus (John 6.44), gives him to Jesus (John 6.37), the Holy Spirit convicts him (John 16.8), the Father gives him a measure of faith (Romans 12.3) and the person responds by calling upon the name of God which is God (Joel 2.32; Acts 2.21; Romans 10.13). What the person says is important, but he does not have to recite a specific prayer that the televangelist, pastor or friend leads him to say. He can just say what the publican said, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" (Luke 18.13).

If you understand the Gospel – Jesus died on the cross shedding His blood to cleanse you of your sins (Revelation 1.5), He was buried, He rose bodily three days later and appeared to His disciples (1 Corinthians 15.3-8) – and you believe the Gospel you are saved when you cry out to Jesus to save you.

You will see a change in your life if you were sincere in your call for mercy. You will want to pray frequently, not just before meals. You will want to read, study, memorize and meditate on the Bible. You will want to fellowship with other believers. You will want to share the Gospel with others. You will want to be disciple and then make disciples.

You will NOT go on living the same old lifestyle that you lived before you cried out for mercy. If you continue in your old ways it means your plea for mercy was not sincere. You did it to please your spouse, friends, parents or you did it because you were caught up in the excitement of the moment.

If you think your confession of faith was not sincere because you have lived like you always did beforehand, study the Gospel presentation in Appendix A. If you want to be saved after you have studied the verses carefully cry out to Jesus asking Him to be merciful to you a sinner. Once you have been born from above go back to Chapter Three and set up your spiritual fitness program. Start small and build from there.

Once again consider what some of the most respected fundamental pastors and evangelists said concerning church members:

Dr. Rod Bell, president of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship of America, estimated that **50% of church people are without Christ**. His estimate concurs with that of **Bob Jones, Sr.** ...in the 1940's he also fixed the estimate at **50%**. **Dr. B. R. Larkin** estimated that **75% are lost**. **W. A. Criswell** would be surprised to see even **25%** of his church members in Heaven. **Dr. Bob Gray**, longtime pastor of the prestigious Trinity Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida, once said that probably **75% of those he baptized were not saved**. **Billy Graham** puts the figure at **85%** while **A. W. Tozer** and Southern Baptist consultant **Jim Elliff** raise it to **90%**. These are shocking figures to be sure, but not surprising...many such lost people find their way into the roles of the church through evangelism methods that are less than thorough...In a country boasting of coast to coast Christianity with thousands of church buildings and millions of members, it is hard to realize the depth of the problem...The reason that so many who think they are saved may actually be lost is traceable to a misunderstanding about the means of salvation. Many

religious people are misled into believing they are genuine Christians because of some external criteria. This may be the form of their prayer at the time of salvation. It can also include a dependence upon feelings, going forward at a public meeting, or meeting someone's expectations in any regard about the means of salvation. The Bible warns against dependency upon the wrong things for salvation (Dr. Jim Binney, *Issues of the Heart*, Fall 2000, p. 4).

Pastor	Percentage NOT saved
Dr. Rod Bell (1934)	50%
Bob Jones, Sr. (1883-1968)	50%
Dr. B. R. Lakin (1901-1984)	75%
W. A. Criswell (1909-2002)	75%
Dr. Bob Gray (1926-2007)	75%
Billy Graham (1918-2018)	85%
A W. Tozer (1897-1963)	90%
Jim Elliff	90%

If these pastors and evangelist are even close in their guesstimate of how many members of solid Bible churches in America are NOT saved it means that several hundred million church members in the 20th and now 21st centuries went to Hell and will go to Hell!

Do NOT take a chance of being among them! Study the Gospel presented in Appendix A and trust Jesus to save you. Cry out to Jesus to have mercy on you as the tax collector did, “*And the tax-gather standing afar off would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but struck his chest saying, ‘God, be merciful to me the sinner’*” (Luke 18.13).

Then live for God every day of the rest of your life. Set up your Spiritual Fitness Program (Chapter 3), go through the discipleship course (*Discipleship 101-501*), find someone to disciple you and then make disciples. If you cannot find someone to disciple you contact Grace Mercy Discipleship Institute – gracemercy.ministry@yahoo.com

FINAL WORD

To see exactly how dedicated you are to God the Father and your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ answer these questions:

Do you consider all of your worldly goods to be nothing but rubbish?

Do you consider your career, home, bank account, stocks, bonds, cars, planes, boats, motorcycles, art collection, jewelry, clothing, gold and silver stash, guns and other valuables to be rubbish? Or are some or all of these worldly things more important to you than serving God with all of your heart, soul, mind and body?

Do you spend more time playing with your worldly goods or serving the Lord?

Do you believe you were bought with a price – the blood of Jesus Christ and that you are not your own boss? (1 Corinthians

Do you believe you should deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus?

Do you believe that you must be willing to sell all that you have to be His disciple?

Do you believe you must love God more than your family and yourself to be His disciple? (Luke 14.26)

Do you believe that everything you do should be done for the glory of God? (1 Corinthians 10.31)

Do you believe you should present your body as a living sacrifice? (Romans 12.1)

Do you believe you must not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing your mind daily through prayer and the study of the Bible? (Romans 12.2)

If you believe these things then do them.

Every believer “*shall give account of himself to God*” (Romans 14.12). We all want to hear the words from Him, “*Well done, good and faithful slave*” (Matthew 25.21). Be a faithful *disciple*.

Meditate on these passages to see how you can be a faithful *disciple* of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave: you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.’” (Matthew 25.21)

You also need to answer the following questions:

1. Should every believer pray every day and how often should we pray?
2. Should every believer read the Bible every day and how much should we read?
3. Should every believer study the Bible every day and how often should we study the Bible?
4. Should every believer memorize Scripture on a regular basis and how many verses should a believer memorize?
5. Should every believer meditate on Scripture every day and how often should we meditate?

The answers to these questions are:

1. Yes and throughout each day (Ephesians 5.18; 1 Thessalonians 5.17)
2. Yes! By reading four chapters a day you can read through the Bible in a year. (Deuteronomy 17.19; Isaiah 34.16; Revelation 1.3).
3. Yes! Even a short devotional or quiet time is good. One should also spend an hour or more once a week studying a specific book in the Bible or doctrine. (Acts 17.11; Romans 15.4; 2 Timothy 2.15).

4. Yes! The Bible does not say we should memorize a specific number of verses, but a conservative number would be one per month. (Dueteronomy 6.6; Romans 10.8; Colossians 3.16)
5. Yes! We should meditate on Scripture throughout each day. (Joshua 1.8; Psalm 1.2; 63.6)

APPENDIX A

WHAT YOU MUST DO TO BE SAVED

For those who want to spend eternity with Jesus Christ instead of the Lake of Fire there is Hope! Everyone is a sinner in need of salvation:

For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.
(Romans 3.23)

Those who die in their sins will be judged and suffer punishment in the Lake of Fire for all eternity:

And inasmuch as it is appointed for men once to die, and after this comes judgment. (Hebrews 9.27)

“And these will go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matthew 25.46)

He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. (John 3.36)

And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20.15)

All the riches and pleasures of this short life are not worth exchanging for eternal life, riches and pleasures beyond comprehension:

“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark 8.36-37)

Yet even though all have sinned, one can escape eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire, and have eternal life through Jesus Christ:

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6.23)

Salvation is available to all:

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5.8)

Belief in Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved:

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (John 14.6)

“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4.12)

Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone:

For by grace you have been saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2.8-9)

What must one do to be saved?

That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (Romans 10:9-10)

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. (1 John 1.9-10)

If you believe God the Father raised Jesus from the dead, call upon Jesus Christ to save you right now:

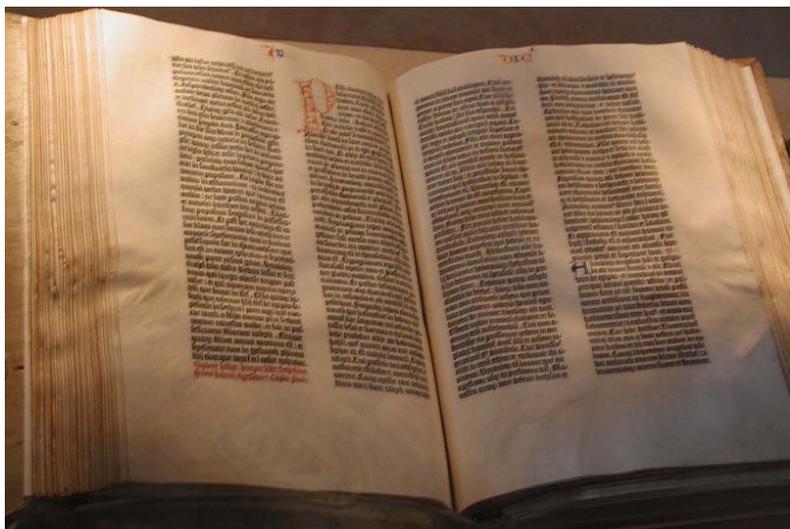
For “WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.” (Romans 10.13)

Today is your day of salvation:

Behold, now is “THE ACCEPTABLE TIME,” behold, now is “THE DAY OF SALVATION.” (2 Corinthians 6.2b)

Receive Jesus today for you do not know what tomorrow may bring:

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name. (John 1.12)



PROVERBS TO LIVE BY

Proverbs is filled with practical advice on how to live a holy life that is pleasing to God and will bring glory to Him. We encourage every believer in Jesus Christ to study Proverbs daily. This book is an aid to assist you in that great privilege.

Read it online at GraceMercyMinistry.com or order a copy from – dovbooks@yahoo.com

APPENDIX B

BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

And be not drunk with wine in which is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5.18)

Believers in Jesus Christ are not to be intoxicated (drunk) with wine and in like manner to not get “high” with drugs (legal or illegal). Instead we are to “*be filled with the Spirit.*” What does it mean to “*be filled with the Spirit*”? Does it mean we must have a “second blessing” in which the Holy Spirit empowers us to do the work of the Lord?

Scripture does not say that before we can be “*filled*” or empowered with and by the Holy Spirit we must have a special “second blessing.” Instead it is a daily activity. It is something we must do when we first awake and then throughout the day.

The first thing we should do when we wake up is ask the Holy Spirit to fill us and lead us that day. Prayer at the beginning of a day makes it go by much more smoothly. Prayer gets us in the proper attitude so we can let our light shine throughout the entire day. The second thing one should consider is spending time in the Word. A quiet time in the Word when one first gets up fills us with the Word. Being filled with the Word and the Holy Spirit is the same thing because the words that Jesus spoke are “*spirit*” and “*life*” (John 6.63). Not only are the words that He spoke “*spirit*” and “*life*” but all Scripture is:

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3.16)

Prayer throughout the day (1 Thessalonians 5.17) is a spiritual habit that keeps our mind set on the things above and not the things of this sin-filled world (Colossians 3.2). Being filled with the Word several times throughout the day is another spiritual habit that will conform us to the image of Jesus (Romans 8.29). Taking Bible breaks is vital to be continually “*filled*” with the Holy Spirit. Take a Bible or New Testament with you when you leave home and read a few chapters during the day. If you cannot take a Bible with you to work or when you are out meditate on Scripture that you have memorized. When you hide the Word of God in your heart you always have it with you to meditate on.

By praying several times throughout the day and taking Bible breaks one can continually be “*filled*” with the Holy Spirit. The more often one feeds on Scripture and prays the more he will grow. Babies would die within a few days if they were not given food. The same is true of newborn believers. If they are not given spiritual food they quickly die spiritually. The more spiritual food they receive the faster and stronger they grow. One or two twenty minute sermons each week may keep a believer alive spiritually, but that is life-support nourishment. To grow into a strong, mature and vital disciple one must feed on Scripture several times each day. All believers need to listen to, read, study, memorize and meditate on Scripture daily and wash the Word down with prayer. If you do that faithfully every day God will bless you with myriad spiritual blessings, not physical blessings.

If you want to be a disciplined and dedicated disciple of Jesus you must be a spiritual glutton, feeding on the holy Word of God throughout each day and praying always. Instead of being a glutton of physical food and pleasures of the world be a glutton of spiritual food.

APPENDIX C

HUMILITY

Humility is a spiritual trait that few believers in Jesus Christ have because it is impossible to obtain it through the flesh. Humility only comes when a believer surrenders his life to the Lord every day. Surrender is daily obedience to God and dying to oneself, the flesh and the world.

One obeys God by praying throughout the day from morning to night (1 Thessalonians 5.17); by daily reading, studying, memorizing and meditating on Scripture; by regular fellowship with the brethren (Acts 2.42, 46-47; Hebrews 3.13; 10.24-25); by continual sharing of the Gospel (Psalm 96.2; Acts 2.47; 1 Peter 3.15) and by making disciples (Matthew 28.19-20; 1 Timothy 2.15).

One dies daily to self by not doing things that feed the ego. Instead of spending time seeking to have your ego built up by the approval, attention, love, respect and honor from others, and seeking fame, glory and riches we need to seek how we can build others up by giving approval to their good deeds, and by giving them attention, love, respect and honor (Philippians 2.1-9). The road to humility is travelled by building others up in the faith, not demanding others build us up in the faith or build up our egos.

A believer also dies to the flesh daily by not engaging in things that the sinful flesh desires and which are sins. Two of the most prevalent sins of the flesh are gluttony and intoxication (by alcohol or drugs). Excessive indulgence in some other activities of the flesh that are not a sin, which most

believers should consider reducing, are: sex (with spouse), partying, sports, hobbies, vacationing and chit-chatting.

The way to die to yourself is to spend more time in spiritual activities than of the flesh which are not necessary for survival. Everyone must eat to live, but gluttony is a sin. Everyone needs bodily exercise, but excessive exercise is a misuse of the Lord's time. The same is true of partying, sports, hobbies, vacationing and chit-chatting. These things are not sins, but excessive indulgence in them is.

A believer dies to the world by reducing his involvement in worldly activities or by cutting them out altogether. Some other worldly activities that most believers spend far too much time in are: television, movies, music, Internet, politics, non-spiritual books and magazines, and seeking after wealth and possessions. Every believer who desires to die to himself and live a holy life for the glory of God will spend more time each day in prayer, Scripture, fellowship and soul-winning than in activities of the world.

We know we are growing in the Lord and dying to ourselves, the flesh and the world when our self love, our love of the flesh and our love of the world diminishes as it should:

Love not the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts, but the one who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2.15-17)

The more these sinful desires diminish the more humble one will be. Pride is the opposite of humility. Pride is the root of every sin. There is no sin a person can commit that does not spring from pride. That is why the key to holy living is humility which replaces pride, and when pride is vanquished so is sin. No one can ever eliminate all traces of pride and sin, but it should be the goal of every true believer.

Humility is a spiritual trait that every believer should not only desire, but actively seek after. God does not use His children to bring Him glory until they are humble. A believer who humbles himself before God will be looked upon by God with grace (Isaiah 66.2; Proverbs 3.34; James 4.6) and He will have regard for him (Psalm 138.6). When we humble ourselves before God and those around us He will exalt us (James 4.10). We must never forget that all believers are commanded to “*humble*” themselves before God (1 Peter 5.6), “*walk humbly with*” God (Micah 6.8), be “*humble in spirit*” (1 Peter 3.8), clothe themselves “*with humility*” (1 Peter 5.5) and to not be proud (Romans 12.16).

Humility is always better than pride (Proverbs 16.19) and it is the only way to obtain true riches, honor and life (Proverbs 22.4). Pride will bring a person down while humility will bring him honor (Proverbs 11.2; 16.18; 29.23). We must also remember that there are numerous warnings against pride (Psalm 10.2; 40.4; 73.6; 119.78; Proverbs 3.7; 26.12; 28.25; Isaiah 5.21; 13.11; John 9.41; Revelation 3.17). Pride is a sin (Proverbs 21.4), one of the seven things that God hates and that is an abomination to Him (Proverbs 6.17; 8.13).

Humility is one of the most difficult traits for anyone to obtain. No one can be humble in his own power. We must rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to impart humility to us. Yet there are specific things we must do on a daily and regular basis before He will give us humility. The daily things we should do as noted previously are pray, read, study, memorize and meditate on Scripture. The things one should do on a regular basis are fellowship with the brethren and share the Gospel with the lost as the Holy Spirit leads. These are the basics, but there are many other things a dedicated believer should do on a daily basis:

1. Seek first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6.33).
2. Put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6.10-18).
3. Fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6.12).
4. Transform your mind (Romans 12.2).
5. Take up your cross (Matthew 10.38-39; 16.24-26).

6. Deny yourself (Romans 12.1).
7. Be content in your circumstances (Phil. 4.3; 1 Tim. 6.6-8; Hebrews 13.5).
8. Give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thess. 5.18).
9. Continually offer praise to God (Hebrews 13.15).
10. Forsake the world and all that is in it (Romans 12.2; Galatians 6.14; 1 Peter 1.14; 1 John 2.15-17).
11. Flee from seeking after riches (1 Timothy 6.9-11).
12. Submit to others (Ephesians 5.21).
13. Obey your spiritual leaders (Hebrews 13.17).
14. Love the brethren (John 13.34-35; James 2.15-16; 1 John 3.16-18).
15. Love the lost and your enemies (Prov. 25.21; Matthew 5.43-48).
16. Be rich in good works (1 Timothy 6.18; Galatians 6.10; Eph. 2.10; 2 Timothy 3.17; Hebrews 13.16)
17. Grow not weary in doing good works (2 Thess. 3.13)
18. Give to those in need (Leviticus 25.35; Deut. 15.7; Proverbs 11.24-25; 19.17; 21.13; 22.9; 28.27; Ecclesiastes 11.1; Isaiah 58.7; Matthew 5.42; Luke 6.38; 12.33; Acts 11.29; Romans 12.13; Hebrews 13.1-2; James 1.27; 1 Peter 4.9).
19. Lead a tranquil/quiet life in all godliness and dignity (1 Timothy 2.1).

As we do these things day-by-day we will grow more humble and be used by God for His glory (1 Corinthians 10.31) more each day. Others will see the Lord working through us and may be encouraged to follow our example. Pastors must set an example for the flock (1 Peter 5.3) by engaging in the spiritual activities above and they should also encourage others to do the same. They and all believers should be the servant of all (Matthew 20.26-27; Mark 9.35; Luke 22.26).

Negativity Factor

Very few believers understand the Negativity Factor. Understanding of this is the key to gaining humility and ridding oneself of pride.

Everyone is conceived and born in sin and goes astray from birth (Psalm 51.5; 58.3). We struggle with sin our entire lives even after we are born from above (Galatians 5.17). It is our sin nature and our submission to it that hinders the work that God seeks to do through us. This is the Negativity Factor. We do not add to the work of God in any way, we only hinder it. God performs great works through us in spite of us. We hinder His work we do not help it. The only thing we can do is lessen our Negativity Factor by obeying God every second of every day of our lives.

Christians who think they help God perform good deeds are delusional. We can never help God. All we can do is empty ourselves of all of our desires and make ourselves available to Him every day. We must daily do what John the Baptist said about Jesus the Messiah, “*He must increase, but I must decrease*” (John 3.30). The more we rid ourselves of us the more God can work through us for His glory.

The way to diminish ourselves is to spend every spare moment we have in prayer, worshipping God, Bible reading, study, memorization and meditation, fellowship with the brethren, sharing the Gospel and making disciples. Every minute we spend enjoying the pleasures of the world – watching TV, movies and sports, shopping, partying, reading meaningless fiction books, eating pleasure foods, hobbies, worrying over investments – is a minute wasted forever. Everyone needs down time, recreation and relaxation, but there are good ways of getting R&R and bad ways. Make sure your methods of R&R are honoring to the Lord and do not over do it. Three of the best forms of relaxation are praying, reading the Bible and listening to hymns. When you need to chill out pray, read the Bible and or listen to hymns. If these activities do not relax and energize you something is wrong.

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