

SPIRITUAL FITNESS PROGRAM

Grace Mercy Ministry

Spiritual Fitness Program

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to our Lord and Savior YAHSUA of Nazareth the Messiah (Jesus Christ) who gave all who believe in Him the spiritual gym that we need to get in and stay in top spiritual shape.

INVITATION

We invite all believers in Jesus Christ to use the spiritual gym membership that we all received when we trusted in Jesus as Messiah, Savior and Lord.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	9
INTRODUCTION	11
1. WHAT IS OUR SPIRITUAL GYM?	13
2. WHY USE THE SPIRITUAL GYM?	31
3. HOW OFTEN DO I NEED TO WORK OUT?	49
4. MY SPIRITUAL FITNESS PROGRAM	63
5. RECRUIT OTHERS TO USE THE GYM	81
AFTERWORD	87
APPENDIX A	
What you must do to be saved	91
APPENDIX B	
Prayer	95
APPENDIX C	
Memorizing and meditating on Scripture	103
APPENDIX D	
How to do an exegetical study	111

APPENDIX E	
Fellowship	119
APPENDIX F	
Worship	121
APPENDIX F	
Be filled with the HOLY SPIRIT	123
APPENDIX G	
Humility	125

FOREWORD

If you have never heard of a Spiritual Fitness Program (SFP) you need to read this book.

Every true believer in Jesus Christ is commanded to use the spiritual gymnasium daily. That gym is prayer, the Holy Infallible Word of God, fellowship with fellow believers and worship of God. Every believer should spend as much time as possible in the spiritual gym every day.

Every athlete must train hard every day to develop and maintain the skills to compete. Believers likewise must do the same to fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6.12-14).

Consider how much time you spend each day spiritually training to serve God. If you spend only a few minutes each day you will not be prepared to perform even a fraction of the good deeds God has prepared for you (Ephesians 2.10).

Study this book carefully with your Bible in hand and learn how to get spiritually fit and stay fit so you can bring as much glory to God as He has prepared for you.

Grace Mercy Ministry
December 2013

INTRODUCTION

God exhorts His spiritual children to get spiritually fit and to stay fit until the day He takes them home. This book will show you how to set up your personal Spiritual Fitness Program (SFP) and stay with it.

Meditate on these verses:

As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God? (Psalm 42.1-2)

O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water. (Psalm 63.1)

I stretch out my hands to You; My soul longs for You, as a parched land. (Psalm 143.6)

Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation. (1 Peter 2.2)

Do you thirst for the Scriptures as a deer does for water? Do you spend time every day hearing the Word, reading the Word, studying the Word, memorizing the Word, meditating on the Word and praying for wisdom as you do?

Do you spend at least an equal amount of time each day feeding your soul as you do feeding your body? Do you spend as much time in the spiritual gym as you do in a physical gym? Which is more important to you – your immortal soul or your mortal body? Do you take care of your mortal body more than your immortal soul?

Do you spend every spare moment of each day absorbed in the Word, in prayer, in worship and in fellowship?

If you truly love God and you sincerely desire to please Him by living an obedient, holy life then you will set up a Spiritual Fitness Program (SFP). That is the first step in demonstrating your love for God and in living a holy life (1 Peter 1.15-16) that brings glory to Him (1 Corinthians 10.31).

Set up your Spiritual Fitness Program today!

ONE

WHAT IS OUR SPIRITUAL GYM?

The Scriptures

*“He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but **man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.**” (Deuteronomy 8.3)*

*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)*

***All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.** (2 Timothy 3.16-17)*

The key to growing spiritually is daily study of Scripture along with daily memorization and meditation on It. It is the Word that prepares us to serve God by doing the good works He has prepared for us to do every day (Ephesians 2.10).

Read the following passages to see how important the study of the Holy Word of God is:

Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, (1 Peter 2.2)

As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God? (Psalm 42.1-2)

*O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; **My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water.** (Psalm 63.1)*

*I stretch out my hands to You; **My soul longs for You, as a parched land.** (143.6)*

Spiritual exercises

There are five spiritual exercises we can engage in every day:

1. Listening to Scripture
2. Reading Scripture
3. Studying Scripture
4. Memorizing Scripture
5. Meditating on Scripture

Listening to Scripture

It is important to listen to Scripture either someone reading or teaching it. Listening to Scripture in the car or at home when you are doing house work or relaxing is very helpful in growing in grace.

*“Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, ‘Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them **hear My words** so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.’” (Deuteronomy 4.10)*

“My son, give attention to my words; **Incline your ear to my sayings.**” (Proverbs 4.20)

“Now therefore, O sons, **listen to me,** For blessed are they who keep my ways.” (Proverbs 8.32)

“Blessed is the man who **listens to me,** Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at my doorposts.” (Proverbs 8.34)

Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, And apply your mind to my knowledge. (Proverbs 22.17)

Apply your heart to discipline And **your ears to words of knowledge.** (Proverbs 23.12)

He who **turns away his ear from listening to the law,** Even his prayer is an abomination. (Proverbs 28.9)

“But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have **heard the word** in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.” (Luke 8.15)

But He answered and said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these **who hear the word of God** and do it.” (Luke 8.21)

But He said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who **hear the word of God** and observe it.” (Luke 11.28)

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely **hearers** who delude themselves. (James 1.22)

Blessed is he who reads and those who **hear** the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near. (Revelation 1.3)

Reading Scripture

Every believer should take the time each day to read at least four chapters in the Bible. If you read just four chapters a day you can read through the entire Bible once a year. Those four chapters a day will take you about 20 minutes. Are you too busy to spend 20 minutes a day reading a love letter from your Savior?

*“It shall be with him and he shall **read it all the days of his life**, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes.” (Deuteronomy 17.19)*

*Seek from the book of the LORD, and **read**: Not one of these will be missing; None will lack its mate. For His mouth has commanded, And His Spirit has gathered them. (Isaiah 34.16)*

*Blessed is he who **reads** and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near. (Revelation 1.3)*

Studying Scripture

Listening to and reading Scripture is necessary for mataining spiritual lfe, but studying Scripture is necessary for spiritual growth.

*My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you, Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; **If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures**; Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God. (Proverbs 2.1-5)*

“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me.” (John 5.39)

*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)*

*For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through **perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures** we might have hope. (Romans 15.4)*

*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)*

Memorizing Scripture

Another spiritual activity that is mandatory for spiritual growth is memorizing Scripture. When you hide the Holy Word of God in your heart It transforms you from the inside out. The best way to get the sin nature out of you and holiness in you is to flush out the sin nature with the Word. Listening to, reading and studying Scripture is very effective, but memorizing is better than all three of them combined.

*“These words, which I am commanding you today, **shall be on your heart.**” (Deuteronomy 6.6)*

*“You shall therefore **impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul** ; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.” (Deuteronomy 11.18)*

*“But the word is very near you, in your mouth and **in your heart**, that you may observe it.” (Deuteronomy 30.14)*

*Please receive instruction from His mouth And **establish His words in your heart.*** (Job 22.22)

*The **law of his God is in his heart;** His steps do not slip.* (Psalm 37.31)

*I delight to do Your will, O my God; **Your Law is within my heart.**"* (Psalm 40.8)

***Your word I have treasured in my heart,** That I may not sin against You.* (Psalm 119.11)

*My son, if you will receive my words And **treasure my commandments within you.*** (Proverbs 2.1)

*My son, do not forget my teaching, But **let your heart keep my commandments;** Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, **Write them on the tablet of your heart.*** (Proverbs 3.1, 3)

*Do not let them depart from your sight; **Keep them in the midst of your heart.*** (Proverbs 4.21)

***Bind them continually on your heart;** Tie them around your neck.* (Proverbs 6.21)

*Bind them on your fingers; **Write them on the tablet of your heart.*** (Proverbs 7.3)

*For it will be pleasant if you **keep them within you,** That they may be **ready on your lips.*** (Proverbs 22.18)

*“Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, **A people in whose heart is My law;** Do not fear the reproach of man, Nor be dismayed at their revilings.”* (Isaiah 51.7)

Moreover, He said to me, “Son of man, take into your heart all My words which I will speak to you and listen closely.” (Ezekiel 3.10)

*But what does it say? “THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, in your mouth and **in your heart**” – that is, the word of faith which we are preaching. (Romans 10.8)*

*Let the **word of Christ richly dwell within you**, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3.16)*

Notice there are more Scriptures exhorting believers to memorize the Word than to listen to, read or study the Word. This means memorizing Scripture is more important than those spiritual exercises. The only spiritual exercise more important than memorizing the Word is meditating on It.

Meditating on Scripture

Notice there are more Scriptures exhorting believers to memorize the Word than to listen to, read or study the Word combined. This means memorizing Scripture is more important than those spiritual exercises. The only spiritual exercise more important than memorizing the Word is meditating on It. When you meditate on Scripture God gives you special insights. He blesses those who meditate on His Word with wisdom and understanding directly from Him.

*“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate on it day and night**, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.” (Joshua 1.8)*

*Please receive instruction from His mouth And **establish His words in your heart**. (Job 22.22)*

*“I have not departed from the command of His lips; **I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food**.” (Job 23.12)*

*But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law **he meditates day and night.*** (Psalm 1.2)

*Tremble, and do not sin; **Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still.*** (Psalm 4.4)

*Let the words of my mouth and the **meditation of my heart** Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.* (Psalm 19.14)

*When I remember You on my bed, **I meditate on You in the night watches.*** (Psalm 63.6)

***I will meditate on all Your work** And muse on Your deeds.* (Psalm 77.12)

*Let my **meditation be pleasing to Him;** As for me, I shall be glad in the LORD.* (Psalm 104.34)

*I will **meditate on Your precepts** And regard Your ways.* (Psalm 119.15)

*Even though princes sit and talk against me, Your servant **meditates on Your statutes.*** (Psalm 119.23)

*Make me understand the way of Your precepts, So I will **meditate on Your wonders.*** (Psalm 119.27)

*And I shall lift up my hands to Your commandments, Which I love; And **I will meditate on Your statutes.*** (Psalm 119.48)

*May the arrogant be ashamed, for they subvert me with a lie; But **I shall meditate on Your precepts.*** (Psalm 119.78)

*O how I love Your law! **It is my meditation all the day.*** (Psalm 119.97)

*I have more insight than all my teachers, For **Your testimonies are my meditation.*** (Psalm 119.99)

My eyes anticipate the night watches, That I may meditate on Your word. (Psalm 119.148)

I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your doings; I muse on the work of Your hands. (Psalm 143.5)

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3.16)

Prayer

Another key component of spiritual growth is prayer. Without daily prayer a believer will not grow in grace and in the Lord. As you will see from reading these verses that we should be praying throughout the day – not just before meals.

*“And My people who are called by My name humble themselves and **pray and seek My face** and turn from their wicked ways, then **I will hear from heaven**, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now **My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place**. For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that **My name may be there forever**, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.”* (1 Chronicles 7.14-16)

*My eye has wasted away because of affliction; **I have called upon You every day, O LORD**; I have spread out my hands to You.* (Psalm 88.9)

*But I say to you, love your enemies and **pray for those who persecute you**.* (Matthew 5.44)

*When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, **when you pray**,*

go into your inner room, close your door and **pray to your Father who is in secret**, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6.5-6)

“**Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!** (Matthew 7.7-11)

“**Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.**” (Mathew 26.41)

Then He said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him,’ and from inside he answers and says, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs. So I say to you, **ask**, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who **asks**, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who **ask Him?**” (Luke 11.5-10)

Now He was telling them a parable to show that **at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart**, saying, “In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, ‘Give me legal protection from my opponent.’ For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, ‘Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.’” And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18.1-8)

“Whatever you **ask in My name**, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you **ask Me anything in My name**, I will do it. If you love Me, **you will keep My commandments**.” (John 14.13-15)

“In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, **if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you**. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; **ask and you will receive**, so that your joy may be made full.” (John 16.23-24)

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

With all **prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit**, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and **petition for all the saints**. (Ephesians 6.18)

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything **by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God**. (Philippians 4.6)

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving. (Colossians 4.2)

Pray without ceasing. (1 Thessalonians 5.17)

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. (1 Timothy 2.1-2)

*Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and **continues in entreaties and prayers night and day.** (1 Timothy 5.5)*

*Therefore I want the men in every place to **pray**, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension. (2 Timothy 2.8)*

*But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him **ask of God**, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (James 1.5)*

*Is anyone among you suffering? **Then he must pray.** Is anyone cheerful? **He is to sing praises.** (James 5.13)*

Remember this truth – you can pray 24 hours a day, but if you stop studying the Bible or spend very little time in the Word your prayers are an ABOMINATION to God:

***He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.** (Proverbs 28.9)*

Everyone must have a balance between prayer and Bible study. It is more important to listen to God (Bible study) than to talk to Him (prayer). The ratio is different for everyone, but it should never be less than 60% (Bible study) 40% (prayer).

Fellowship

Fellowship is also extremely important for spiritual growth. Without regular fellowship all believers will eventually stray from the Lord. This is why we must seek out fellowship in church and at home. Every believer should invite the brethren over to study the Bible and pray as often as possible.

*I will tell of Your name to my brethren; In the **midst of the assembly** I will praise You. (Psalm 22.22)*

*I am a companion of all those who fear You, And of those who **keep Your precepts**. (Psalm 119.63)*

***He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm.** (Proverbs 13.20)*

*Then those who feared the LORD **spoke to one another**, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name. (Malachi 3.16)*

***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, 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)*

***And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.** (Acts 5.42)*

On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them,

*intending to leave the next day, and **he prolonged his message until midnight**. There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together. And there was a young man named Eutychus sitting on the window sill, sinking into a deep sleep; and as Paul kept on talking, he was overcome by sleep and fell down from the third floor and was picked up dead. But Paul went down and fell upon him, and after embracing him, he said, “Do not be troubled, for his life is in him.” When he had gone back up and **had broken the bread and eaten, he talked with them a long while until daybreak, and then left.** (Acts 20.7-11)*

***But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,”** so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Hebrews 3.13)*

***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)*

***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 1.7)*

Worship

Worship is important to spiritual health and growth. Believers who do not spend time in worship of their Lord and Savior each day become unloving, cold, mechanical and arrogant. They eventually believe they are more important than the average believer and stand aloof from them rarely fellowshiping with them. In America today this is true of most pastors, evangelists, teachers in Bible colleges and seminaries and theologians. It is true of all mega-pastors, televangelists and mega-ministry CEOs.

Study these passages concerning worship and see for yourself how important it is for every believer to worship God privately and with the brethren:

“You shall fear only the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name.” (Deuteronomy 6.13)

“Now behold, I have brought the first of the produce of the ground which You, O LORD have given me. And you shall set it down before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God and you and the Levite and the alien who is among you shall rejoice in all the good which the LORD your God has given you and your household.” (Deuteronomy 26.10)

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him; Worship the LORD in holy array. (1 Chronicles 16.29)

Worship the LORD with reverence And rejoice with trembling. (Psalm 2.11)

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in holy array. (Psalm 29.2)

Worship the LORD in holy attire; Tremble before Him, all the earth. (Psalm 96.9)

Exalt the LORD our God And worship at His footstool; Holy is He. (Psalm 99.5)

Exalt the LORD our God And worship at His holy hill, For holy is the LORD our God. (Psalm 99.9)

Let us go into His dwelling place; Let us worship at His footstool. (Psalm 132.7)

“Stand in the gate of the LORD’S house and proclaim there this word and say, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, all you of

Judah, who enter by these gates to worship the LORD!”
(Jeremiah 7.2)

*Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘**YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.**’”* (Matthew 4.10)

*“But an hour is coming, and now is, when the **true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth**; for such people the Father seeks to be **His worshipers**. God is spirit, and **those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.**”* (John 4.23-24)

*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)

*For we are the true circumcision, **who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus** and put no confidence in the flesh.* (Philippians 3.3)

*The twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and **will worship Him** who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”* (Revelation 4.10)

*And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; **worship Him** who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.”* (Revelation 14.7)

*Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; **worship God.** For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”* (Revelation 19.10)

*But he said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. **Worship God.**” (Revelation 22.9)*

TWO

WHY USE OUR SPIRITUAL GYM?

We are commanded to

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, fellowshiping with the brethren, sharing the Gospel and then discipling others. Once again we cite the commands of our Father to be spiritually fit:

*“He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but **man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.**”* (Deuteronomy 8.3)

*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, **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)*

*And these were more noble than those in Thessalonika who received the word with all readiness, **daily examining the Scriptures** if these things were so. (Acts 17.11)*

*Be diligent to present yourself **approved to YAHWEH** a workman not ashamed, straightly cutting the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2.15)*

***Take care**, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But **encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,”** so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Hebrews 3.12-13)*

*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)*

*But according as He who called you is holy, **you also be holy in all your conduct**; because it has been written, **You are holy; for I am holy.** (1 Peter 1.15-16)*

*“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)*

We are to obey bearing fruit

Once we trust in Jesus to save us by His death on the cross – shedding His blood to cleanse us of our sins (Hebrews 9.12, 14; Revelation 1.5) – we should want to serve our Lord and Savior more than anything else. One aspect of serving Him is obedience. When we serve Him faithfully we will bear fruit. We will lead people to the Lord, disciple them, help the brethren and sacrificially give of ourselves.

*“It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by **carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes.**” (Deuteronomy 17.19)*

*“But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that **you may observe it.**” (Deuteronomy 30.14)*

*“Every tree that does not **bear good fruit** is cut down and thrown into the fire.” (Matthew 7.19)*

*“But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and **bear fruit with perseverance.**” (Luke 8.15)*

*But He answered and said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and **do it.**” (Luke 8.21)*

*But He said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and **observe it.**” (Luke 11.28)*

*“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)*

*“My Father is glorified by this, that you **bear much fruit**, and so prove to be My disciples.” (John 15.8)*

*“You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and **bear fruit**, and that your **fruit** would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.” (John 15.16)*

*Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might **bear fruit** for God. (Romans 7.4)*

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. (Ephesians 2.10)*

*But **prove yourselves doers of the word**, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. (James 1.22)*

*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and **heed the things which are written in it**; for the time is near. (Revelation 1.3)*

We are to fight the good fight of faith

Every believer is in a spiritual war that will not stop until the day you die or the Rapture. We are commanded to fight the good fight of faith:

***Fight the good fight of faith;** take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 6.12-14)*

All believers need to learn what the “armor of God” is and how to use it. We are in a spiritual war and every Christian is a warrior. Most have been wounded and are sitting on the sidelines watching the war.

Very few pastors train the members of the congregation in the arts of spiritual warfare. This is why most churches are not alive and why many have been dead for decades. It is the solemn duty of the pastors to train their spiritual soldiers to fight just as the drill instructors in all military basic training camps train their recruits to fight. If your church does not have a basic training program study this step carefully, then put on your armor every day and go into battle with boldness.

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the **full armor of God**, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the **full armor of God**, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore,*

HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. (Ephesians 6.10-18)

The devil has many schemes to keep believers from serving God fully. That is why it is vitally important to know what our armor is and how to use it. Study the above passage in Ephesians and meditate on it for many hours. Memorize the passage and burn it into your mind and heart. Also study the exposition of the passage given on the following page.

Your armor

1. Gird your loins about with truth (v. 14).
2. Put on the breastplate of righteousness (v. 14).
3. Shod your feet with the Gospel (v. 15).
4. Take up the shield of faith (v. 16).
5. Put on the helmet of salvation (v. 17).
6. Take up the sword of the Spirit (v. 17).

Gird your loins about with truth

A believer clothes himself with the truth by studying Scripture. The Bible from Genesis 1.1 to Revelation 22.21 is truth. Every believer needs to study the entire Bible book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter and verse-by-verse throughout his life. Daily and methodical reading, studying, memorizing and meditating on

Scripture is a must. We need the whole truth and not just part of the truth to be victorious in our spiritual battles. That is why it is extremely important to set up a Spiritual Fitness Program.

Believers clothe themselves with the truth, but also with righteous deeds. A believer's robe of righteousness is symbolic of the righteous deeds that God has prepared for us to do (Ephesians 2.10; 2 Timothy 3.17). Each morning when a believer wakes up he puts on his robe of righteousness by praying that the Lord direct his steps that day and gives him the strength to do the good deeds that He has prepared for him to do. He also needs to spend time in the Word. Daily Bible reading, study, memorization and meditation are necessary to prepare for spiritual battle. One must start the day with time in the Word and then renew one's mind with It throughout the day. Taking periodic Bible breaks is a good habit to develop.

Girding your loins with the truth is symbolic of preparing your mind for battle. We do that by daily reading, studying, memorizing and meditating on Scripture. One must be prepared to encounter problems throughout the day and respond to them in a holy, loving, joyful and considerate manner. These problems may be encounters with people seeking to harm or deceive us, accidents, illness or circumstances that prevent us from doing what we planned to do. When we fight through our daily problems with prayer and meditation on Scripture we will win the battles through the power of Jesus Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4.13).

Put on the breastplate of righteousness

To put on the breastplate of righteousness means to live a holy life. All believer's are commanded to live holy lives (Leviticus 11.44; 19.2; 20.7; Psalm 99.3, 9; 1 Peter 1.14-16) instead of continuing to live sinful lives as we did before we were saved and cleansed (Romans 6.1-2, 6-7, 12-13; Ephesians 4.17; 1 Peter 4.2-3). We are to daily not be conformed to the world, but transform and cleanse our minds (Romans 12.1-2). We do this by reading, studying, memorizing and meditating on Scripture. It is the Word

of God that cleanses our minds and lives (John 15.3; 17.17; Ephesians 5.26). This daily cleansing will enable us to lay aside our old nature, be renewed in our minds and put on our new nature (Ephesians 4.22-24). It will also help us abstain from fleshly lust (1 Peter 2.11) and not love the things of the world (1 John 2.15-17). As we daily read, study, memorize and meditate on Scripture the Holy Spirit washes, regenerates and renews us (Titus 3.5).

Shod your feet with the Gospel

Shodding your feet (putting on footwear) means to be prepared at all times to share the Gospel. Every believer is commanded to know what the Gospel is and how to share it with everyone who asks him about his faith:

*But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, **always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence** (1 Peter 3.15)*

To be able to share the Gospel in a clear manner one must memorize the basic verses. It is also necessary to learn how to quote them in a logical order and comment on them. Memorize the basic verses (Appendix A) and practice sharing the Gospel with a brother. This is a reason every believer needs a discipleship partner.

Take up the shield of faith

Taking up the shield of faith means to use your faith. We do that by trusting the Lord to meet our needs as He has promised (Matthew 6.25-34; Philippians 4.6, 19). Instead of worrying about our daily needs we are to trust in the Lord. That does not mean we can watch television all day and not seek work. Everyone must work for a living (2 Thessalonians 3.10). We do what we can to meet our needs and trust the Lord for the rest.

Along with using our faith we should seek to increase it. The more we exercise our faith the more it grows. It also grows by study of Scripture for *“faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”* (Romans 10.17). The more we study Scripture the more our faith grows. This is just one more reason why every believer needs to read, study, memorize and meditate on Scripture daily.

Put on the helmet of salvation

Putting on the helmet of salvation is having total assurance of your salvation. The helmet protects the most vital part of a body and when a soldier does not wear a helmet he becomes highly vulnerable to injury and death. The same is true in spiritual warfare. When a believer does not have complete assurance that he is saved he can easily be taken out by the enemy. Doubts can sneak into one’s mind concerning his conversion and if those doubts are not dealt with they can cause him to stop serving God or even believing in Him.

Assurance of salvation is necessary to stay in the spiritual battle. Failure to have assurance also endangers the brethren. A believer in a position of leadership who does not have assurance can cause others to doubt their salvation resulting in the destruction of spiritual moral. Spiritual soldiers who are demoralized are ineffective and become casualties.

One can have assurance of salvation by knowing the Gospel and by making a public profession that you have trusted in Jesus Christ alone to save you by His sacrifice on the cross understanding that *“that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures”* (1 Corinthians 15.3-4). Once you make that confession fully trusting Jesus to save you apart from works, baptism, keeping the Sabbath or any other law or ordinance you can have total assurance of your salvation.

Take up the sword of the Spirit

The sword is an offensive and defensive weapon. Every believer should be an expert swordsman capable of defending his faith. Our spiritual sword is Scripture (Hebrews 4.12). Defending our faith is the ability to quote or cite Scriptures to refute those who make false charges or claims against our faith, the Bible, our Savior and our Father. One uses Scripture in an offensive manner to destroy concepts, ideologies and philosophies that are opposed to Scripture (2 Corinthians 10.5). We can also defend the faith and destroy unbiblical ideologies by writing articles and books, and making audio and video presentations.

Prayer

Along with our armor we must also use prayer in our daily spiritual battles. We should wake up praying, pray throughout the day and pray as we fall asleep (1 Thessalonians 5.17). We are to pray for ourselves and our brethren daily (Psalm 86.3, 6; Luke 18.1; Ephesians 6.18; Philippians 4.6; Colossians 1.3) and the lost (1 Timothy 2.1-3). We cannot pray for every believer we know, but we should try to pray for as many as we can.

Appearance

Every believer is an ambassador of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5.20) and should dress as an ambassador. This does not mean we must walk around in public in our Sunday best every day of the week. For some that is appropriate for them, but not for most. We should dress well and not try to attract undue attention to ourselves. Brothers in the Lord should wear clean slacks that are not too worn out with decent shoes and a clean shirt. Sisters in the Lord should wear a clean dress or skirt that does not cling to her body and which hangs down to her knees or below. Mini-skirts are

not modest dress. If a woman wears a skirt with a blouse the blouse should not cling to her body revealing all of her curves. It should also not be a low-cut blouse. Women should only wear slacks if a dress or skirt would be not appropriate for the chore they are doing. Women should also not doll themselves up with loads of make-up, jewelry, fancy hairdos or anything else. They must always dress modestly without attempting to draw attention to themselves:

*Your adornment must not be merely external braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the **hidden person of the heart**, with the imperishable quality of a **gentle and quiet spirit**, which is precious in the sight of God. (1 Peter 3.3-4)*

Single women, you do not have to look like a movie star or a model to attract the attention of a man. You attract the attention of a holy man by living a holy life, dressing modestly and serving the Lord. The kind of man women attract by wearing provocative clothing and accessories is not the type of man a true daughter of Sarah would want for a husband (1 Peter 3.6).

A true man of God may not be exciting, funny, rich, handsome, strong or anything else that most unsaved women are looking for. Which is more important to you – a man of the world who makes you happy for a few years or a man of God who is sold out to Him and to you?

We should seek rewards in Heaven

Seeking a reward in Heaven is a good thing that every true believer should work for. Paul said in his letter to the Hebrews that anyone who comes to God “*must believe that He is and that He is a **rewarder of those who seek Him***” (11.6). Read these passages and decide for yourself if seeking rewards in the life to come is good or bad:

Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is **great reward**. (Psalm 19.11)

And men will say, “Surely there is a **reward for the righteous**; Surely there is a God who judges on earth!” (Psalm 58.11)

For you will heap burning coals on his head, And the LORD will **reward you**. (Proverbs 25.22)

Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, **His reward is with Him** And **His recompense before Him**. (Isaiah 40.10)

Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth, Say to the daughter of Zion, “Lo, your salvation comes; Behold **His reward is with Him**, and His recompense before Him.” (Isaiah 62.11)

“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for **your reward in heaven is great**; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matthew 5.11-12)

So that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will **reward you**. (Matthew 6.4)

But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will **reward you**. (Matthew 6.6)

So that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret ; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will **reward you**. (Matthew 6.18)

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6.19-21)

*“He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a **prophet's reward**; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a **righteous man's reward**. And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall **not lose his reward**.” (Matthew 10.41-42)*

*“The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.’ 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.**’ Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.’ 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 25.20-23)*

*“Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, **your reward is great in heaven**. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.” (Luke 6.22-23)*

*“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and **your reward will be great**, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.” (Luke 6.35)*

*Now he who plants and he who waters are one ; but each will **receive his own reward according to his own labor.** (1 Corinthians 3.8)*

*Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, **he will receive a reward.** If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3.12-15)*

*Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will **receive the reward of the inheritance.** It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. (Colossians 3.23-24)*

*And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a **rewarder of those who seek Him.** (Hebrews 11.6)*

*Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that **you may receive a full reward.** (2 John 8)*

*“And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the **time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.**” (Revelation 11.18)*

*“Behold, I am coming quickly, and **My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.** (Revelation 22.12)*

We have examples of great men of faith who gave up everything for the reward that awaits them and all of us if we serve YAHSHUA faithfully.

Enoch

*By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up **he was pleasing to God.** And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a **rewarder of those who seek Him.** (Hebrews 11.5-6)*

Noah

*By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an **heir of the righteousness** which is according to faith. (Hebrews 11.7)*

Abraham

*By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for **he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.** (Hebrews 11.8-10)*

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, considering the reproach of Christ **greater riches than the treasures of Egypt**; for he was looking to the reward.* (Hebrews 11.24-26)

Other heroes of faith

Besides the four great men of faith who served God seeking a reward there were millions of others who faithfully served their Savior confident that they would receive a full reward. Here are just a handful mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Hebrews:

Abel, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, parents of Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

Others that Paul did not mention, but were faithful to the Lord were:

Job, Judah, Joseph, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, Dinah, Aaron, Miryam, Ezra, Nehemiah, Naomi, Ruth, Baruch, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, Josiah, Joseph, Mary, Mary Magdalene, Salome, Mary, Joanna, Luke, James, Judas Barsabbas, Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, Apollos, Prisca, Aquila, Silas, Timothy, Lois, Eunice, Titus, Phoebe, Agabus, Philemon, Epaphroditus, Epaphras, Tychius, Archippus, Apphia, Urbanus, Clement, Aristarchus, Andronicus, Euodia, Syntyche, Demas, Sothenes, Chloe, Lucius, Jason, Sospater, Tertius, Gaius, Erastus, and Quartus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, Eubulus, Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, Philologus,

Julia, Nereus, Olympas, Stachys, Apelles, Aristobulus, Herodion, Narcissus, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis and Rufus.

The Apostles

The twelve apostles – Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Nathaniel, Matthew, Thomas, James the less, Simon, Judas (Thaddaeus) and Paul – were promised exalted positions in the Kingdom of Heaven:

And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matthew 19.27-28)

Post-Apostolic Era

There have been millions of heroes of faith from the end of the Post-Apostolic Era unto today. Here is a short list of some of the most notable heroes of faith:

Polycarp, Ignatius, Clement of Rome, Papias, Justin Martyr, Iranaeus, Theophilus of Antioch, Tatian, Melito of Sardis, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Cyprian, Athanasius, Victorinus, Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Hilary of Poitiers, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Hugh Latimer, John Knox, Increase Mather, Cotton Mather, John Gill, Isaac Newton, Morgan Edwards, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, William Carey, William Wilberforce, Adoniram Judson, George Lisle, Isaac McCoy, John Birch, Joseph Booth, Robert Morrison, George Muller, Jim Elliot, David Livingstone, Hudson Taylor, Charles Spurgeon, Dawson Trotman, Lewis Sperry Chafer and Herbert Lockyer.



TREASURE HUNT

Everyone dreams of finding hidden treasure and millions have search for it throughout the last 6,000 years with thousands finding it. Yet every true believer in Jesus Christ has the incredible privilege of spending their entire life searching for hidden treasure that is much more valuable than all the hidden treasure on the Earth! In fact the unimaginable hidden treasure that we are commanded to search for is far more valuable than all the minerals, oil, gas, water, gold, silver, precious gems, art, stocks, bonds, corporations, buildings, land livestock and animals on Earth! It is more valuable than the planet and the entire universe!

If you have not begun your search for the greatest treasure in the Universe read it online at **Gracemercyministry.com** or order your copy from – **dovbooks@yahoo.com**

THREE

HOW OFTEN DO I NEED TO WORK OUT?

Prayer

The Scriptures are explicitly clear that ALL believers are to not only pray every day, but throughout each day! Here are three verses that tell us to pray every day throughout the day:

*My eye has wasted away because of affliction; **I have called upon You every day, O LORD; I have spread out my hands to You.** (Psalm 88.9)*

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

*With all **prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit,** and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and **petition for all the saints.** (Ephesians 6.18)*

***Pray without ceasing.** (1 Thessalonians 5.17)*

*Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and **continues in entreaties and prayers night and day.** (1 Timothy 5.5)*

Prayer is communication with God the Father and the Son. We speak to Them through prayer. They speak to us through our study of Their Word.

Worship

Private and family worship of God is an aspect of a believer's walk that few know about and fewer still practice. Most believers go to church services and worship God (corporate worship), but virtually none worship Him in the privacy of their home or alone in the outdoors.

David knew how important it was to worship God every day and he did:

*My mouth is filled with Your praise And with Your glory **all day long**.* (Psalm 71.8)

***Every day** I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever.* (Psalm 145.2)

Scripture

The Scriptures are clear that every believer should partake of spiritual food daily. Once again we cite the passages that say daily spiritual exercise is vital to spiritual growth:

*“He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but **man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.**”* (Deuteronomy 8.3)

*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)

Most people eat three or more meals each day plus a few snacks. Very few people go without eating a single meal or snack unless they are fasting. Imagine how healthy you would be if you only ate one meal a week. Within a month or so most people would be dead.

The same is true in the spiritual realm. Anyone who does not partake of the Word a few times a day every day 365 days a year will not grow. Instead they will die spiritually. Within a month of not spending time daily in the Word a believer will be spiritually dead and of no use to God.

There is NO alternative to daily listening to the Word, Bible reading, study, memorization and meditation supplemented with copious amounts of prayer. Exam these passages and ask yourself if you need to partake of spiritual food every day:

*And these words which I command you today shall be on your heart and you shall repeat them to your sons and **shall speak of them when you sit in your house, when walk in the way, when you lie down and when you rise up.** (Deuteronomy 6.6-7)*

*“It shall be with him and he shall **read it all the days of his life**, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes.” (Deuteronomy 17.19)*

*“Blessed is the man who listens to me, **Watching daily** at my gates, **Waiting** at my doorposts.” (Proverbs 8.34)*

*Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, **And apply your mind to my knowledge.** (Proverbs 22.17)*

*“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate on it day and night**, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.” (Joshua 1.8)*

But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1.2)

When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. (Psalm 63.6)

*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)

These passages speak directly of studying Scripture daily and not just once a day, but all day long. Obviously no one can study the Bible from the time he wakes up to the time he goes to sleep. Yet we are commanded to be in the Word every spare moment we have. Contrary to popular belief we are not commanded to allot a few minutes each day to prayer and the Word. No! We are commanded to allot ALL of our free time to God – prayer, the Word, fellowship, worship and evangelism.

Here are passages that do not say we should study the Word daily, but imply it:

*Like newborn babies, **long for the pure milk of the word**, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,* (1 Peter 2.2)

As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God? (Psalm 42.1-2)

*O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; **My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You**, In a dry and weary land where there is no water.* (Psalm 63.1)

*I stretch out my hands to You; **My soul longs for You, as a parched land.*** (143.6)

These passages clearly imply that a believer should seek God daily through prayer and study of the Word. New born babies need milk every day to grow. If a baby had just one meal of milk once a

week he would be dead before his second meal. No one could live for very long if all they ate was one meal a week.

Deers pant for water every day. Most animals do and so do people. We do not call it panting. Instead we just say we are thirsty. Very few animals and no person go without drinking water or some liquid for days on end. It is extremely unhealthy.

The spiritual health of a believer is directly proportional to the amount of time he spends in prayer and the Word each day. Regular fellowship is also very important to maintain good spiritual health as we will not see.

Fellowship

All believers should fellowship with each other every day. Today this is only practiced in Second and Third World countries. There is virtually no congregation in the Western world in which every member of a congregation fellowships with each other whether in homes or in the church building. Some churches have services or spiritual activities every day of the week, but there is no effort by the pastors and deacons to see to it that every member engages in some form of fellowship every day of the week.

Since we are living in the apostasy of the last days (2 Thessalonians 2.3; 2 Timothy 4.3-4) this failure of virtually all pastors is to be expected. Do not waste your time trying to get the backslidden pastors in the church you attend to do something. Open your home for Bible studies and prayer meetings every day of the week and invite members over.

If you do not understand that ALL believers are commanded to fellowship with one another every day study these passages carefully and memorize them:

Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Hebrews 3.12-13)

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)

The members of the first church fellowshiped with each other every day. They set the bar high and we should follow in their example. A major cause of the apostasy that we are living in is the neglect of daily fellowship.

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, 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)

And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.
(Acts 5.42)

Good works

Every believer should do good works every day that we interact with others:

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
(Ephesians 2.10)

You do not have to do big things every day, just little things each day. Holding a door open for an elderly or disabled person, a

child or someone whose hands are full is a good work. Helping a neighbor do something and just being kind to others are good works. There are thousands of things we can do to help others. We just need to be alert and willing.

Loving others

Loving others includes doing good works (Romans 12.13; Hebrews 13.2; James 2.15-17; 1 John 3.17-18), but it also encompasses forgiving those who wrong us. Forgiving is one of the hardest things we can do, but it is one of the most important things we should do on a regular basis. If we do not forgive others God will not extend temporal forgiveness to us (Matthew 6.12). He forgives us as we forgive others. Permanent forgiveness was paid for at the cross by Jesus Christ and applied when we put our trust in Him.

Living a holy life

We are commanded to live a holy life:

But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all of your behavior; because it is written, “You shall be holy for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1.15-16)

Living a holy life includes spending a good amount of time in prayer, the Word, worship, fellowship, loving others, doing good works, being disciplined, discipling others and sharing the gospel. It also includes refraining from committing overt sins such as evil thoughts, hating others, not honoring parents, murder, adultery, stealing, bearing false witness, telling dirty jokes and stories, coveting and not forgiving those who sin against us.

Evangelism

Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission to take Gospel to everyone on Earth:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” (Acts 1.8)

And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. (Acts 5.42)

This commissioning of the disciples to take the Gospel to everyone on Earth is also a commissioning to everyone who receives the Lord Jesus as Savior. Peter makes it clear that every believer should know how to share the Gospel:

But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence. (1 Peter 3.15)

We also know that believers in the Old Testament dispensation also shared the Gospel that they had – namely telling the lost what great deeds God had done for the nation of Israel. David was a king, priest, prophet and an evangelist:

I will give thanks to the LORD with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders. (Psalm 9.1)

That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving And declare all Your wonders. (Psalm 26.7)

*And my tongue shall declare Your righteousness And Your praise **all day long**.* (Psalm 35.28)

*My mouth shall **tell of Your righteousness** And of **Your salvation all day long**; For I do not know the sum of them.* (Psalm 71.15)

*O God, You have taught me from my youth, And **I still declare Your wondrous deeds**.* (Psalm 71.17)

The Old Testament saints were commanded to proclaim the Gospel just as we are:

*Sing to the LORD, bless His name; **Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day*** (Psalm 96.2)

In all dispensations those who win souls are blessed:

*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And **he who is wise wins souls**.* (Proverbs 11.30)

Discipleship

Most believers think the Great Commission is to preach the Gospel to all the world, but it is more than that. Jesus commissioned His disciples to “*make disciples of all the nations:*”

*“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)

Later Jesus explained how His disciples were to go into all the world and make disciples in every nation. They were to begin in Jerusalem then go to all Judea and Samaria and finally to every person on Earth (Acts 1.8).

To disciple people you must first share the Gospel leading them to Jesus. Once you lead someone to the Lord you are to disciple them.

Be disciplined

Before you can disciple a person you must first be disciplined:

Hear, my son, your father's instruction And do not forsake your mother's teaching. (Proverbs 1.8)

Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, And give attention that you may gain understanding. (Proverbs 4.1)

My son, observe the commandment of your father And do not forsake the teaching of your mother (Proverbs 6.20)

The Holy Spirit twice commands all young men to listen to the teaching of their parents and once to obey them. All boys who are reared by believing parents should be disciplined by them. Sadly, very few parents disciple their sons or daughters because they do not know how to. Pastors do not disciple parents so they are incapable of disciplining their children.

Yet the Sacred Scriptures are explicitly clear that the church is responsible for disciplining parents and single men and women:

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4.11-13)

Jesus gave His Church gifted men – apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers – to equip (disciple) the members. We have no apostles and prophets, but we still have evangelists,

pastors and teachers. Every church should have a minimum of three pastors, one evangelist and a few teachers. The primary duty of these men is to disciple everyone in the church.

Every church should have a discipleship program for parents, singles and children who have unsaved parents. Any church that does not have a real discipleship program for every member is led by hirelings who should be removed. If you attend a church with hirelings as pastors give them this book and beg them to set up a discipleship program for everyone in the church. If they refuse to start one find a church with real pastors.

Churches need an evangelist so he can train the members how to share the Gospel. It is his job to teach them how to present the Gospel and then take them out and show them how to do it in the real world. Once they learn how then he is to take them out and supervise them as they share the Gospel. He also needs to teach them how to train others to share the Gospel.

Churches also need teachers who can train the members how to study the Bible and then how to teach others to study the Bible.

One of the primary duties of every pastor is to train faithful men to be pastors:

*The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, **entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*** (2 Timothy 2.2)

We see that a true church has an evangelist who can train the members how to share the Gospel and Bible teachers to disciple the members. And the pastors are to oversee this training and also train faithful men to be pastors. Some of the pastors may have the gift of an evangelist and a teacher and have two or three roles in the church.

Disciple others

Once a believer has been discipled – trained to share the Gospel and study the Bible he is to disciple others:

*“Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but **make them known to your sons and your grandsons**. Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, ‘Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and **that they may teach their children.**’” (Deuteronomy 4.9-10)*

*“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)*

*“You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. **You shall teach them to your sons**, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up. (Deuteronomy 11.18-19)*

*“Assemble the people, the men and the women and children and the alien who is in your town, so that they may **hear and learn and fear the LORD your God**, and be careful to observe all the words of this law. **Their children**, who have not known, **will hear and learn to fear the LORD your God**, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.” (Deuteronomy 31.12-13)*

*He said to them, “Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which **you shall command your sons to observe carefully**, even all the words of this law.” (Deuteronomy 32.46)*

*Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us. We will not conceal them from their children, But tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers **That they should teach them to their children, That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, That they may arise and tell them to their children, That they should put their confidence in God And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments,** (Psalm 78.3-7)*

***Train up a child in the way he should go,** Even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22.6)*

***Tell your sons about it, And let your sons tell their sons, And their sons the next generation.** (Joel 1.3)*



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 the great privilege of living for your Lord and Savior.

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FOUR

MY SPIRITUAL FITNESS PROGRAM

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 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).

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(s) on discipleship such as *Discipleship 101-501*.

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:

All have sinned – Romans 3.23

The wages of sin is death – Romans 6.23

Judgment – Mark 8.36-37; Hebrews 9.27

Jesus is the only way – John 14.6; Acts 4.12

The gift of eternal life – John 1.12; John 3.16; Rom. 6.23

Faith in Jesus – Romans 10.9-10, 13; Eph. 2.8-9

Evangelism - Matthew 28.19-20; Acts 1.8

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

Eternal security – John 5.24; 6.37; 10.27-29; 20.31;

1 John 5.10-13.

Holiness/Sanctification – Psalm 119.11; Proverbs 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 1.15-17; 1 John 2.15-17.

Love – Matthew 5.43-48; 1 Corinthians 13.1-13.

Blessed hope – 1 Thess. 4.16-18; Titus 2.13; 1 John 3.2-3.

Brotherly love – John 13.34-35; 1 John 3.16-18

Peace – Philippians 4.7.

Prayer – Matthew 7.7; John 14.13-14; 1 John 3.22; 5.14.

Prosperity – Psalm 1.

Protection – Psalm 23.

Spiritual warfare – Ephesians 6.10-18.

Strength – Isaiah 40.29-31; Ephesians 3.16; Phil. 4.13.

Sufficiency – Philippians 4.19.

Temptation – 1 Corinthians 10.13.

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 slave” (Matthew 25.23).

Prayer program

Daily prayer is essential just as daily time in the Word is. Set aside three times each day to pray. Pray when you wake up during the middle of your day and before you go to sleep. Even if you set aside five minutes of prayer for these three times that is a good start. Add to that time as your needs and the needs of others grow.

Also pray throughout the day. Short prayers a few seconds long are vital to keeping your mind on the things above and not on the things of this world:

*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)*

It is good to make a prayer list. List your needs, the needs of your family, friends, church members, pastors and others. Make a list of unsaved people to pray for their salvation. Keep the list with you and have it handy wherever you go. Eventually you will memorize your prayer list, but keep it because you will need to update it from time-to-time. Keep a prayer journal listing the prayers that God answered. Note the date of each answered prayer whether it was answered yes, no or wait. See Appendix B for more on prayer.

Listening to Scripture program

Find pastors or Bible teachers who know the Scriptures and listen to their sermons or lessons weekly. Take time out of your busy day each day to listen to at least one message. If you can watch one or more television shows you can listen to one or more

messages each day. The key to spiritual growth is putting more of the transforming Word of God in you than the philosophy of the world. All secular television shows and movies present philosophies of the world of Satan. Remember what Paul said about living for God and not being conformed to the world:

*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. 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 12.1-2)

If you can find decent movies about the Bible they are good to watch. Some of the best are: *The Gospel of John, Peter and Paul, The Greatest Story Ever Told, King of Kings, St. Paul.*

Scripture reading programs

There are dozens of reading programs that a believer can use to read through the Bible once a year. Here are just a few programs that will help you choose which program is right for you or help you make your own customized reading program.

Basic reading program

The most basic reading program that even a backslidden believer should follow daily is three chapters in the Old Testament and one chapter in the New Testament.

Wisdom reading program

Read one chapter a day in Proverbs and one in Psalms along with three other chapters in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament.

Advanced wisdom reading program

Read five chapters in Psalms each day plus one chapter in Proverbs and one chapter in Ecclesiastes along with three other chapters in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament.

Super advanced reading program

Read one chapter of Proverbs and one chapter each day from the following divisions of the Bible:

1. Torah (Genesis – Deuteronomy).
2. Historical books (Joshua – Esther).
3. Poetical books (Job – Song of Solomon).
4. Major prophets (Isaiah – Ezekiel).
5. Minor prophets (Daniel – Malachi).
6. Gospels & Acts (Matthew-Acts).
7. Pauline Epistles (Romans – Hebrews).
8. General Epistles & Revelation (James – Revelation).

This reading program is 9 chapters per day. It may seem like it is a lot of reading, but it is well worth it. Since there are 929 chapters in the Old Testament and 260 in the New Testament you will read the OT through twice, the New Testament about four times and Proverbs 12 times each year.

Grace Mercy Discipleship Institute reading program

Read one chapter of Proverbs and two chapters each day from the following divisions of the Bible:

1. Torah (Genesis – Deuteronomy).
2. Historical books (Joshua – Esther).
3. Poetical books (Job – Song of Solomon).
4. Major prophets (Isaiah – Ezekiel).
5. Minor prophets (Daniel – Malachi).

6. Gospels & Acts (Matthew-Acts).
7. Pauline Epistles (Romans – Hebrews).
8. General Epistles & Revelation (James – Revelation).

This reading program is 17 chapters per day. It may seem like it is a lot of reading, but it is necessary. Since there are 929 chapters in the Old Testament and 260 in the New Testament you will read the OT through about four times, the New Testament more than 8.4 times and Proverbs 12 times each year.

Grace Mercy Discipleship Institute advanced reading program

Read five chapters of Psalms, one chapter of Proverbs, one chapter in Ecclesiastes and two chapters each day from the following divisions of the Bible:

1. Torah (Genesis – Deuteronomy).
2. Historical/poetical books (Joshua – Esther plus Job and Song of Solomon).
3. Major prophets (Isaiah – Ezekiel).
4. Minor prophets (Daniel – Malachi).
5. Gospels & Acts (Matthew-Acts).
6. Pauline Epistles (Romans – Hebrews).
7. General Epistles & Revelation (James – Revelation).

This reading program is 21 chapters per day. You will read the OT through about four times, the New Testament more than 8.4 times, Psalms 12 times and Proverbs 12 times each year.

Grace Mercy Discipleship Institute super advanced reading program

Read five chapters of Psalms, one chapter of Proverbs, one chapter in Ecclesiastes and three chapters each day from the following divisions of the Bible:

1. Torah (Genesis – Deuteronomy).
2. Historical/poetical books (Joshua – Esther plus Job and Song of Solomon).
3. Major prophets (Isaiah – Ezekiel).
4. Minor prophets (Daniel – Malachi).
5. Gospels & Acts (Matthew-Acts).
6. Pauline Epistles (Romans – Hebrews).
7. General Epistles & Revelation (James – Revelation).

This reading program is 28 chapters per day. You will read the OT through about 6 times, the New Testament nearly 13 times, Psalms and Proverbs 12 times and Ecclesiastes 30 times each year.

Bible study program

Very few believers systematically study through the Bible. Most pastors do not bother to. Instead they do topical studies for sermons.

It is extremely important for every believer to study through the Bible book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter and verse-by-verse. If you do not know how to study a book learn how or find a study book on that book of the Bible.

Here are some sample study programs that you will want to give consideration to.

Basic study program

Study the following books in the order listed:

1. General Letters (James-Jude).
2. Gospels and Acts (Matthew-Acts).
3. Pauline Epistles (Romans – Hebrews).
4. Revelation.
5. Proverbs.
6. Ecclesiastes.
7. Psalms.

8. Historical books (Joshua-Esther).
9. Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy).
10. Minor prophets (Daniel-Malachi).
11. Major prophets (Isaiah-Ezekiel).
12. Song of Solomon.

You may not finish all the books of the Bible, but keep studying through them until the Rapture or until you are called home.

Advanced study program

In this program you study one book in the O.T. and one in the N.T. at the same time:

1. General Letters (James-Jude) and Proverbs, Ecclesiastes.
2. Gospels-Acts and Psalms, Song Solomon.
3. Letters of Paul and Historical books (Joshua-Esther).
4. Revelation and Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy).
5. Minor prophets (Daniel-Malachi) and Major prophets (Isaiah-Ezekiel).

Since there are nearly four times as many books in the O.T. as the N.T. you will study through the minor and major prophets at the same time. For a crash course on studying the Bible go to Appendix D.

Scripture memorization program

There are numerous Scripture memory programs. We will list just as few to give you some ideas.

Gospel presentation

Everybeliever should be able to share the Gospel by quoting the basic Gospel verses. Here are those verses in the order you should use them when sharing the Gospel:

Romans 3.23, Hebrews 9.27; Matthew 25.46; Mark 8.36-37; Romans 6.23; Romans 5.8; John 14.6; Acts 4.12; Ephesians 2.8-9; Romans 10.9-10; Romans 10.13; John 1.12.

Topical program

Memorizing Scriptures that focus on specific topics is always edifying. Pick the topics and verses you think will help you the most in your spiritual walk. Just choose a few verses from each topic. Here are some topics to consider:

1. Eternal security – John 5.24; 6.37; 10.27-29; 20.31; 1 John 5.10-13.
2. Blessed hope – 1 Thessalonians 4.16-18; Titus 2.13; 1 John 3.2-3.
3. Holiness/Sanctification – Psalm 119.11; Proverbs 8.13; Romans 3.3-5; 12.1-2; 1 Corinthians 10.31; 2 Corinthians 6.14-18; Galatians 5.13-26; Philippians 3.7-10; James 1.2-5; 1.12-17; 2.1-8; 4.1-10; 1 Peter 1 Peter 1.13-19; 2.15-16; 1 Peter 2.11-21; 1 Peter 4.1-4; 2 Peter 1.5-11; 1 John 2.15-17.
4. Humility – Romans 12.16; Philippians 2.1-5; James 4.6-10
5. Love – Romans 12.9; 1 Cor. 13.1-13; 1 John 3.16-18
6. Peace – Philippians 4.7.
7. Prayer – Matthew 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.

Chapter program

Once you have memorized the Gospel verses and a few dozen topical verses you may want to try to memorize entire chapters. Here are some key chapters you should consider memorizing:

1. Psalm 1.
2. Psalm 23.
3. Isaiah 53 (begin with 52.13).
4. Matthew 5-7.
5. John 14-17.
6. 1 Corinthians 13.
7. James 3.
8. 1 John 1.
9. Revelation 21-22.

Book program

Once you have mastered the Gospel passages, key topical verses and a few chapters you can start with memorizing entire books. Here are some books to consider memorizing:

1. James.
2. 1 Peter.
3. 2 Peter.
4. 1 John.
5. 2 John.
6. 3 John.
7. Jude.

Meditation

Meditation on Scripture is an aspect of spiritual growth that only a fraction of true believers know about. It is not only essential for spiritual growth it is the key aspect of it:

I have more insight than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. (Psalm 119.99)

Insight or understanding comes mainly through indepth meditation of Scripture. Hearing, reading, study and memorization of Scripture gives us knowledge of the Word, but wisdom, understanding/insight only comes through meditation. The way to obtain the wisdom, understanding and insight of God is through daily meditation on His Word. See Appendix C for more on memorization and meditation of Scripture.

Fellowship

Daily fellowship is very important for spiritual growth and regular fellowship is vital. If you live alone or with unsaved people you need to find at least one true believer you can fellowship with on a regular basis. One-on-one fellowship is essential for growth, but few believers have ever experienced the joy of it.

Virtually all believers in the West have only experienced fellowship at “church.” Most know nothing of one-on-one fellowship and small group fellowship. Some have been part of a home Bible study or prayer meeting, but that is not small group fellowship.

One-on-one fellowship

This form of fellowship is the most productive and every believer should have a close friend he/she can fellowship with two or more times a week.

Married couples should fellowship with each other daily. Believing couples who do not are missing out on one of the greatest joys in this life and one of the best ways to grow in faith.

Couples without children have no excuse to not have daily fellowship. If their schedules are too full they need to remove

something or reduce the time. Morning prayer and devotions is the best way to start a day. If you wake up at different times then evening devotions is mandatory. Every couple must set aside time each day to pray together and have devotions. They should also spend time each day memorizing and reviewing Scripture. Weekly study of the Bible is also very important. Meditation on Scripture together is important and every couple should set aside one day a week to do this together. Every believer should meditate on Scripture by himself every day (Joshua 1.8).

Small group fellowship

Every believer should go out of his way to find a small group for fellowship. Believing parents have their own small group – their children. The most important spiritual duty of parents is to disciple their children:

*“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)*

***My son, observe the commandment of your father And do not forsake the teaching of your mother.** (Proverbs 6.20)*

Couples with children should also seek out fellowship with one or more couples at the church they attend or elsewhere. Couples without children should do the same.

Singles should also make a concerted effort to plug into a Small Group Fellowship (SGF). If the church you attend does not have SGFs beg the pastors to start them. If they refuse you may want to consider finding a church that has SGFs. See Appendix E for details on fellowship.

Worship

Daily worship is the lost practice among most believers in the West. They think that weekly worship of God in a church building is sufficient. As noted previously worship is important to spiritual health and growth. Believers who do not spend time in worship of their Lord and Savior each day become unloving, cold, mechanical and arrogant. They eventually believe they are more important than the average believer and stand aloof from them rarely fellowshiping with them. In America today this is true of most pastors, evangelists, teachers in Bible colleges and seminaries and theologians. It is true of all mega-pastors, televangelists and mega-ministry CEOs.

Every believer should spend time each day worshipping God. Here are some things you can do to worship God:

1. Be silent and meditate on the blessings He has given you
2. Thank Him
3. Praise Him
4. Rejoice
5. Sing
6. Read Scripture
7. Serve God
8. Serve others

If you live alone it is easy to take time out every day to worship God. If you live with unsaved people it can be hard yet if you have your own bedroom you can worship Him silently or softly. If you have a prayer closet that would be an excellent place to worship. If you live in the country you can take a walk in the woods, desert, etc. and worship in the big outdoors. If you are a husband or father you should lead your family in daily worship. Go back to the “worship” section of Chapter One for details on worshipping God.

Daily worship is important:

*My mouth is filled with Your praise And with Your glory **all day long**.* (Psalm 71.8)

***Every day** I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever.* (Psalm 145.2)

We are to worship at the footstool of God:

*Exalt the LORD our God and **worship at His footstool**; Holy is He.* (Psalm 99.5)

Since we cannot teleport ourselves to New Jerusalem (Heaven) every day we worship God at His footstool wherever we are. Worshipping God is not a uniform practice as worshipping Satan is in the false religions and cults (1 Corinthians 10.20). True believers in Jesus Christ worship in spirit and in truth:

*“But an hour is coming, and now is, when the **true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth**; for such people the Father seeks to be **His worshipers**. God is spirit, and **those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth**.”* (John 4.23-24)

Another way of worshipping which very few believers know about is service. When we serve God and others we are worshipping God:

*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)

When we serve God and others each day that is a form of worship. All believers should make a concerted effort to serve Jesus and others (believers and unsaved) each day. See Appendix F for more on worship.

FIVE

RECRUIT OTHERS TO USE THE GYM

Evangelism

Everybeliever should have a strong desire to share the Gospel knowing that those who die in their sins will suffer eternal punishment (Matthew 25.46).

I will give thanks to the LORD with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders. (Psalm 9.1)

That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving And declare all Your wonders. (Psalm 26.7)

And my tongue shall declare Your righteousness And Your praise all day long. (Psalm 35.28)

Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day. (Psalm 96.2)

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who is wise wins souls. (Proverbs 11.30)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” (Acts 1.8)

But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence. (1 Peter 3.15)

If you are too timid to share the Gospel find a brother or sister to train you how to share it and then go with him/her and share the Gospel. The more you share the Gospel the more you will want to. Once again here are the basic Gospel verses:

Romans 3.23, Hebrews 9.27; Matthew 25.46; Mark 8.36-37; Romans 6.23; Romans 5.8; John 14.6; Acts 4.12; Ephesians 2.8-9; Romans 10.9-10; Romans 10.13; John 1.12.

Discipleship

Recruiting others is discipleship. Paul commanded Timothy to recruit faithful men to be pastors:

*The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, **entrust these to faithful men** who will be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2.2).*

All fathers and mothers are commanded to disciple their children (Deuteronomy 4.9-10; 6.5-7; 11.18-19; 32.46; Psalm 78.3-7). Mothers should assist their husbands in disciplining their children (Proverbs 1.8; 6.20).

Fathers and mothers need to be discipled so they can disciple their children. If the church you attend does not have a discipleship program and if you cannot find someone to disciple you, you must be discipled by the Holy Spirit (1 John 2.27). A good discipleship book can help you in that endeavor.

Before, while and after you are discipled you should be recruiting brothers and sisters in the Lord to join you. Once you have been trained to lead a Bible study start one and let the Lord minister through you.

Recruiting others to become disciples can be difficult since we are living in the apostasy of the last days (2 Timothy 4.3-4). Be an example and when the Lord leads you to someone or someone to you who wants to grow in the Lord help him. Be ready at all times to help others grow.

Be disciplined

Every believer should be disciplined whether it is by their parents, through a church program, by a brother or sister, by completing a discipleship workbook or through your own study of Scripture.

Hear, my son, your father's instruction And do not forsake your mother's teaching. (Proverbs 1.8)

Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, And give attention that you may gain understanding. (Proverbs 4.1)

My son, observe the commandment of your father And do not forsake the teaching of your mother. (Proverbs 6.20)

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4.11-13)

Make disciples

All parents should disciple their children. Single believers or married couples without children should also know how to disciple others and do it.

*“Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but **make them known to your sons and your grandsons**. Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, ‘Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.’” (Deuteronomy 4.9-10)*

*“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 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 6.5-7)*

*“You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You **shall teach them to your sons**, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up.” (Deuteronomy 11.18-19)*

*He said to them, “Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, **which you shall command your sons to observe carefully**, even all the words of this law.” (Deuteronomy 32.46)*

*“Which we have heard and known, And **our fathers have told us. We will not conceal them from their children, But tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers That they***

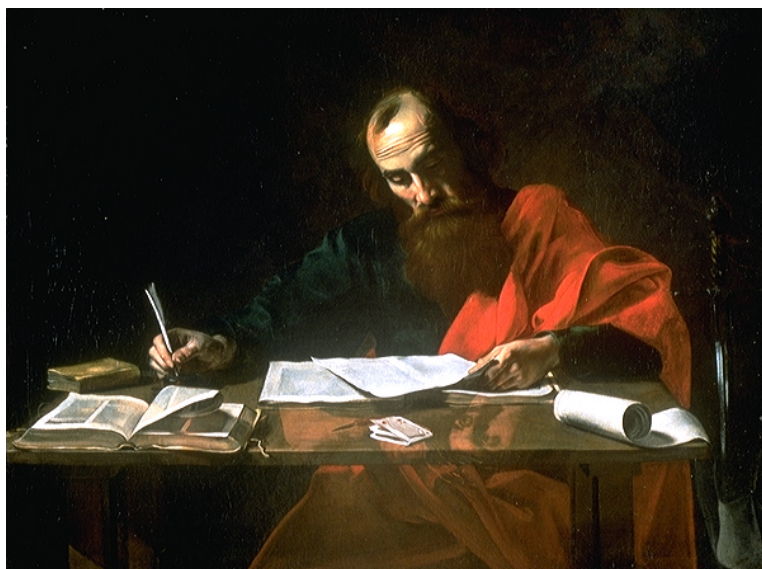
should teach them to their children, That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, That they may arise and tell them to their children, That they should put their confidence in God And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments.” (Psalm 78.3-7)

Tell your sons about it, And let your sons tell their sons, And their sons the next generation. (Joel 1.3)

*“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)*

*The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, **entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.** (2 Timothy 2.2).*

If you have not been disciple or know how to disciple others get your copy of ***Discipleship 101-501***.



DISCIPLESHIP 101-501

This book is one of five books 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 to study the Bible inside and out and to burn the Scriptures into his soul. These workbooks can be used by any and all denominations and churches.

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

AFTERWORD

As we noted in the Introduction, God exhorts His spiritual children to get spiritually fit and to stay fit until the day He takes them home. Now that you know how to set up your personal Spiritual Fitness Program (SFP) do not put it off – start today!

Begin your topical memory program by memorizing these verses:

As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God? (Psalm 42.1-2)

O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water. (Psalm 63.1)

Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation. (1 Peter 2.2)

Set up your prayer program along with your Bible reading, study, memorization and meditation programs. Find a church that has a real discipleship program. If you cannot find one get the book series, ***Discipleship 101-501***, from Grace Mercy Ministry. Get started today!

If you have no desire to set up a Spiritual Fitness Program you need to take the ***Faith Test***.

FAITH TEST

The Spiritual Man versus the Natural Man

Take a few minutes out of your busy schedule and examine your daily walk with Jesus.

Spiritual Activities	Average time spent weekly
Prayer	_____
Reading and studying the Bible	_____
Memorization and meditation	_____
Family worship and devotions	_____
Worship/fellowship with believers	_____
Giving to and helping others	_____
Sharing the Gospel	_____
Being discipled/making disciples	_____
Total time serving Jesus	_____

Worldly activities	Average time spent weekly
Watching TV and movies	_____
Internet	_____
Reading (secular books/magazines)	_____
Hobbies and recreation	_____
Attending sporting events	_____
Socializing (in person or 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)*



FAITH TEST

Faith Test is a book that every believer needs to read. Paul exhorted the believers in Corinth to examine themselves to see if they were in the faith:

Try yourselves if you are in the faith; prove yourselves! Or do you not recognize yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you are rejected. (2 Corinthians 13.5)

To see if you pass the faith test read it online at **GraceMercyMinistry.com** or order a copy from – **dovbooks@yahoo.com**

APPENDIX A

THE GOSPEL

The most important thing any person can ever do is know where he/she will spend eternity. The Creator of the universe said there are only two places where a person can go when he dies – Heaven or Hell.

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 to die once and after this comes judgment. (Hebrews 9.27)

And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal. (Matthew 25.46)

He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall 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 the world are not worth eternal punishment:

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall 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 because:

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

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace. (Ephesians 1.7)

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, that no one should 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 shall be saved: for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (Romans 10.9-10)

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

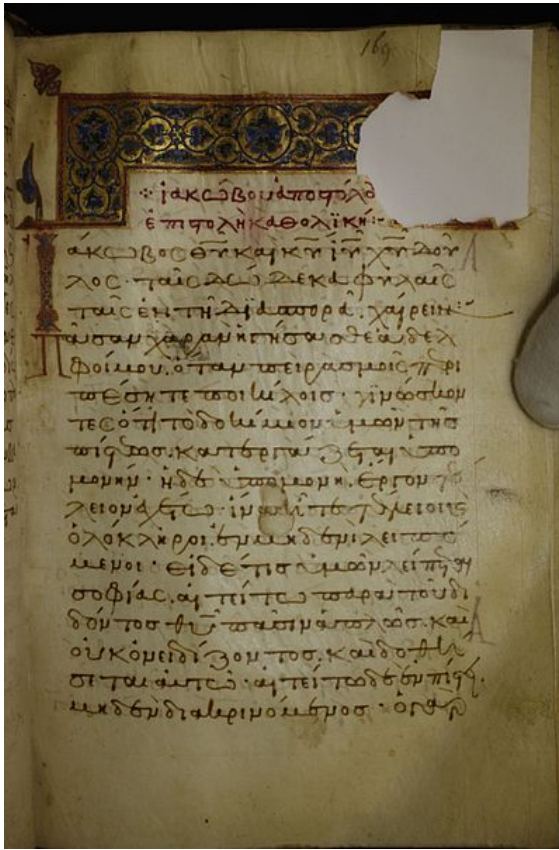
For “WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.” (Romans 10.13)

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 gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. (John 1.12)



JAMES: BIBLE SENSE TO LIVE BY

This commentary and workbook on James is designed to stimulate the reader's desire to study the book of James and apply the myriad truths on holy living to their life.

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

APPENDIX B

PRAYER

Why pray

If you do not know why prayer is important prayerfully these scriptures will help you understand the importance of prayer:

*The LORD said to him, “**I have heard your prayer** and your supplication, which you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built by putting My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.” (1 Kings 9.3)*

*“Yet have regard to the **prayer of Your servant** and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to listen to the cry and to the **prayer which Your servant prays before You** that Your eye may be open toward this house day and night, toward the place of which You have said that You would put Your name there, to **listen to the prayer which Your servant shall pray toward this place.**” (2 Chronicles 6.19-20)*

*“Also concerning the foreigner who is not from Your people Israel, when he comes from a far country for Your great name's sake and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm, when they come and **pray** toward this house then hear from heaven, from Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, in order that all the*

peoples of the earth may know Your name, and fear You as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by Your name.” (1 Chronicles 6.32-33)

“And My people who are called by My name humble themselves and **pray and seek My face** and turn from their wicked ways, then **I will hear from heaven**, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now **My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place**. For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that **My name may be there forever**, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.” (1 Chronicles 7.14-16)

Then the Levitical priests arose and blessed the people; and **their voice was heard and their prayer came to His holy dwelling place, to heaven**. (2 Chronicles 30.27)

O You who **hear prayer**, To You all men come. (Psalm 65.2)

But certainly **God has heard**; He has given heed to the voice of my **prayer**. (Psalm 66.19)

My eye has wasted away because of affliction; **I have called upon You every day, O LORD**; I have spread out my hands to You. (Psalm 88.9)

He has regarded the **prayer** of the destitute And has not despised their **prayer**. (Psalm 102.17)

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight. (Proverbs 15.8)

The LORD is far from the wicked, But **He hears the prayer of the righteous**. (Proverbs 15.29)

“Go and say to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David, “**I have heard your prayer**, I have seen

your tears; behold, I will add fifteen years to your life.””
(Isaiah 38.5)

*“But this kind does not go out except by **prayer** and fasting.”*
(Matthew 7.21)

*“And all things you **ask in prayer**, believing, you will receive.”* (Matthew 21.22)

Jesus prayed

If Jesus needed to pray we certainly need to and much more than He did.

*It was at this time that **He** went off to the mountain to **pray**, and **He spent the whole night in prayer to God.*** (Luke 6.12)

*And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and **He knelt down and began to pray**, saying, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.” Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in agony **He was praying very fervently**; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. **When He rose from prayer**, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, and said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”* (Luke 22.41-46)

Do a detailed study of the Lord's Prayer (John 17). It is extremely edifying. You can pray 24 hours a day, but if you stop studying the Bible or spend very little time in the Word your prayers are an ABOMINATION to God:

He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination. (Proverbs 28.9)

We need a balance between prayer and Bible study. It is more important to listen to God than to talk to Him. The ratio is different for everyone, but Bible study should be a minimum of 60 percent of your study/prayer time.

Types of Prayer

The three types of prayer are praise, intercession and personal requests. These three types of prayer can be short prayers or lengthy ones. We are commanded to be devoted to prayer (Romans 12.12; Colossians 4.2; 1 Peter 4.7) which means we need to spend time every day in private prayer on our knees, and in prayer on the go. We are also to pray with others (Acts 2.42; 13.3; 16.25).

Praise

Praise and thank God every day for the myriad blessings He has and will pour out on you (Ephesians 5.20; 1 Thessalonians 5.18; Hebrews 13.15). Some of the things we can praise God for are – His eternal love (John 3.16; Romans 5.8; 1 John 4.19), His grace which saved us (Ephesians 2.8), His mercy and comfort (2 Corinthians 1.3), His strength that He gives us (Ephesians 3.16; Philippians 4.13), His riches (Ephesians 3.16; Philippians 4.19), His guidance (Proverbs 3.5-6) and His discipline (Proverbs 3.11-12). These are only a few of the blessings that God pours out on us that we can thank Him for daily.

Intercession

Intercessory prayers for other believers (Ephesians 6.18; Philippians 1.4), and for the unsaved (Matthew 5.44; 1 Timothy 2.1-3) is important. Make a habit of making requests on behalf of

believers that you know rather than making blanket requests for believers we do not know. Some of the things we can ask for is that God comfort, strengthen, perfect, confirm and establish them (2 Thessalonians 2.16-17; 1 Peter 5.10), increase their wisdom (James 1.5), give them greater courage and boldness in sharing the Gospel (Philippians 1.19-20) and open doors to share the Gospel (Colossians 4.3). We can also pray for the brethren who have special needs (Acts 12.5, 12).

Praying for the salvation of unsaved people we know (Romans 10.1) is vital. We can pray for family, relatives, neighbors, co-workers, employers and employees. We can also pray for the unsaved people in our life and for political leaders so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life (1 Timothy 2.1-4), in order that we will have more time to share the Gospel with the lost.

Personal Requests

After we have praised the Lord for all He has done for us, have prayed for the brothers and sisters in the Lord and for the lost, we can make personal requests (Philippians 4.6). These requests must be made in accordance with the will of God (1 John 5.14), and God will grant them in His good time (1 John 5.15). We must wait on Him to grant them (Psalm 37.7; 40.1), and not demand that He grant them immediately. We need to refrain from asking for worldly goods such as big houses, fancy cars, stylish clothing, jewelry and toys. Instead we should ask God to meet our needs – food, shelter, clothing, work (Luke 11.3), forgive us our sins, and keep and deliver us from evil (Matthew 6.12-13).

We also need to ask the Holy Spirit to teach us – give us knowledge, understanding and wisdom (Proverbs 1.1-7; 3.13) – as we study Scripture (1 John 2.20, 27). We can pray for boldness to share the gospel with the lost (Philippians 1.19-20). If Paul asked for believers to pray for him to have boldness in sharing the gospel we should also.

Disciples' Prayer

The disciples' Prayer is mistakenly called the Lord's Prayer. To study the Lord's Prayer go to John Chapter 17. We see some fundamental truths in this prayer:

“Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. ’] (Matthew 6.9-13)

The first thing all believers should do every day when they wake up is to acknowledge that God is Holy (v. 9) and Sovereign (v. 10), and that we should fulfill His will that day – every second of the new day (v. 10).

Next we should ask Him to meet all of our needs for that day (v. 11). Those needs are not just food, water and other physical needs. They include our spiritual needs – faith, hope, love, wisdom, understanding, knowledge, reverence of God, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control (1 Corinthians 13.13; Proverbs 2.2; 3.13, 21; 4.5; 5.1; 8.11; 11.2; 16.16; 19.8; 23.23; Proverbs 1.7; 8.10; 10.14; 15.14; 18.15; 22.17; 23.12; Galatians 5.22-23).

Another thing we need to do throughout the day is ask God to forgive us when we sin (v. 12). John wrote of the importance of this (1 John 1.8-10). We ask forgiveness of God and then of the person we sinned against. There is a caveat in forgiveness here. If we do not forgive those who sin against us God will not forgive us (v. 12).

This forgiveness is not forgiveness for salvation. It is temporal forgiveness for fellowship. As long as we do not forgive those who sin against us we do not have fellowship with the Father, Son or the Holy Spirit. We are still saved, but we are living in a

backslidden condition and do not have the joy of fellowship with God.

The statement, “*do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil*” is a bad translation. It should be “*do not lead us into trials, but deliver us from the evil one.*” We should daily ask God to not lead us into a trial or trials and to deliver us from the schemes of Satan (Ephesians 6.11). We must also do our part to be delivered from the schemes of the devil by putting on the full armor of God first thing every day (Ephesians 6.10-18).

We should verbally and silently acknowledge throughout each day that God is all sovereign, all powerful and all deserving of all glory (v.13). When we have this attitude about God we can focus on serving Them fully and then do everything each day for Their glory:

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10.31)

Everything we do in private or public should be done to the glory to God. If you do something on a regular basis that cannot bring glory to God consider giving it up and replacing it with prayer, Bible study, fellowship, discipleship or evangelism. It may not be a “sin” but our time here is short and (James 4.14) we should make every second count.

Remember this eternal truth:

Everything you do for you will be forgotten forever.

Everything you do for God will be remembered forever and you will receive eternal rewards.

The choice is yours:

Live for all the gusto you can grab in this life and have nothing or very little in the eternal life to come.

Live for your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and have untold eternal rewards in the life to come along with rank, status and a greater capacity to enjoy eternal life.

If you choose the first or try to do both you need to read *Faith Test* and study this passage carefully:

“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)

Not everyone who thinks they are saved are born from above and headed to Heaven. Billions of people will stand trial for their sins at the Great White Throne Judgment who truly believed they would be high-ranking saints in Heaven (Matthew 7.21-23; Luke 13.24). They will hear those fateful words that will ring in their ears forever, ***“I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.”*** (Matthew 7.23b)

APPENDIX C

MEMORIZING AND MEDITATING ON SCRIPTURE

Memorizing and meditating on Scripture is the most important activity any believer can engage in. Prayer is extremely important but if a believer prays a great deal and rarely memorizes and meditates on Scripture his prayers become an abomination to God:

He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination. (Proverbs 28.9)

Prayer warriors read, study, memorize and meditate on Scripture a great deal. A prayer warrior is a student of the Bible.

If a new-born believer spent a great deal of his time praying and he never studied Scripture he would not grow spiritually. Spiritual growth and faith comes primarily through reading, studying, memorizing and meditating on Scripture. Our faith also grows through trials, tribulations and hardships, but mainly by the intake of Scripture:

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. (Romans 10.17)

To grow in faith and become a spiritual adult one must memorize Scripture and meditate on It. One form of meditation is to study Scripture. Another form is to memorize a verse or passage and then

think about it. Just think and ask the Holy Spirit to give you understanding. You can also ask questions about the passage or verse. You will gain fantastic insights into Scripture when you meditate on It.

Remember, the key to understanding Scripture more than any Bible teacher, preacher, pastor and theologian is to meditate on Scripture:

I have more insight than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. (Psalm 119.99)

Anyone can have greater understanding than all of the giants of the faith if they memorize and meditate on Scripture more than those giants. The only ones you cannot have more understanding of Scripture are those who meditate on Scripture more than you do. Keep in mind that memorizing Scripture is commendable, but without daily meditation on Scripture it will only produce knowledge of the Bible. There are millions of believers around the world who have great knowledge of Scripture, but very little understanding and wisdom. There are even millions of non-believers who have greater knowledge of Scripture than the average believer, but they do not have much understanding and wisdom. *“Knowledge makes arrogant”* (1 Corinthians 8.1). Yet if one meditates on Scripture he will be given understanding and wisdom.

Memorization Exercise

Exercise One

Set up your spiritual fitness program and increase the amount of time you spend in prayer and Scripture. Start your memorization program with the basic salvation verses. Then memorize the verses suggested below or choose your own. Try to memorize one verse per week. If you cannot memorize all of them memorize as many as you can.

1. Salvation – Matthew 25.46; Mark 8.36-37; John 1.12; 3.16, 36; 14.6; Acts 4.12; Romans 3.23; 5.8; 6.23; 10.9-10, 13, 17; 2 Cor. 6.2b; Ephesians 2.8-9; Hebrews 9.27; Revelation 20.15.
2. Eternal security – John 5.24; 6.37; 10.27-29; 20.31; 1 John 5.10-13.
3. Blessed hope – 1 Thessalonians 4.16-18; Titus 2.13; 1 John 3.2-3.
4. Holiness/Sanctification – Psalm 119.11; Proverbs 8.13; Romans 3.3-5; 12.1-2; 1 Corinthians 10.31; 2 Corinthians 6.14-18; Galatians 5.13-26; Philippians 3.7-10; James 1.2-5; 1.12-17; 2.1-8; 4.1-10; 1 Peter 1 Peter 1.13-19; 2.15-16; 1 Peter 2.11-21; 1 Peter 4.1-4; 2 Peter 1.5-11; 1 John 2.15-17.
5. Humility – Romans 12.16; Phil. 2.1-5; James 4.6-10.
6. Love – Rom. 12.9; 1 Cor. 13.1-13; 1 John 3.16-18.
7. Peace – Philippians 4.7.
8. Prayer – Matthew 7.7; John 14.13-14; 1 John 3.22; 5.14.
9. Prosperity – Psalm 1.
10. Protection – Psalm 23.
11. Spiritual warfare – Ephesians 6.10-18.
12. Strength – Isaiah 40.29-31; Ephesians 3.16; Phil. 4.13.
13. Sufficiency – Philippians 4.19.
14. Temptation – 1 Corinthians 10.13.
15. Tongue – James 3.1-18.

It will take you almost three years to memorize the above 139 verses if you memorize one verse a week. Stay with it and review them daily.

Meditation Exercises

We are commanded to meditate on Scripture “*day and night*” (Joshua 1.8). True disciples of Jesus “*delight in the law of God*” and they meditate on His Word “*day and night*” (Psalm 1.2). These exercises are designed to help you meditate on Scripture.

Exercise one

Pick a favorite verse and spend some time just thinking about it. Write down what comes to you. After you have spent ten minutes or more doing this – meditate on that verse or passage asking the following questions and write down your answers:

1. What doctrine(s) is found in this passage?
2. What message is being conveyed to me?
3. How should the message change my life?
4. What does YAHWEH want me to do?

Passages to meditate on:

Psalm 1	Psalm 23
Psalm 37.1-11	Psalm 119.9-16, 97-104
Proverbs 1.1-7	Proverbs 2.1-12
Proverbs 3.1-12	Proverbs 3.13-18
Proverbs 6.16-19	Proverbs 8.32-36
Isaiah 43.10-12; 44.6	Isaiah 52.13-53.12
Isaiah 55.6-11	Isaiah 65.17-25
Jeremiah 1.4-12	Jeremiah 17.5-11
Matthew 5.1-12	Matthew 5.13-16
Matthew 5.38-48	Matthew 6.9-13
Matthew 6.19-34	Matthew 7.1-5
Matthew 12.1-8	Matthew 28.19-20
John 1.1-14	John 6.32-40
John 8.31-36	John 10.1-15
John 10.27-30	John 14.1-6
John 14.13-18	John 14.23-27
John 15.1-6	John 15.7-14
John 15.15-21	John 16.7-11
John 17.15-23	John 21.19, 22
Romans 3.10-18	Romans 5.1-5
Romans 6.1-23	Romans 8.28-30
Romans 9.10-24	Romans 12.1-2
Romans 12.9-16	Romans 12.17-21

1 Corinthians 13.1-13	2 Corinthians 5.17-21
2 Corinthians 6.14-18	2 Corinthians 9.6-15
2 Corinthians 11.23-33	2 Corinthians 13.5
Galatians 5.13-26	Galatians 6.1-10
Ephesians 2.8-10	Ephesians 4.11-16
Ephesians 6.10-18	Daniel 10.13, 20-21
Philippians 2.2-8	Philippians 3.7-8
Philippians 4.4-9	Colossians 1.9-12
1 Thessalonians 4.13-18	1 Timothy 6.9-12
2 Timothy 2.15	2 Timothy 4.1-5
Hebrews 2.1-3	Hebrews 3.12-13
Hebrews 4.12-13	Hebrews 5.11-6.3
Hebrews 10.32-39	Hebrews 11.1-40
Hebrews 12.1-17	Hebrews 13.1-9
Hebrews 13.15-17	James 1.2-10
James 1.19-20	James 1.22-27
James 2.14-20	James 3.1-18
James 4.1-12	James 4.13-17
1 Peter 1.13-16	1 Peter 2.20-21
1 Peter 3.1-9	1 Peter 5.5-10
2 Peter 1.5-9	2 Peter 1.4-11
1 John 1.6-10	1 John 2.8-11
1 John 2.15-17	1 John 2.27-29
1 John 3.15-24	1 John 5.10-14
Revelation 20.11-15	Revelation 21.1-7; 22.1-5

If you meditate on one of these 98 passages each week you will complete them in less than two years.

Exercise two

Choose a subject or topic and think about it. Write down the thoughts that come to you. Get your study Bible out and write down several verses that deal with the subject. Meditate on each verse or passage and write down your thoughts about it. Note what you learned concerning this subject and how it affects your life.

Topics and passages to consider meditating on:

1. Grace (Romans 5.2, 15; 11.6; 12.3, 6; Ephesians 2.8-10).
2. Faith (2 Chronicles 20.20; Habakkuk. 2.4; Matthew 17.20; Luke 17.5; Romans 1.17; 10.17; Ephesians 6.16; Hebrews 11; James 2.17; 1 John 5.4).
3. Discipleship (Matthew 16.24; 28.19-20; Luke 14.26-33; John 15.8; 2 Timothy 2.2).
4. Prayer (Ephesians 6.18; 1 Thes. 5.17; 1 Timothy 2.1-4).
5. Study of Scripture (Deut. 17.19; 31.12; Isaiah 34.16; Hosea 6.3; John 5.39; Acts 2.42; 5.42; 17.11; Romans 15.4; 2 Timothy 2.15).
6. Fellowship of the brethren (Psalm 119.63; Prov. 13.20; Acts 2.42; 5.42; Hebrews 3.13; 10.24-25; 1 John 1.7).
7. Love of the brethren (Leviticus 25.35; John 13.34-35; 15.12-13; Romans 12.9, 13; 1 Thess. 3.12; 1 Peter 1.22; 1 John 3.16-18).
8. Love of all men (Leviticus 19.34; Proverbs 25.21; Matthew 5.43-48; Romans 12.17-21; Hebrews 13.2).
9. Hell and the Lake of Fire, and eternity (Psalm 11.6; 140.10; Luke 16.19-31; Matthew 25.41, 46; Romans 12.20; Revelation 14.9-11; 20.10-15; 21.8).
10. Humility (Proverbs 3.34; 15.33; Romans 12.3, 16; Philippians 2.3-5; James 4.6, 10; 1 Peter 5.5-6).
11. Giving (Exodus 25.2; Leviticus 25.35; Numbers 31.50; Deuteronomy 15.7; 16.17; Proverbs 3.9; 11.24-25; 19.17; 21.13; 22.9; 28.27; Ecclesiastes 5.13; 11.1; Isaiah 58.7; Matthew 5.42; 6.3; Luke 6.38; 12.33; Acts 11.29; Romans 12.13; 2 Corinthians 9.6-15; Hebrews 13.1-2; James 1.27; 1 Peter 4.9).
12. Rewards (Matthew 5.11-12; 25.23; Luke 6.35; 1 Cor. 3.12-15; 9.25; Ephesians 6.8; 2 Timothy 4.8; Hebrews 11.6, 26; James 1.12; Revelation 3.11; 22.12).
13. Sanctification (Leviticus 11.44-45; 19.2; 20.7; Matthew 5.48; Romans 12.1-2; 1 Peter 1.15-16; 1 John 5.21).
14. Spiritual warfare (2 Corinthians 10.3-5; Galatians 5.13-26; Eph. 6.10-18; 1 Thess. 5.8; 2 Tim 2.4; Heb. 4.12).

15. Suffering and persecution (Acts 5.40-42; Romans 8.17; Philippians 1.29; 3.10; 2 Thessalonians 1.5; 2 Timothy 1.8; 2.3, 9; 3.12; 1 Peter 2.20-21; 4.19).
16. Temptation (1 Corinthians 10.13; James 1.13-16).

For those of you who respect the opinions of famous pastors read what these three have said about memorizing Scripture:



“I am convinced that one of the greatest things we can do is to memorize Scripture.” **(Billy Graham)**



“Scripture memory is a habit that most Christians have never even tried, but getting your members to hide God's word in their hearts brings personal revival and renewal.” **(Rick Warren)**



“I know of no other single practice in the Christian life more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing Scripture...No other single exercise pays greater spiritual dividends! Your prayer life will be strengthened. Your witnessing will be sharper and much more effective. Your attitudes and outlook will begin to change. Your mind will become alert and observant. Your confidence and assurance will be enhanced. Your faith will be solidified.” **(Chuck Swindoll)**

APPENDIX D

HOW TO DO AN EXEGETICAL STUDY

Every disciple should know how to do an exegetical study to be able to teach the Infallible, Holy Word of God accurately. Do the exercises and you will learn how to do a study.

The basic hermeneutical principle that should be adhered to with no variation is:

Take everything literally in context, unless the Scriptures say it is symbolic or unless it is physically impossible for it to be or to take place in a literal manner.

An example of how this principle works is found in Revelation 12:

Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth...
(Revelation 12.3-4a)

There never has been nor will there be a literal dragon with seven heads and ten horns. Even if there were such a creature it could not sweep a third of the stars in space and cast them down to Earth. Therefore, the dragon and the stars are symbolic. In verse nine it says the Devil, who is called a “*great dragon*,” and his

angels were cast down to Earth. We can determine from this that the devil is the dragon and the angels are the stars.

We also know from Daniel 8.9-11 that the “*little horn*” (Antichrist) casts some of the stars of heaven down to Earth. These stars are fallen angels that joined the devil in his rebellion. The Devil and Antichrist together cast down angels to Earth. We know the “*little horn*” is the Antichrist because in verse eleven of Daniel 8 he claims to be equal to the “*prince of the host*” (Jesus Christ). In 2 Thessalonians 2.4 we see the Antichrist will claim to be “*God.*”

Another example is found in Revelation 3.12:

*“He who overcomes, I will make him **a pillar** in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will **write on him** the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.”*

Jesus promises to make a pillar for all believers in the temple of His God, God the Father. Every believer will have a pillar in New Jerusalem with his/her name on it. All believers will have a permanent residence in New Jerusalem (John 14.2) and we will never be put out of that Holy City. We will travel the universe going in and out of New Jerusalem, but we will never be evicted.

All believers will have the name of the Father, the new name of the Son and New Jerusalem on our foreheads. It is physically possible to do this. It was done in the Old Testament. One angel went through Jerusalem and put a physical mark on the foreheads of the righteous. Then six angels of war followed and they killed every man, woman and child they came across who did not have a mark on their forehead (Ezekiel 9.1-11). It will also be done during the Tribulation (Revelation 13.16-17). The mark that believers will get when they arrive in New Jerusalem will not be one of protection but identification. There will be several groups of people who will have access to New Jerusalem:

1. Old Testament believers
2. New Testament believers

3. Tribulation believers
4. Millennial Kingdom believers

Yet of these four groups of believers only the New Testament believers are promised to have a dwelling in New Jerusalem (John 14.2). The mark on the forehead with the names of the Father, Son and New Jerusalem identifies New Testament believers as being residents of the city. The other three groups will have homes outside New Jerusalem on the new Earth. The other groups may have the name of the Father and the Son written on their foreheads, but not New Jerusalem. We are not told this in the Bible, but it is a logical deduction.

How to do a study

1. Determine who the message is being given to and why.
2. Determine if the message is literal or symbolic.
3. Determine the context (What is the subject).
4. Determine the dispensation the passage applies to and if the message is for us today or for only those of the Old Testament dispensation or for a later dispensation (Tribulation or Millennial and Eternal Kingdoms).
5. Find as many passages dealing with the subject as you can.
6. Put together the message of all the passages to determine the message.
7. Give clear statements far more importance than unclear statements.
8. Base the message of an unclear statement on a clear one.

Example of an exegetical study of a book

True love of the brethren

(3.16-24) *We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17*

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? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. 19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him 20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. 23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. 24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

(3.16-18) We know that Jesus loves us because He died for us. His death on the cross at the hands of wicked men was the ultimate act of love. Even though there may be times in our lives when we feel as though He does not love us we can look back at His sacrifice on the cross and know for certain that He always has, does and will love us. His love for us is not dependent on our feelings, obedience or faithfulness, but upon His faithfulness.

In the same way we are to love the brethren – with a pure love that is not based on their behavior, but on the faithfulness of Jesus. Since He is always faithful we should be too (2 Timothy 2.13; 1 Corinthians 10.13; 2 Corinthians 1.8; 1 Thessalonians 5.24; 2 Thes. 3.3; Hebrews 2.17; 3.6; 10.23).

Our love should be so strong that we are willing to die physically for the brethren. This is the greatest act of love (1 John 15.13). The opportunity to die for another does not come along very often, but we all have the opportunity to help the brethren regularly.

Anyone who claims to love the brethren should be eager to help them when they have true spiritual and physical needs. Those who fail to help their brothers and sisters do not have the love of God

living in them – they are not walking in the Spirit. Their faith is dead (James 2.15-17) and they are backslidden – living in the flesh.

Obviously, if there is a sluggard among the brethren who refuses to work and is always in need you should not help him. Instead let him go without food (2 Thessalonians 3.10).

Instead of saying we love the brethren we should show it by our actions. If you rarely have the opportunity to help someone and you would like to become more involved, get to know more brothers and sisters. Once you become a friend they will let you know what their needs are.

(3.19-22) True love of the brethren is positive evidence that we are truly born from above and it gives us assurance in our walk with the Lord. When we sin and feel guilty for what we have done we should not go on a guilt trip. Instead we must understand that God knows we will sin from time to time and He has forgiven and cleansed us of all sins we have and will commit.

When we live a holy life we have greater confidence before God and can come boldly before the throne of grace. We also have confidence to make petitions when we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing to Him.

There are three basic ingredients needed before a believer can make a petition before God and expect it to be answered. They are: you must not be practicing sin or have committed a sin without repenting of it and asking forgiveness; you must obey the commandments that Jesus has given us in His Word; and you must live a life that is pleasing to Him.

The first two requirements are self-explanatory. It is the third requirement, to live a life pleasing to God that is controversial. Some argue they have liberty to do anything that is not forbidden by the Scriptures, but they miss the point of why we are here.

We are ambassadors of God (2 Corinthians 5.20). whose job it is to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and to teach them to observe all that Jesus has commanded us (Matthew 28.19-20). We are not to spend our time seeing how far we can go in “Christian liberty” before we cross the line. Instead we are to love God with all our

heart, soul, might (Deuteronomy 6.5) and mind (Mark 12.29) and do everything to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10.31).

(3.23) The primary commandment that God gave us is to believe in His Son Jesus Christ. We must obey that command before we obey any other. If a person tries to obey every command that God and Jesus have given mankind without believing in Jesus it is all in vain. No one can work their way into Heaven by obedience to the commandments of God. The only way to be saved, born from above, is to trust Jesus to save you. Once you have done that and are redeemed by the blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1.18-19; Revelation 5.9) you should keep the rest of the commandments starting with the second most important commandment, to love the brethren.

Even in the Old Testament dispensation the second commandment after loving God with all your being was to love your neighbor (Deuteronomy 6.4-5). We are to love the brethren first and then the lost so we can lead them to Jesus.

(3.24) All believers who abide in Jesus as He commanded us to (John 15.4-7) do so by keeping His commandments. If you do not obey Him you are not abiding in Him and are in danger of being taken home early (John 15.2, 6). He abides in us no matter what we do. He does not leave us when we disobey Him for He said He and His Father would make their home in us (John 14.23). The Holy Spirit also lives in us and cannot leave us no matter how much we sin (Romans 8.9-11; 1 Corinthians 3.16; 6.19-20; 2 Cor. 5.5; 6.16; James 4.5). Jesus promised the other Helper will be with us forever (John 14.16).

All three members of the Trinity live in us and none of Them ever leave. If we lead a life of sin and refuse to repent They will take us home early, but never leave us. You cannot lose your salvation for when you are born anew from above you passed out of death into life and were given eternal life (John 5.24). Eternal life is not eternal if you can have it taken away.

APPENDIX E

FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship consists of several spiritual activities along with non-spiritual ones:

1. Worship (Matthew 4.10; John 4.24; Philippians 3.3).
2. Prayer (Matthew 18.19; Acts 1.14; 2.42; 4.31; 6.4; 12.12; 21.5).
3. Studying Scripture (1 Colossians 3.16).
4. Exhortating each other (Romans 12.8; 1 Timothy 4.13).
5. Admonishing each other (1 Colossians 3.16).
6. Reproving and correcting each other (2 Timothy 3.16).
7. Forgiving each other (Matthew 6.12; Luke 17.4; Ephesians 4.32; Colossians 3.13).
8. Loving and pleasing each other (Mark 12.31; Romans 15.2).
9. Meeting each other's needs (James 2.15-17; 1 John 3.16-18).
10. Bearing each others burdens (Romans 15.1).
11. Serving each other (Mark 10.43-45).

Fellowship is not just meeting with brothers and sisters in the Lord and worshipping God, praying, studying the Bible, comforting and exhorting each other. It is a way of life.

Every believer should be an active member of a church, but also of a small group fellowship (SGF). In a true SGF all of the members love each other as if they were their own family members. All believers should treat each other as if they were blood relatives, but very few do. Yet in a SGF it is required.

Members worship together, pray together, study the Bible together, memorize Scripture together, disciple each other and share the Gospel with the lost together. They also exhort and admonish each other and when necessary correct, reprove and forgive each other.

They love and please each other. This means they do things to help each other grow spiritually and live in peace and tranquility – not upset each other by self-centered behavior.

Two things that we should do for one another is meet the physical needs of the brethren and also bear their burdens. When a member of our SGF has need of work, food, clothing, shelter, money, transportation, etc. we do whatever it takes to meet those needs. If a member is a lazy bum who refusing to work and takes advantage of the others he/she must be removed from the fellowship (2 Thessalonians 3.10).

Bearing each others burdens encompasses a wide range of things. It means we are to help each other with our physical needs, but also our emotional needs. When a brother or sister is going through trials and tribulations we are to be there to listen to them share their problems and then act if need be. This is something all couples should do, but many do not.

Being a servant to all is also a key aspect of fellowship:

“Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. 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 10.42-45)

SGFs can be made up of families, mixed singles, men or just women. Some believers who have the time are members of two or more SGFs. Every church should have numerous SGFs. If your church does has none urge your pastors to start some. If they do not consider going to a church that has some.

APPENDIX F

WORSHIP

Every believer should spend time each day worshipping God. How do we do that? Here are some things you can do to worship God:

1. **Be silent and meditate on the blessings He has given you** (Psalm 4.4).
2. **Thank Him** (Leviticus 7.12; 1 Chronicles 16.8; Nehemiah 12.8; Psalm 9.1; 50.14, 23; 116.17; 118.1; Isaiah 12.1; 25.1; Jeremiah 17.26; Jonah 2.9; Philippians 4.6; Colossians 4.2).
3. **Praise Him** (Judges 5.3; Psalm 30.1; 95.2; 2 Chron. 7.3; Psalm 22.23; 30.4; 34.1; 66.8; 67.3; 74.21; 99.3; 100.4; 106.1; 112.1; 113.1; 117.1; 119.164; 117.1; 135.1, 3; 145.2; 147.12; 148.1-7, 13; 150.1-6; Matt. 11.25; Rom. 15.11; Heb. 13.15; Rev. 19.5).
4. **Rejoice** (Leviticus 23.40; Deuteronomy 12.7, 12, 18; 14.26; 16.11; 32.43; Psalm 2.11; 32.11; 89.16; Matthew 5.12; Luke 10.20; John 4.36; Romans 12.15; 15.10; 2 Corinthians 13.11; Philippians 3.1; 4.4; 1 Thessalonians 5.16).

5. **Sing** (1 Chronicles 16.9, 23; Nehemiah 12.8, 27, 46; Psalm 9.11; 18.49; 30.4; 33.1-3; 47.6-7; 66.2; 68.4, 32; 69.30; 81.1; 96.1-2; 98.1, 4-5; 105.2; 107.22; 135.3; 138.1; 147.1, 7; 149.1, 3; Isaiah 12.5; 42.10; Jeremiah 20.13; 31.7; Romans 15.9; James 5.13).
6. **Read Scripture** (Deuteronomy 17.19; Isaiah 34.16; Revelation 1.3).
7. **Serve God** (Exodus 23.25; Deuteronomy 10.12; Romans 12.1; Hebrews 12.28)
8. **Serve others** (Mark 10.43-45; Luke 10.27-37; John 13.14; Galatians 6.2, 10;)

All believers should strive to worship God every day in these eight ways. The key is to set aside time each day to worship God. If you do not make time you will never have time. The best time for worship is when you first wake up and when you go to bed. Even if you spend five or ten minutes in worship when you lie down and rise up that is better than none. Try to take small worship breaks throughout the day.

Besides worshipping God by yourself you should also seek to worship Him in a small group fellowship and in church worship services.

APPENDIX G

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

APPENDIX H

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: 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 time in worldly activities or by cutting them out altogether. Some other worldly activities that most believers spend too much time in are: movies, television, music, Internet, 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:

Seek first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6.33)

Put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6.10-18)

Fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6.12)

Transform your mind (Romans 12.2)

Take up your cross (Matthew 10.38-39; 16.24-26)

Deny yourself (Romans 12.1)

Be content in your circumstances (Philippians. 4.3; 1 Tim. 6.6-8; Hebrews 13.5)

Give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5.18)

Continually offer praise to God (Hebrews 13.15)
Forsake the world and all that is in it (Romans 12.2;
Galatians 6.14; 1 Peter 1.14; 1 John 2.15-17)
Flee from seeking after riches (1 Timothy 6.9-11)
Submit to others (Ephesians 5.21)
Obey your spiritual leaders (Hebrews 13.17)
Love the brethren (John 13.34-35; James 2.15-16; 1 John
3.16-18)
Love the lost and your enemies (Prov. 25.21; Matthew
5.43-48)
Be rich in good works (1 Timothy 6.18; Galatians 6.10;
Ephesians 2.10; 2 Timothy 3.17; Hebrews 13.16)
Do not grow weary in doing good works (2 Thess. 3.13)
Give to those in need (Leviticus 25.35; Deuteronomy 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)
Lead a tranquil and 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 or great works 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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