

Divine Fruits of God Draft
A Preview

By Douglass J Webb

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Introduction:

(This is book has editing and updates to be completed. Please treat this a rough copy)

Romans 7:4-6 (NASB 2020) 4 Therefore, my brothers [and sisters,] you also were put to death in regard to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were [brought to light] by the Law, were at work in the parts of our body to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

With

Psalm 58:3 (NASB 2020) 3 The wicked have turned away from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth.

The fruits of death and darkness reign from birth. May God's people rejoice that the death of darkness is gone. The evil reigning since birth is dead in Christ, who replaces it with the light of God. Christian, what does this mean for you? Death and darkness with their fruits are gone. In the Christian soul lives the fruits of God as God works in the soul.

The Fruits of God are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. God has implanted these attributes inside of you, Christian. Attributes of God are not emotional states. Emotional states are having some feeling inside and following that feeling. Fruits given by God affect every part of the person, including how to think, how to feel, and how to act while following God's mission. God's mission to his people is to proclaim Christ died for the lost while learning the Bible well, like a student studying. The fruits of God are another way of saying God gives each Christian some attributes or some properties from himself. It is common to call the Fruits of God the Fruits of the Spirit. Think of these attributes either way. God provides and produces some elements of himself in each Christian through the Holy Spirit, who is God.

Christians may find reading and understanding the Bible difficult. To resolve this struggle, always read before a passage and after a passage. This may require reading

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many verses before and after or a few verses. Remember, God calls all Christians to be a student of the Bible. This will mean Christians will need to read a lot of the Bible to understand one or two passages well. Languages are used to write Bibles. Rules within a language allow the language to be understood. When reading before and after a passage, follow the rules of any language to understand what God's intent is. God speaks through the rules of a language. Throughout this book, each chapter will provide additional passages for further study. Christian, take your time to read each chapter to explore God's word well.

Please read from the start to the end of this book to absorb the larger ideas starting with chapter one. Some ideas will repeat in each chapter. Reading one topic like love is alright, as each chapter contains everything it needs to be understood. Like any other book, there are weaknesses and strengths. Christian, seek God and focus on what this book does well. May God use this book to build his church around the world. Amen!

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Chapter 1: In Adam Bible Study

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. 19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, indecent behavior, 20 idolatry, witchcraft, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, 21 envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Without Christ, would everyone be good in God's sight? Everyone is in God's likeness in some ways, but evil defiles and corrupts God's likeness. Sin overpowers being made in the likeness of God. The non-believer, like every Christian if outside of Christ, would love and enjoy killing his or her neighbour, at least in thought. Why be patient and content when stealing out of envy is more desirable while being in darkness? Is there any point in having a sober mind if one can cloud their mind with drugs and drinks? Who needs peace if one can fight and take a piece of land? Sin knows no bounds without God's restraining and cleansing power only found in the Gospel. The Gospel of Christ that restrains darkness should bring all Christians to praise him for his marvellous grace.

If sin had its way when Christ lived, the Jews and Jewish leaders would have killed him many times. But Christ stopped these rebellious people by walking through their midst in enormous crowds when many sought to kill him. But if darkness removed God's sovereign hand, there would be no hope in the Gospel, as there would be no salvation. Yes, the pure saviour Jesus Christ would not have died for his people, as the prophecies foretold. Christ came for the sick, lost in a sea of darkness with no light or hope.

Sadly, many Christians agree with the non-believing world that everyone is good, but we make poor decisions on how one speaks and acts. This view denies every human is born into darkness and then being spiritually dead with no good in them. A non-believer can submit to God with some slight wound of darkness yet be pure in themselves. This person does not need the Gospel of Christ, as Christ came for the deadly sickness of sin, not the well needing therapy. The one who is pure with a slight wound does not need this Christ, as they are good with full control of themselves. But this is deception, as the Bible speaks about every human's true state in Romans Chapter 2 through to Chapter 8. Fruits of darkness stemming from a bad tree manifest themselves in Galatians 5:18-21, opposing the divine fruits of the Gospel.

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All those Christ knows have the Fruit of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Gospel. Instead of each Christian seeking after darkness, Christians seek after what God loves, as revealed in the Bible alone. Salvation causes every Christian to enjoy what God enjoys throughout every aspect of life, as the power of God completes its task. The Fruit of the Spirit is a part of God's power working among his people. What are the attributes or qualities that God, who is gracious, is working in each Christian? These fruits are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. May God work all these fruits in every Christian. Amen!

Questions:

1. What are the common sins you see around you where you live that do not follow Exodus 20 and love as defined in 1 Corinthians 13?
2. How are these people deceiving themselves in thinking they are correct and moral?
3. In what ways are you agreeing with what is evil from the world around you?

Additional Texts: John 7:30, John 7:44, Matthew 21:46, Ephesians 2:1-7, Galatians 5:-22-24, Titus 3:5, Psalms 51:5, Psalms 58:3, John 10:31, Matthew 12:14, Luke 4:29-30, Luke 5:31-32

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Chapter 2: In Adam Commentary

If Christ never came for creatures covered in darkness, where would any Christian be? There would be no interdependence on God the Father, who becomes every Christian's heavenly father. Greater interdependence leads to God speaking in the Bible, so that each Christian learns how to speak and act. As the Bible directs and leads as God works through living and divine words of the Bible, strengthening occurs in Christians. God the Father, Jesus Christ who is God, and God the Holy Spirit, leads local churches into more qualities of light, like the fruits of God. Only through the salvation of Jesus Christ, fruits of God become available. What are these fruits flowing from the gracious Jesus Christ?

In Galatians 5:22-23, God lists his divine fruits given to each Christian. As Christians have a growing grasp of the living Bible, fruits grow. The power of the Gospel removes influences of any remaining darkness while harvesting good fruit. The power found in the Gospel is on display as Christians seek God in his word. As Christians fill their minds with the Bible, God is actively completing many activities as he desires. Every Christian has fruits of God through the saviour Jesus Christ as Christians join God.

Being loving or patient does not mean someone has God's Gospel or fruits from the Gospel. Many methods can produce fruits like love, but sin taints these fruits. Being known and beloved by God should lead each Christian to have powerful impulses of God working in them. As God works, the desire of God overcomes any remaining influences of sin, leading to greater conformity to what the Bible explains. The Gospel is still active today in each Christian while producing joy or faithfulness. In Christ Jesus, this has all been attained, as the Gospel is still central to the Christian life. God will plant and harvest as the Bible completes its task. See Hebrews 4:12 with Philippians 2:12-13, and 2 Timothy 1:8-10.

In Christ Jesus is the Gospel flowing with many encouragements, like divine fruits. Without Jesus Christ dying on a cross, then rising from the dead, where would Christians be? If each Christian is being honest, the love of darkness along the broad path would be the path one would walk. Every form of desire and actions that oppose God would be on everyone's mind, maybe with some guilt. Lying, stealing, misusing God's pure name, and many actions would be a normal day. Why does this matter? In Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, the Bible describes through Adam, everyone is a sinner and will die.

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What does it mean, through one man, everyone outside of Christ is a sinner? It does not mean every person at birth loves God, which God accepts. A sinner is a person who misses God's perfect standard with acts of evil. Any form of evil is like mocking and spitting in God's face. See James 4:4-6, John 3:36, and Psalms 73:27. The depths of evil in each person are much deeper.

Psalms 51:5 NASB 2020 Behold, I was brought forth in guilt, And in sin my mother conceived me.

And

Psalms 58:3 NASB 2020 The wicked have turned away from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth.

And

1 Corinthians 15:22 NASB 2020 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

And

Ephesians 2:1-4 NASB 2020 1 And you were dead in your offenses and sins, 2 in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

And

Romans 3:9-19 NASB 2020 9 What then? Are we better [than they?] Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written: "THERE IS NO RIGHTEOUS PERSON, NOT EVEN ONE; 11 THERE IS NO ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NO ONE WHO SEEKS OUT GOD; 12 THEY HAVE ALL TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME CORRUPT; THERE IS NO ONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE." 13 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE VENOM OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS"; 14 "THEIR

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MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS”; 15 “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, 16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, 17 AND THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN THE WAY OF PEACE.” 18 “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.” 19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;

And

Romans 3:22-23 NASB 2020 22 but [it is the] righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

And

Romans 8:6-8 NASB 2020 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able [to do so,] 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Please read Genesis 1-3, Romans 3-5 and Ephesians 2.

What is the depth of sin? Each person goes astray from the womb with evil, not later in life with a choice, or steals at age 10 to be consumed by darkness. At conception and while in the womb, sin is present in each person. The three exceptions are Adam, Eve, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Where does this sin come from? Adam passed darkness into his children. Adam represents the fallen race as in spreading the disease of sin, as Christ represents his people. Christ purifies his people from darkness. What does being represented by Adam mean? When each person is being born, they are children of wrath. By sin being present at birth, God’s judgment is present on everyone. This evil is not just a slight wound but a deadly disease infecting all parts of a person, making them a lover of evil. Lying starts at birth, as a liar goes astray from birth. From birth, evil lives in each person, as there is no one who can subject themselves to God. Evil is the default motivation in each person descending from Adam. No one wants to please God or is neutral towards God at birth.

Why discuss this? Many Christians disregard these texts to create an idea that everyone born is good, or at least neutral, towards God. Look at the British Monk Pelagius from

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the 4th century. He taught that Christ's grace can be useful for salvation but not necessary, as there is no stain of darkness in each person. Or someone can cleanse themselves to enter heaven without God's grace, as each person can remove the effects of evil through choice. Another pathway of Pelagius's thought is someone can reject the illness of sin and be good so that God would accept them. Pelagius thought everyone was neutral at birth, while rejecting everyone being born with the darkness of sin. Sin does not affect a person's will and it is free to do as it pleases. Christ came for the sick, did he not? See Matthew 9:12. The Doctor Christ comes and heals the sick starting from birth, not later in life.

Question: How does someone reject that each person is consumed by the darkness of sin at birth?

- 1) Someone becomes accountable at a certain age for their actions. Once the person lies or steals at this age, they come under God's judgment. Before this age, God will let them into heaven, as there is no darkness in them or accountability from God. This means anyone before this age at death will enter heaven as they are pure.
- 2) Free will allows someone to come to God in submission. Free will becomes the reason God knows someone, but often many say it is by God's grace that I am saved. God cannot save anyone without a person's permission, as God does not violate someone's will. God and man work together to complete salvation through God providing the pathway and man freely choosing the pathway. As much as a person gives God credit for creating the pathway, free will is the determining factor of why someone becomes a Christian.
- 3) Someone can select darkness over light, as the will is free of sin. By a person's free will, they can enter darkness, then light, and then darkness again. God cannot prevent this person from leaving his kingdom to return to what is evil for a time. Any person is stronger than God, as the will is free to do as it pleases, while making God the weaker partner unable to act. There is little reason to pray that God will save anyone, as God cannot do anything without a person's will acting first.

Pelagius's ideas live on, as each person is born freely able to choose good or evil. From a simple reading of the passages above, each person is born with the corruption of evil, as liars go astray from birth. See James 2:10.

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Many have arguments about why passages do not mean what they say. The arguments do not matter, as God communicates these ideas clearly throughout his book. The simple reading of the passages mentioned above show man cannot submit themselves to God because of being consumed by darkness from the womb. No one is good by God's standards, as a liar goes astray from birth. No argument will change the reality of the Bible if someone wants to be honest.

God comes to each Christian to free his people, or darkness will reign. God has mercy upon his people for his own sake. See Romans, John 3, John 6, John 10, and Ephesians 1. In Christ, salvation is for the person who is not good and darkness is present at conception. The prominent doctor comes for the person who is on their deathbed, barely able to breathe, with life fading. For the person who is good or neutral at birth, who is void of sin from birth, has no need for this healer. Yes, the Bible says everyone sins, but this is the liar from birth. The conclusion of needing Christ must fit all the passages for the topic. If someone is free from any chains or influence of darkness, even if they may steal a little, Christ does not cure this illness. This person is not in darkness because of Adam, as the illness of sin has not spread to them. The cure for the illness needs to fit the illness. Christ cleanses the poor man or woman who is on their deathbed already dead!

Path 1:

If someone is not born with darkness, a ten-step self-help book will heal through education and tips. Education and tips show how each person can be better. To be the best version of oneself, the person needs therapy to have peace and love. Christ can be there as an emotional comforter and gives delight that a slight wound in lying is gone. Or many think Christ is a foolish man dying for nothing as the saviour. Without darkness at birth, Christ's role is optional for something, as no one requires this divine doctor. Still, many say Christ with much passion is needed to be everyone's saviour for a slight wound. The ideas and conclusion conflict with each other. Is man good and requiring some self-help or therapy, as in some education, to resolve issues? Or is Christ the doctor needed to cure and resurrect the dead as this illness is 100% fatal? It cannot be both, as this pathway is confused. This pathway agrees with the unbelieving world that everyone is good and requires some help. Slight wounds can be healed with therapy, including Jesus as an emotional comforter to motivate. In the 21st century, this path is where many Christians walk, wondering why the Gospel has no power while the church fades into a distant memory.

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Path 2:

By being born into Adam, everyone has inherited sin and evil; hence, everyone requires Christ. He is not an emotional saviour to provide a stable and easy life. He is not there to be a therapist and help work out trauma or addiction. God comforts his people in trials, but not like a therapist educating to have a better life. Christ is there to save all his people who are completely helpless. God comes to his people and opens each of their eyes to the light of the Gospel. See Acts 16:14 with Romans 10 in trusting and resting on Christ Jesus for salvation. Through the power and shelter of Christ's grace from the cross, there will be fruits of the Gospel, but not through ten steps to be more caring. The saviour Jesus Christ leads his people to greater studying of the Bible and prayer without ceasing. See Hebrews 4:12 with 2 Timothy 3:10-17 and Matthew 6 with James 1. The spiritual activities of prayer and Bible Study lead to God working. God removes influences of darkness while comforting his people through spiritual activities. Sadly, this path is hard, as it is offensive to Christians to deny free will and see the depths of sin. This path becomes forgotten, for everyone is not that bad.

To conclude, Adam's family needs the saviour Christ Jesus. From the Gospel washing and cleansing, God will harvest many fruits according to his will, as seen in Galatians 5. Amen!

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Chapter 3: What are the Fruits of the Spirit

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

When the Fruit of the Spirit comes up, how is it taught? Often the teacher speaks of ten steps to become more loving, while Christ makes a quick appearance then disappears. Other times, the teacher teaches being patient or kind, since God desires Christians to be patient and kind. Many churches speak of being filled with gentleness or gracefulness as an emotion. In these examples, God comes up, then becomes quickly forgotten. God's Gospel and God's divine fruits are different ideas that do not have a direct connection. Think of a farmer planting seed, but only focused on the grown crops. Has the farmer missed anything? Yes, how to produce the crops.

Many churches speak about the Spirit's fruits, but lack instruction on how these fruits become planted and harvested. These fruits flow out of the Gospel. What does this mean? From birth, every person who lies goes astray. As Christ died for everyone who trusts in him, his blood cleanses these people. The Holy Spirit applies the atoning work of Christ, bringing in many from many tribes and nations. Think of smelly mud on an item being washed with water to remove the dirt and any smell. This Gospel removes a corrupted disposition that is like smelly mud with a new mind loving God throughout history. What a perfect and merciful saviour in Christ Jesus!

What is the new mind in each Christian? The new mind has some attributes of God that show the purity of God, instead of waging war against God. A Christian's thoughts, will, emotions, and immaterial part submits to God. The mind or spirit contains thoughts, will, and desires. The mind is free from blemish, with new desires to follow what God directs. What does this have to do with being kind and patient?

With the Gospel active in the mind of every child of God, loving and kindness is the new creation. Why? Since everyone in Christ Jesus is a new creation, they take on a mindset that is like our common lord and master. Being a new creature means a person is loving by nature, instead of being rude and uncaring. Then why does a Christian not have perfect amounts of kindness or patience? The influences from a Christian's body still have much sway that needs to die, as God works in a lifetime. God plants and harvests divine fruits through the Bible as the Christian works out his or her salvation with reverence. The sinful world influences Christians at many times, hence; Christians need to be careful what they take part in. But the Gospel's power is triumphant because of Christ's work in his life, death, and resurrection. No ten-step method to be nice or counselling will gain love that is freed from the corruptions of darkness.

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All of God's children should rejoice that God saves his people, then reduces evil influences. The Fruit of the Gospel is active in the minds of God's people as their body drags each Christian into darkness for a time. Be taught through the Bible by the Holy Spirit that lessens dark influences in each Christian. The fruits of God will be more present as in kindness and patience as God plants and harvests many kinds of fruit over decades. Amen!

Questions:

1. What do you think the Fruit of the Spirit is?
2. Do you view the Fruit of the Spirit as only an emotional state? Why or why not?
3. Do you see the Gospel and the Fruit of the Spirit essential to each other?
4. How has your body brought you back into a sinful and evil influence?
5. Where have you lost hope that a dark influence has overtaken you?
6. In what areas are you praying God will plant more seeds to harvest more divine fruits?

Remember to pray to your heavenly father about anything, including these questions. The end goal is not to be nice for the sake of being nice. The goal is to worship God with a refining mind that God develops through the Bible, so each Christian serves with other Christians.

Additional Texts: 2 Corinthians 5, Hebrews 8:8-12, Colossian 3:2, Ephesians 4:19-24, Ephesians 2:3, Psalms 16:7, Psalms 26:2, Proverbs 16:9, Titus 3:5, Ephesian 2:9-10, Romans 7

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Chapter 4: The Fruits of God in the Mind

What is each person without Christ? Nothing good, as everyone is a descendant of Adam. Adam passed on dark tendencies with a corrupt nature to his children. An evil nature means everyone is ill, needing Christ the divine doctor to heal the incurable disease of sin. The illness of sin is:

- 1) Every person is in Adam as Adam passed sin along his family line – Romans 5
- 2) Conceived with evil – Psalms 58:3 with Psalms 52:3
- 3) Every person is dead in sin with an evil disposition – Ephesians 2:1-4
- 4) God does not listen to Adam's children's prayers - Proverbs 15:29 with Proverbs 28:9
- 5) No one seeks for God or submits to God – Romans 3
- 6) No one does good by the standard given by God – Romans 3
- 7) The mind in darkness cannot submit to God – Romans 8:6-8
- 8) A person in darkness cannot please God – Romans 8:8
- 9) What is evil according to God – Galatians 5:18-21
- 10) Seeks to violate God's revealed directions – Exodus 20 with Romans 3 and Ephesians 2
- 11) All in Adam die because of the effects of sin – 1 Corinthians 15

For the saviour to be a divine doctor, the illness of sin in each person must fit the description that God has revealed. The summary above provides enough signs of illness to define what darkness is. Christ heals this illness, not a slight wound of lying or stealing.

Matthew 9:11-14 NASB 2020 11 And when the Pharisees saw [this,] they said to His disciples, “Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?” 12 But when [Jesus] heard [this,] He said, “[It is] not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. 13 “Now go and learn what this means: ‘I DESIRE COMPASSION, RATHER THAN SACRIFICE,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” 14 Then the disciples of John *came to Him, asking, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?”

Many teach someone becomes evil at a certain age, the illness does not fit God's description. Others want to teach every person is good, but have some behaviours that God finds questionable. The illness that comes by choice or at a certain age differs from the illness that Christ heals. Christ does not heal or cleanse someone with a mild condition.

What is a person? Each person is a physical being with a soul. See Genesis 1 through Genesis 2. God uses many terms to describe being a physical being and a non-physical being. As seen in modern English Bibles, God uses words like flesh, body, soul, spirit, and mind. From Genesis 1 through Genesis 2, the human is two parts, physical and non-

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physical. Humans exist as male and female with similar and dissimilar features in their bodies. Each person's non-physical part is more complex. The mind or spirit thinks, feels, and has memories. See Proverbs 16:9, Psalms 4:7, Psalms 13:2, Hebrews 4:12, Joshua 1:8-18.

A person has a body and a mind, but how do they interact with each other? God never goes into great detail about such matters. God reveals that after death, the mind still exists. See Matthew 10:28 and Ecclesiastes 12:6.

There is a debate whether a human is two parts, three parts, or more. It does not matter since God wants all of each Christian to worship him. God wants emotions, thinking, memories, moving the body, and using the body to bring him praise.

Why review any of this? Each Christian needs to know what part of them still likes sin and what part loves God. The members or body of each Christian still love sin, but Christ lives in the mind. Let's look at some of these passages and see how they relate to the Fruit of the Gospel. See Romans 6-8 with Galatians 5.

Acts 15:7-9 NASB 2020 7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the Gospel and believe. 8 "And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; 9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.

And

Psalms 51:10 NASB 2020 10 Create in me a clean heart, God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

And

Jeremiah 31:31-33 NASB 2020 31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. 33 "For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD: "I will put My law within them and write it on their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

And

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Titus 3:5-7 NASB 2020 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we did in righteousness, but in accordance with His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He richly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to [the] hope of eternal life.

And

Hebrews 10:19-22 NASB 2020 19 Therefore, brothers [and sisters,] since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, [through] His flesh, 21 and since [we have] a great priest over the house of God, 22 let's approach [God] with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled [clean] from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

And

Romans 7:22-25 NASB 2020 22 For I joyfully agree with the law of God in the inner person, 23 but I see a different law in the parts of my body waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, [the law] which is in my body's parts. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Additional References: 1 Corinthians 6:11, Ezekiel 36:25, Matthew 3:11.

As the Gospel of Christ comes to each Christian, God recreates the mind. The mind, with all its functions and parts, is clean. The Gospel washes away evil that directly affects the mind, just like an old house washed thoroughly to remove filth. Where evil plotted and schemed once in the heart, the light of God lives. God's purity, as found in Exodus 20 and 1 Corinthians 13, lives in each Christian's soul.

Notice the heart has instructions written on it; it has the function of telling each Christian right and wrong. With a new heart, the light of God guides the functions of thinking, knowing right and wrong, and feeling. Notice both the heart and mind plan in Proverbs. Note, the Bible calls the heart many things. See Psalms 14:1, Psalms 16:9, Psalms 21:2, Psalms 55:4, Proverbs 16:1, and Proverbs 16:9 for more functions, such as planning and feeling.

The Holy Spirit washes the Christian's immaterial functions and is reborn. But why do we commit evil while being known by God? The body still needs to be cleansed. See

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Romans 6 to 8. Depending on the English translation, you will see the term flesh, body or member. The body causes each Christian loved by Christ to still sin. When every Christian gets a new body, the perishable transforms into the imperishable. The darkness that lives in a Christian's body that plagues him or her will be gone with a new body. The curse of being in Adam is gone as Christ lives in each Christian. See 1 Corinthians 15.

Living in each Christian's heart is the Fruit of the Spirit, as in Galatians 5. As the body influences with sin fights the new mind, the mind slowly overcomes the influences of evil. The Bible comes along and strengthens the new mind. New fruits of God arise and conquer influences. Reading a Bible is not gaining knowledge about God and history. As the words of God transform each Christian, the remaining effects of sin decrease. See Romans 6:19-23, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7, Hebrews 4:12, and 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

The Fruits of the Gospel show they exist through more patience, joy, love, peace, and other qualities of the heart. God works powerfully in each Christian, which causes each Christian to sing with joy. Who needs an arm healed when the heart overflows with rot and filth? It is tempting to seek a healing, but the greater work of God is growing in the Fruits of the Gospel. See Matthew 5:29-30.

Can a non-believer produce love and kindness outside of the Gospel, yes? Does God accept these moral acts? No. Evil taints everything that a non-believer does. Simply being moral, like not lying or respecting parents, is not what God has called his people too. Being moral means seeking to do good for the sake of being good. If someone wants to stop lying or be more kind, there are better methods like Mindfulness or other forms of therapy. Each Christian has the greater gift of a cleansed heart that leads to love and graciousness. God calls his people to live away from darkness, then provides instructions through all the Bible.

Morals from God come through the power of the Gospel. The link between God and morals always come through repentance away from evil and turning to a new life by trusting in Christ. Any morals given are to serve God as each Christian follows the mission given by God. The mission given by God is to spread the news of Christ that Christ forgives everyone who comes for the cure of sin. And each person forgiven by God is to learn the Bible to continue being transformed into more faithful servants of God. Remember, God in each Christian is planting seeds and harvesting ripe fruits again and again. The Christian is not alone in this life, as the Bible acts as a gateway for many abundant harvests of the divine qualities of God. It is not enough to be like David or Daniel with 5 steps to be like them. Purity in life that God accepts is not having ten steps to be more loving or kind. As mentioned above, forgiveness from the curse of Adam, as

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seen in Romans 5 with the continuing work of God, leads to being moral. The Bible is living and active. Embrace the living word. See 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Hebrews 4:12.

Look towards the Gospel as it is the supernatural work of God. Is God lifeless since a miracle, healing, or other supernatural event does not occur? No. If God heals, great! But it is better to enter the kingdom limp and blind, but have a rich soul with the qualities and fruits of God. God develops each Christian through the Bible. As the Bible goes forth, God is alive and active, working in the hearts of his people. Amen!

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Chapter 5: Affection Bible Study

Romans 5:8-10 NASB 2020 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath [of God] through Him. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

And

Ephesians 1:15-17 NASB 2020 15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which [exists] among you and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention [of you] in my prayers; 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

What is affection? Affection is Christ crucified, and Christ rising with a physical body, proving God's love. When Christ died and rose, it showed God came for the dark and hopeless lost in the sea of evil. The penalty of God's people is upon Christ as the servant who died. Without complaint, Christ provides forgiveness, hence love toward criminals that all Christians are. Without God's love for the lost in the sea of darkness, God would know no one. By being known by God causes warmth to enter the heart of each Christian that is guided by the Bible.

God shows his love for his people in the Gospel of Christ. Christ transforms his people with affection. Affection leads to appreciation for others. This affection causes a mother to show godly affection to uphold what is true. Worldly affection covers darkness while being friendly. The appreciation found in the Gospel leads to many places in life. Affection is caring for a child, or explaining the good news of Christ to someone, or forgiving someone who hurts a Christian deeply.

Other Christians may always have a cold exterior, but their soul has warmth. Now he or she listens and surprises someone with help from Christ's warmth living in the heart. Or this Christian prays quietly as they observe and hear the needs of others.

The power of God performs this miracle of providing warmth in every true believer. The Gospel creates a new life of love, worshipping God and caring for another that no man or woman can produce. Yes, any human can have affection, but evil twists affection. In our day, what is wrong according to our creator is love according to a fallen world. When the Bible speaks, many react as if it is hate. Others see the Bible as pointless as the darkness in their soul blinds. But affection follows what our creator says and upholds

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it without question. Love rejoices with the truth, including the teaching of the Bible, and avoids lies.

Remember, the Holy Spirit through the Bible harvests ripe fruits. The Bible teaches and corrects. God has shown what love is throughout all the Bible. These words of the Bible work with power as the Holy Spirit moves among his people. God has not left the Christian struggling with ten steps or therapy to have love. Many fruits are being planted and harvested by God.

Without the Gospel of Christ, there would be no transforming of the mind. Genuine warmth in the mind would not exist. But the Gospel has come. As the truth in the Bible leads, affection should grow in each Christian. Continue to walk in the affection through the living saviour Jesus Christ, who died and rose. Amen!

Questions:

1. Are you colder or do you have affection according to truthful friends?
2. Where do you have more affection or seem more cold?
3. How has sin caused you to become cold towards others? How has sin caused you to be affectionate but overlooking darkness? Review Exodus 20 with 1 Corinthians 13. Christ covers all his people's sin. Let no shame rule over you.
4. How is God directing you through the Bible to show more affection in life? Remember, God's grace continues to sustain you in your weaknesses to show godly affection.

Additional Texts: 1 Corinthians 13, Psalm 119:142, Ephesians 4:32, Psalms 40:1

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Chapter 6: Affection Commentary

Affection, love, and acceptance seem to be common words in parts of the world. God defines love, yet evil replaces love with darkness. Nowadays, it is unloving for a Christian to question what acceptance and love are. Biblical love differs from this as it seeks the light. Where does this false love come from? The sick person with an incurable disease of sin and darkness needs Christ. From birth, each person is spiritually dead, and hates the Lord Jesus Christ spreading darkness in action and speech. Christ is the doctor for this person, not for the person who is born excellent or neutral with no darkness inside. Often, many say each person is born neutral or good and then becomes full of darkness later in life by choice. By choice, they do good deeds pleasing to God as each person's will is free to choose good or evil. The person with a free will does not need the Lord Jesus Christ for the incurable illness starting at birth. See Pelagius and Augustine's debates in the 4th century. See Romans 3, Ephesians 2, Psalms 14:3, Psalms 52:3, and Psalms 58:3.

The Gospel comes and washes away sin from the person who loves evil from birth. Christ's Gospel works in the immaterial part of the person, known as the soul and mind. New attributes from the Holy Spirit in the Gospel change how each Christian thinks. These attributes of God are not mere emotions, but attributes that come out in actions and speech. The Holy Spirit is the one that works as he sanctifies. Sanctifying means to remove the remaining evil influences from the bodies of Christians and temptations from living in a dark world. The dark world includes attacks from Satan against God's people. Body is often called members or flesh in different Bible translations. Affection replaces darkness as the Holy Spirit kills the evil remaining in each Christian's body or other dark influences. See Romans 6:19-22, Romans 7, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7, and 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

What is biblical affection? In the bible study portion, God shows love in dying for his people who have an incurable illness. One example of affection is God sending Christ to live perfectly, to die, and rise again. Christians have this Gospel, which means they have love as defined by 1 Corinthians 13. May God speak concisely through 1 Corinthians 13.

Note, there will not be a discussion on prophecy, tongues, or knowledge since it does not add to the discussion.

1 Corinthians 13:1-8 NASB 2020 1 If I speak with the tongues of mankind and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have [the gift of] prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 And if I give away all my possessions [to charity,] and if I surrender my body so that I may glory, but

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do not have love, it does me no good. 4 Love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous; love does not brag, it is not arrogant. 5 It does not act disgracefully, it does not seek its own [benefit;] it is not provoked, does not keep an account of a wrong [suffered,] 6 it does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 it keeps every confidence, it believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails; but if [there are gifts of] prophecy, they will be done away with; if [there are] tongues, they will cease; if [there is] knowledge, it will be done away with.

While reviewing 1 Corinthians 13, the Bible is about the Lord Jesus Christ. Affection is about our Lord Jesus Christ, not on how to be loving to our neighbour. Helping our neighbour is a part of love, but Christ is the primary focus. See John 5:37-40, Luke 24:27 with Luke 24:44.

Verse 1: Speaking without Love

Christians should have a caring tone as the Gospel enables each Christian to do so. Each Christian seeks gentleness and a loving tongue. What does this mean? For many today, it means not debating or even showing the appearance of proclaiming the Bible boldly. Love often means to complete a kind act, do a free service like cleaning someone's windows, or give a non-believer free money. This is not the way in Acts. In Acts, Christians filled with God boldly proclaimed Christ. After the Holy Spirit came and filled a person, new Christians would go debate, to teach explicit statements about Christ being the saviour. For the Christian, speech is to reflect Christ died and rose. When someone speaks to another Christian, Christ is still on their lips and seeking ways to explain Christ to encourage and build up. The mouth is there to speak about Christ directly or indirectly. As Christ is on Christian's lips, each Christian seeks to avoid needless offence with words while having love. See Acts 19:8 with Acts 2.

Christians have objections to the bold proclamation of Christ, as it is offensive or attacking someone's beliefs is wrong. What about it? Someone in sin hates God and his word; hence, an offence is normal and expected. The non-believers' beliefs are reflections of darkness, even when they agree with the Bible. When an offence or objection comes, there is wisdom in listening before you respond. If the description above of someone going astray from birth away from God is true, any objection is an excuse to avoid meeting the saviour Jesus Christ. An objection should not hinder or stop the proclaiming of Christ, as the Apostle Paul did while facing objections or trials from the Jews. Apostle Paul entered a city and boldly proclaimed Christ's forgiveness of sin in a public place. If a Christian is intentionally being rude or seeking their own glory, this Christian should withdraw for a time to learn how not to seek a needless offence.

When Christians speak to each other, affection should be there either when comforting someone or having a hard conversation. Often in conversations, being offensive for the sake of being truthful is required. Other times, listening and not saying much besides this is hard, and I will lift prayers for you to our common God is wise.

Verse 2: Maturity without Love

As any Christian matures in the knowledge of God, a more excellent understanding of the common faith grows. Love goes hand in hand with knowledge. Insight and affection should go hand in hand with each other. Think of a child who stays around the age of 2 years old. They stop growing and think and act much younger than being 35 years old. There would be a significant concern for this child. A Christian like this is sick, lacking natural maturity.

As a Christian grows in such knowledge, they can become prideful or look down upon a weaker or lesser brother somehow. They may have these insights, but they are nothing if love is not in them. Without affection, they are nothing. Every Christian should seek maturity from the word, but along with love. See the Book of James and Romans 14.

Verse 3: Charity and Suffering

In this era, suffering is a foreign concept. Lacking the concept of suffering has led many to reject the need to be charitable, as it requires some suffering. The impulse is my family and what I want comes first. The needs of each house or person will be different. Some will need office equipment to complete the work of the ministry. Others need wider areas for a wheelchair. Others will need a quiet area to pray. Nowadays, needs mean useless gadgets while children have piles of toys. Often there are mountains of food with overpriced clothes while living in larger homes than required. Love calls Christians to suffer and to give to the poor. God is faithful to provide for our basic needs, which differ from one another. Love requires each Christian to give and deny themselves extra benefits in this life for the sake of others. See the Book of James.

Suffering is normal and expected by Christians. Being known by God will require God's people to suffer from darkness. Yes, every Christian will suffer in various trials. Christians in history and around the world today, understood that they will suffer for the cause of Christ. But for many, especially in North America, suffering is a foreign idea. When persecutions occur, this is normal for the Christian, as the Bible has many examples from cover to cover. But remember, God is there to provide and strengthen Christians. See John 6:35-50 and 2 Timothy 3:12, 1 Thessalonians 3:3, Psalms 23.

Charity and suffering without love leads to no good done. Yes, the poor may have more food. Yes, someone's body may have marks scarred upon it. But it has done no good. Throughout history, many gave to the poor and suffered for false beliefs. The Christian who gives to the poor and suffers out of dry duty lacks the pulse of love. Charity and suffering live together with love, which the Gospel provides.

Verse 4 to 5: Qualities of Love

The first three points in 1 Corinthians 13 point to speech, behaviour, and insight without love. What is love? Please think of the most impatient, rude, jealous bragger seeking his desires first. These actions are sin, which oppose God's love in the Gospel. Love bears under annoyance and is patient while seeking never to offend. As wealth grows worldwide, affection avoids wanting what someone else has or owns. Many brag as they bring attention to themselves, while love seeks to put others and their needs first. Pride is a common failing of thinking too highly of oneself. Affection attempts not to think too high of oneself, but love shows the right value Christians should have about themselves. Proper valuing of love applies to other Christians and to non-believers. Affection avoids the shame of sin while putting others and their needs before themselves, as seen in Ephesians 1. Taking offence is natural, but love overlooks many offences and does not take offence. Last, affection does not keep a record of wrongs toward others. In affection, the Christian lets offences go and forgets the sins of others. Understanding the weakness of others and avoiding putting someone in a tempting situation is loving. The idea of understanding the weaknesses of others and not keeping a record of wrongs should not be confused. See Romans 14.

The qualities of love in themselves are very simple on paper. Every child of God knows it is easy to have this attribute when you get along with someone easily. But when someone is difficult, a person rubs someone the wrong way, seeks their own glory and praise, attacks someone on their trust in Christ, and mocks Christ; it is difficult. It is easy to assume that I am full of the Spirit as sin blinds. Why? Evil blinds Christians from the remaining influences in the body. All of God's children should be very careful of thinking they are well. Pride cloaks many areas and allows the Christian to think they are following the Holy Spirit and have love. Be on guard against pride, since it is a downfall. See 1 Corinthians 10:12.

As the Gospel should be on the lips of Christians, love allows us to turn the other cheek to be vulnerable. As many mock and attempt to put God's children in a tough spot, love responds in a way to not be rude. This impulse of life is what the Spirit gives to the Christian. Christians seek to speak with their mouths about Christ dying for criminals and providing hope. The Holy Spirit is there helping them. Local churches seek to disciple many into the faith with much patience and love. As Christians work together

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for the great commission, affection is there between each other as one sees failings and weaknesses in others. Love covers these failings. As the local church reaches out towards the needy when possible, it is not to provide food and drink primarily. The local church shares the bread of life, Christ, which requires affection for someone's soul.

The impulse of the Holy Spirit gives the qualities of love to live a life filled with such qualities. If love leads to not sharing Christ boldly, whether in public speaking or having a conversation with someone at their home, is the Holy Spirit there? When the Bible becomes the obstacle to unity, each Christian starts deciding what God has said. Is the Holy Spirit with love there? When love does not lead to teaching Christ to Christians and proclaiming Christ to the sinful world, this is not the Holy Spirit. Be careful of false forms of love that mute the Bible with darkness, Christian.

Verse 6: Rejoices with the truth

Affection rejoices and seeks what is true. Whether lying to each other or false ideas about God, no lies are in love. From minor lies to covering up events that need to be spoken about, these are against love. Any form of evil that opposes Exodus 20 and 1 Corinthians 13 has no home with love. Exodus 20 is a summary that reflects God's general directions revealed throughout all the Bible for Christians. Note, Christians are under the New Covenant while learning from the whole of the Bible. Every part of the Bible defines love, so Christians seek the truth to know love. The Bible describes rudeness and what is offensive. As Christians follow what God directs, the example of proclaiming Christ boldly is loving. Love seeks what is true and likes it. Seeking to understand the common faith that God delivered to the saints is a part of love. See the Book of Hebrews and Jude 1:3 with 2 Timothy 2:15.

The modern church often rejects the common faith, like boldly proclaiming Christ on the streets. Publicly proclaiming Christ at the street corner will turn people off according to many; hence, before sharing Christ, do these steps first. The Bible explains if an audience will not trust Christ, move on to another place or audience as a witness against them. Or is it loving to allow a lifestyle that opposes Exodus 20 or to put someone in a position in the local church when the Bible forbids it? Many Christians discourage and run away from seeking good teaching for the sake of unity. Often a Christian uses their authority, saying I do not believe this as they are an island unto themselves, judging everything. God defines what the Bible says with a changeless message as generations of Christians hold fast to the common faith. No Christian has the right through their belief or authority to define what they think God says. This is not love, as affection seeks what is true and accepts it with gladness. Love seeks to understand how God communicated through Apostles and Prophets as they wrote letters and books. See Matthew 10:14, Mark 6:11, and Acts 13:50-51.

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Verse 7: What Love does

Love is not unrealistic, but does hope and has confidence. Affection expects that God will do what he says he will do. God saves people from sin, strengthens, and encourages a local church, as this is God's love in action. Affection waits, knowing that God will do what he says while overlooking many failings and disappointments in life. Love hopes for the best in the limitations provided by the Bible, along with rest in God, knowing God is faithful. See Ephesians 1.

God promises his children hard times in this life, but love endures it. Love bears under stress and the weight of trials. Is it easy? No! Affection endures and overcomes as God strengthens. Remember, through the Gospel, God has provided the way to love in stressful situations. Love is a divine fruit planted at salvation that continues to reap much fruit in the Christian life.

Verse 8: Love never fails

Affection continues its work after special knowledge and insight ceases. Love never fails. Why? When these qualities of God shine in a Christian, rudeness and selfishness fade as these divine qualities become visible. Nothing, including sin, stops or prevents divine qualities from completing their given task. God is working in his people with no force able to stop him. When these qualities appear, they overlook many offences and failings by having an intense focus on what is true and a desire to learn from God in the Bible. As love grows in every child of God, love manifests itself and does not fail. Thoughts, speech, and actions become full of love. God raises up Christians to fulfill the Great Commission in Matthew 28. The Great Commission in sharing Christ and being taught Christ's words is the lifestyle that each Christian has manifesting in them. See Philippians 2:13-14 and the Book of Acts.

In closing, love looks past appearances. If someone is kind and cheerful, this does not mean they have divine affection. If someone seems cold or withdrawn, they may lack love outwardly. Some may seem to have lots of love on the outside. Whether cold or warm, each Christian has love in the soul, as defined in 1 Corinthians 13. Every believer learns to be more affectionate as God works and produces fruits. Yes, every true believer has growing affection growing in them. Amen!

Chapter 7: Joy Bible Study

Psalms 4:6-8 NASB 2020 6 Many are saying, “Who will show us [anything] good?” Lift up the light of Your face upon us, LORD! 7 You have put joy in my heart, More than when their grain and new wine are abundant. 8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, LORD, have me dwell in safety.

With

2 Corinthians 8:1-2 NASB 2020 1 Now, brothers [and sisters,] we make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, 2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.

What comes to mind when someone hears a word like joy, delight, or happiness? To the unbelieving world, darkness brings joy and delight. Being lustful towards the opposite sex brings tainted delightful fantasies to the mind. Being greedy and taking more than one needs brings much happiness. Speaking lies to gain an advantage excites some while destroying another. When adversity comes to someone who is lustful, greedy, or speaks lies, joy tainted by sin evaporates. Like a pool of water left in the sun, the body of water seems to be fine, but the water will disappear as the Sun warms up the pool.

The Christian life is not always living at restful times, but a life called of God to be in the valleys working for God. What are these valleys? These valleys can be anything starting with poor health, lack of food, lack of shelter or a shelter that only provides partial comfort, and lack of work. These valleys become darker when the Christian becomes a target because of the common faith found only in Christ Jesus. The temptations of the opposite sex, fighting the love of money, and struggling to speak the truth are one of many darker valleys. To add to these dark valleys, friends, family, and co-workers represent sin that causes Christians to stumble in various ways. The Christian life is not one of prosperity, wealth, and health for the faithful servant of God, but one of many struggles. All may seem lost, as a ship tossed around in a storm looking for a port, but a lighthouse guides the ship’s path. Christ, through his Gospel of Grace, is the lighthouse for every true believer.

The Holy Spirit brings the Gospel of Christ Jesus to every true Christian. Christians have a new life away from darkness, embracing divine joy and delight. This Gospel has God taking care of his forgiven people in providing food and shelter, as God is active in the world. The Christian’s delight is somewhere else, as it is beyond emotions and physical needs. This Gospel saves from the darkest valley where God’s judgment is on his enemies. All Christians were once God’s enemies before the Gospel came. But God,

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through Christ, makes Christians servants working for God in this world. Joy begins and ends with Christ, who removes his children from the darkest valley of death. Christ, our great God and Saviour, is the Christian's delight and rest.

What does this mean? Christ is the Christian's delight as many valleys and restful times come and go throughout life. The great shepherd, Christ Jesus, guides Christians as God comforts Christians in salvation. Christ lived without sin, bled on a cross, and died for each Christian. Christ, the shepherd, provides joy by showing each Christian's sin is washed away on the cross. In Christ, Christians have defeated the darkest valley of death and sin with all its consequences. Still, the remaining effects of sin plague each Christian. God is removing all the effects of darkness in Christians in this life, until a Christian has a new body after this life. For the Christian, joy lives deep in the soul as evil has died in the soul where it once lived.

The Christian delights in the Lord not because of what God does now as in giving wealth or health. Delight comes from God saving and renewing the soul from the darkest valley of judgment. Remember, in Christ, the valley of death has no power over the Christian. Go in peace following what God directs through the Bible alone. Amen!

1. How does darkness bring you delight?
2. What are the effects of darkness bringing you delight? See Exodus 20 for a summary.
3. When darkness's delight has faded, how far are you from Christ's victory?
4. Have you sought God through the Bible to hear God speak about how sin is defeated?
5. Have you asked God in prayer for help to leave the influence of darkness behind?
6. Have you gone to another Christian to confess your love for a certain darkness?

Additional Texts: Psalm 16:9, Psalms 30:11, Ephesian 5:18, Matthew 16:18, 3 John 1:3-4, 1 Peter 4:12-13, 1 Peter 1:6-9, James 4:4, 2 Timothy 2:12.

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Chapter 8: Joy Commentary

In the chapters 5 and 6, 1 Corinthians 13 was examined. Love affects how any Christian matures, thinks, acts, and speaks. Someone can do the correct activities like helping the poor or suffer for the cause of Christ, but still lack love. Another may have great insight into the mystery of God and the ability to communicate God's words, but love is missing. This Christian has gained nothing, as love is absent. This love comes from knowing everyone is in open rebellion against God, being dead in the soul from birth. If anyone is good or neutral, having a soul pleasing to God from birth, then Christ is a waste. Someone needs a different Christ where he comes along and helps with salvation, not to resurrect from spiritual death, since each person is well. When Christ comes with his Gospel, the spiritual resurrection occurs, leading to true love. The new soul with true love flows as the Christian is reborn away from darkness. Love is about Jesus Christ. Love means to focus on Christ with words and actions. The bold proclamation of Christ being the saviour to the spiritually dead is love. Love embraces the Bible to become a student of God. As affection grows, remember, this love is a product of God working in the mind of each Christian.

With affection comes joy and delight. The Christian delight is not in wealth, health, popularity, and riches on this earth. The Christian delight is in our great God and saviour, Jesus Christ. What does this mean?

Psalms 4:6-8 NASB 2020 6 Many are saying, "Who will show us [anything] good?" Lift up the light of Your face upon us, LORD! 7 You have put joy in my heart, More than when their grain and new wine are abundant. 8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, LORD, have me dwell in safety.

And

Psalms 51:12 NASB 2020 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And sustain me with a willing spirit.

With

2 Corinthians 8:1-2 NASB 2020 1 Now, brothers [and sisters,] we make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, 2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.

Where wealth and riches are abundant, many, including Christians, put their delight there. But for the Christian, joy is in God's mercy through Christ that covers the offence

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of sin deserving swift justice. God reaches out his arm through Christ's work and covers Christians in Christ Jesus for complete and free forgiveness of sin. The forgiveness of darkness comes along with joy, as Christ saves from God's justice. God's justice flows out of his attributes of being pure without darkness. See Ephesians 2 with John 1:12-13, John 6, Acts 2, 2 Thessalonians 2:11-13, and 1 Thessalonians 5:8-9 with 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10.

Are there any other forms of delight, yes? Lying, stealing, dishonouring God's character, ignoring the Lord's Day, and worshipping God like he is a human brings delight. These are some examples of dark practices. Yes, there is a worldly delight tainted with darkness for a time. Worldly delight first seems joyful, especially when emotions are involved. In time, darkness will bring many dark fruits that will consume a person. Scars will form in the mind, damaging a person. If someone steals for a lifetime it leads to not knowing how to spend money or how to work hard. Many delight in the opposite gender for physical pleasure, leading to broken relationships. Many children receive a poor upbringing from their parents as the parents do not have the time or money, or are too busy seeking physical pleasure. There are many outcomes with deep scars that sin brings to each person with unintended results. See Hebrews 11:25, Luke 15:11-32, and Colossians 2:6-7.

The Christian is called out from dark practices. Once, Christians were involved in the world's affairs with its dark practices. Now Christians have abandoned dark practices. Like a soldier, Christians are driven by the Great Commission in Matthew 28. Sharing Christ through speaking and studying the Bible is the emphasis of the Great Commission. The narrow path of the Great Commission is the pathway of genuine delight. The depths of sin and its offence to God reveal the joy of salvation, which does not decrease, but increases overtime. What is the darkest valley of sin deserving God's justice? See Ephesians 2:2.

The darkest valley is not homelessness, depression, or being hungry. It is being an enemy of God. What does it mean to be an enemy of God? It means to offend God with dark acts and dark thoughts. God, out of his pure character, responds. God, in His justice, responds with judgment towards open, rebelling criminals. Outside of Christ, each person born is a criminal. God responds with a verdict. The verdict is a sentence reserved for everyone who rejects the command of Christ. The command of Christ is to come to Christ for free forgiveness of sin. By birth, every person refuses to rest on Christ for mercy and forgiveness. The darkest valley is having no forgiveness of sin.

Christ is the only remedy for the darkest valley. Finding a home may be difficult. The soul freed from darkness has genuine joy. Having low moods is difficult. Christ is the best hope for the mind. Being hungry and weak limits life. God brings life to the mind

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through the Bible and prayer. Nothing compares to being under God's justice. The darkness awaits anyone who does not trust Christ. See Ephesians 5:6, 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, Psalms 58:3, John 3:36, Romans 5:9, James 4:4, Psalms 5:5, Psalms 11:5, and Romans 2:5-8.

Christ has conquered this darkest valley for his sheep. Does this mean God's people avoid minor valleys in life? No, in Psalm 23 and John 10, the great shepherd is there for his fold of sheep. The valleys come and go, but the shepherd guides his people down the narrow path. As the sheep walk down the narrow path, the valleys come and cause affliction. Many pains come for a time. These minor valley's end. Unlike minor valleys, the darkest valley lasts forever into the next life. The joy of being forgiven should drive all Christians to their knees before God with humility. The God who saves brings delight in knowing that Christ forgives the criminals, which Christians once were. This knowledge of finding safety in Christ grows in the immaterial part of Christians as God matures his people gathered around the world. See Matthew 25 with Ephesians 2.

Despite the struggles of being in many valleys, Christ holds his sheep as the divine doctor. The joy of being free from God's justice and sin should cause humble praise among Christians. God pardoned his people out of mercy, seeing nothing good in any criminal. Allow this genuine joy to arise in the soul as Christ frees. Amen!

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Chapter 9: Peace Bible Study

Psalms 119:164-166 NASB 2020 164 Seven times a day I praise You Because of Your righteous judgments. 165 Those who love Your Law have great peace, And nothing causes them to stumble. 166 I hope for Your salvation, LORD, And do Your commandments.

What is peace? Peace is two warring parties ceasing hostilities. Peace is there as hostilities end. Establishing peace is possible when friends end their hostility towards each other. Being hostile can be behind someone's back as in gossip or being aggressive towards someone like arguing. Hostility towards God is refusing to submit to the directions in the Bible. The Bible speaks of peace between God and humanity. Anyone trusting in Christ Jesus ceases the hostilities with God in turning away from the Kingdom of Darkness. Once all were a part of the kingdom of darkness and evil, but Christ frees from darkness. As the war with God has ceased in Christ, what does it mean to have peace with God?

The peace that God refers to is conquering the evil that dwells in every human since birth. Ongoing hostilities with God directly result from the fall into sin through Adam. When Adam fell into sin, every human soul now has darkness from birth. Where sin brings destruction, there is no peace. There is a war against God and his moral directions found in the Bible. Humans commonly resolve hostilities by finding common ground, often with a threat or force behind a statement. If God acted like he was a human, God would seek to find common ground with every human lost in darkness to have people submit to him. But what does God do differently?

God comes and changes the heart of the warring party. When the words of the Bible are spoken out loud, often the warring party's heart becomes full of light as God accomplishes his goals. Yes, God grants salvation as a gift as God the Father teaches and reveals himself to his people. Who the Father teaches comes to the Lord Jesus Christ with trust. As seen in Romans 10 with John 6:28-50, Christians speak the Bible with words so that God will cleanse the warring heart. Peace will reign between God and his people forever as Christ forgives and cleanses without end. It is important not to mix up personal beliefs or thoughts with the peace of God. God's peace only resolves what God says it will do. Earthly wars and other hostilities often continue despite God's peace among Christians.

Often teaching Christ forgives anyone in sin and cleanses darkness away causes more hostilities. Look at Pharaoh and Moses. When Moses proclaimed to Pharaoh, Pharaoh hardened his heart when God directed Pharaoh to let my people go. Or consider Paul with the Jews, as the Jews sought to kill Paul many times. Paul fled many times to save

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his life. Often, between the Kingdom of Light and the Kingdom of Darkness, hostilities flare up. The Bible provokes many negative responses from anyone in the kingdom of darkness.

For the Christian, peace is being away from sin and following the narrow path. The narrow path is a life away from darkness with a peaceful relationship with God. God on the narrow path teaches the same truths to everyone in the kingdom of light. The teachings of God are called the common faith delivered once to the saints, as seen in Jude 1:3. As the common faith expands and teaches each Christian, many hostilities become less while new hostilities start. Conflicts and wars with the Kingdom of Darkness form with God's people when the Gospel is shared privately or publicly. Remember, God's grace is enough for Christians in every situation as strength.

Wars will still occur, and conflict among friends will be commonplace. The kingdom of darkness will become more hostile to God's people. God's peace is alive in each Christian. God's light will respond to unrest. Follow the narrow path Christian as it is full of light and peace away from darkness. Amen!

Questions:

1. How were you hostile towards God before God cleansed you from sin?
2. In what way did your dark heart cause hostilities with others?
3. How has the Gospel resolved hostilities with others?
4. Where are there influences of evil causing you to fight God or fight with others?
5. How does the common faith point you towards light in conflict?
6. Where is God pointing in his word to a weakness where light does not shine enough to reduce conflict?

Additional Texts: Isaiah 54:13, Proverb 3:17, Matthew 13:41, Psalms 37:37, 2 Corinthians 13:11, Galatians 6:15-17, Ephesian 2:13-18, Romans 5, John 6, Jude 1:3

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Chapter 10: Peace Commentary

The last commentary discussed joy where in the darkest valley of sin it is dead to each Christian. Joy is in every Christian's soul as Christ lives in the soul. True joy for the Christian does not come from darkness or sinful pleasure anymore. Christ killed darkness on the cross. Joy flows from Christ's death on a cross. His resurrection shows the power of sin is gone. Christ covers and washes his people out of mercy. God has no compulsion to save anyone. Salvation is not a right or a demand. Christ leads his people like a shepherd through the narrow path where joy lives. God leads his people with many divine fruits like a godly joy, as each Christian knows death is gone. Trials of this life, whether from Satan, attacks on the Church, or a Christian walking into darkness for a time, will only last in this life. Praise be to God for joy from being known by God.

Peace and joy have a connection as divine fruits with each other. Why? In Christ Jesus, the Christian's Lord and Master, sin and death are gone. The conquering of sin has Christ walking daily with his people, which will never end. There is peace and comfort. The sweet joy of salvation should overflow as sin is washed away. Remember the Holy Spirit, who cleanses God's people from sin when Christians trusted in Christ. Praise the Holy Spirit as God who does this mighty work. As each Christian is cleansed from sin, peace lives in the soul, knowing forgiveness of sin and the death of darkness. God, the great shepherd, walks with his church, as his church is pure without blemish.

Psalms 23:1-6 NASB 2020 1 A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd, I will not be in need. 2 He lets me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. 3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For the sake of His name. 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. 6 Certainly goodness and faithfulness will follow me all the days of my life, And my dwelling [will be] in the house of the LORD forever.

With

Hebrews 12:4-13 NASB2020 4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; 5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE PUNISHED BY HIM; 6 FOR WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE PUNISHES EVERY SON WHOM HE ACCEPTS." 7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom [his] father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not

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sons. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected [them]; shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined [us] for a short time as seemed best to them, but He [disciplines us] for [our] good, so that we may share His holiness. 11 For the moment, all discipline seems not to be pleasant, but painful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. 12 Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that [the limb] which is impaired may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

And

Matthew 7:12-14 NASB 2020 12 “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets. 13 “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 “For the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

The common faith trusted by every Christian starts with God. God calls his people out of the world. What does this mean? God reveals himself in the Bible. The Bible spoken aloud changes the heart of sin in the non-believing person. The Bible either works now or later in the person. Many remain in darkness, seeking their own evil. As God speaks through the Bible, He provides faith and grace while saving from sin who he pleases. As God calls his people as each repent with a sorrow over sin. Salvation brought about by God ends the war of sin in every person born again. See John 8, Romans 8-10 with Hebrews 4, Ephesians 1-2, Acts 3:12-26, and Acts 14-16.

What war has ended? The battle between rebellious humans and God. Everyone covered in Christ has this war ended. No person can end the battle with darkness. Christ as the divine doctor can only end this war. The great shepherd, Jesus, walks with his cared for people. Why does God walk with his people? The divine shepherd guides, encourages, disciplines, and protects his church. God cares for his people and will conform all his people to be like himself. See Romans 8, Philippians 2, and 1 Timothy 6.

In Psalms 23, what is the great shepherd doing? God brings rest for Christians as each receives fresh water and lies down in nourishing fields. This refreshment restores the soul containing the mind, will, and emotions in the Christian. While being refreshed, God, as the great shepherd, leads his people down the narrow path. Every Christian walks down the same path as it is the common faith. Yes, this means going through different situations, but the faith remains the same. Where is the common path of God taught? In the local gathering of Christians.

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God instructs Christians about the narrow path in the local church. The shepherd teaches so that his name will have respect among Christians, leading Christians to praise. But the dark valleys still come. Christ has conquered the valley of death with God's justice. Many dark valleys are still to come. The dark valleys come to grow each Christian. Trials make Christians grow. As the trials come, God, as the shepherd, protects and corrects. The shepherd with his staff protects Christians from attacks, as the staff is a defensive weapon. The staff will redirect and correct Christians. But there should be no fear of being lost to darkness again as the Shepherd loses none of his sheep. Affliction and pain accompany the valleys, but the shepherd is greater. For a time, life will seem painful and unbearable, but salvation is greater. This is where the Christian peace flows from. No matter what happens, Christ has forgiven and loses none. Correction and direction will come from God since he cares, this will separate no Christian from God's salvation. See John 10.

See Acts through Hebrews on how God works in local churches. See 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus on how local churches are to be run with male elders and male deacons. God's direction and correction comes through the gathering of Christians who follow the instructions left by God.

The word discipline frightens many Christians. Christians do not want the Lord's discipline. Often there is a picture of God randomly punishing for a slight mistake. Then many Christians see God has contempt towards them. Images like this have nothing to do with the Lord's discipline. If Christians see the Lord's discipline as a negative thing, something is wrong. There is a failure to understand God's grace and the transaction of Jesus on the cross. The cross is not a license to live in darkness. The Lord's discipline keeps Christians on the narrow path as legitimate children. Who the Lord has mercy on in salvation, He cares for. Discipline makes Christians more like God. Think of a wise father who is patient with his child but knows when to discipline. When the child acts up, there is warning or instruction given with ongoing training. If the child continues, the wise father will discipline. Often, this is to prevent the child from hurting them self. Or to allow more time for a child to have fun. Other discipline teaches skills required in life. God does this perfectly to advance his kingdom on earth. For peace to reign in the soul, the remaining effects of sin need to be replaced with light. Being freed daily from darkness means light shines from the soul. Where sin brought strife, true peace lives. Peace should be a common attribute for each Christian. The narrow path provides the way of peace, as sin has no home. Only God's light has a home on the narrow path.

The Bible is the narrow path along with peace. The gathering of Christians needs to be centred around the teaching of the Bible. Prayer and simple worship should bring greater focus to the teaching of the Bible. Godly prayer seeks after prayers God directs through

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the Bible. Prayer becomes focused on the kingdom advancing. Worship should engage the mind to think about the meaning of the Bible. Emotions and feelings should not be confused with the mind ruling during worship. Feelings and emotion should be there but submitted to the mind. Worship leads to advancing the kingdom. Advancing the Kingdom means following Mathew 28:16-20.

Peace brings the ability to learn all the Bible. The effects of sin still prevent the Christian from hearing God speak. But peace has Christians contently listening to their king and saviour as the war has ended. Peace allows forgiveness towards the non-believer. Persecutions will arise when sharing Christ frees the lost from darkness. Darkness wants to fight back and not forgive.

True peace is not resolving a war between two countries or parties in conflict. True peace is the ceasing of hostilities with God. The Gospel ends the battle with God and then slowly removes the remaining effects of sin, leaving true peace. True peace provides a pure life where God's light shines on a friend or family member without being tainted with evil. Christians should praise God that sin has died while being replaced with light in the soul. The war with God has ended with God being victorious, saving from every tribe and nation. Praise be to God, amen!

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Chapter 11: Patience Bible Study

Habakkuk 2:3 NASB 2020 3 “For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hurries toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it delays, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay [long.]

with

2 Peter 3:9 NASB 2020 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

Patience is suffering and calmly waiting. When waiting, trusting in God's word calms the mind. As a Christian loses patience and doubts God's promises in the Bible, worry sets in, and sin makes an ugly appearance. A young man desires to be heard and argues. The young man should wait to be heard. Instead of speaking to a young child with a tender voice, a parent yells. At work, a supervisor is irritating. The employee speaks unkind words about the supervisor. When money is low, and the rent is due, young women may use their bodies to raise the cash. Every Christian's temptation is different in how one doubts God's word and then impatience sets in, and darkness rears its ugly face. This nasty face of impatience leads to many dark paths. God's word becomes silent when it should be alive.

All Christians often forget and need to be reminded that they have access to God's promises stated in his word through Christ. These promises provided to God's people around the world are available by the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. No one can approach God and have access to these promises on their merit. Sin taints every person and makes the person unable to approach God. Christ, through the Holy Spirit, thoroughly cleanses the person's soul at salvation. The gateway of salvation grants promises to everyone known to God.

What are these promises? God will save his people like a lifeboat saving someone from drowning in evil is a promise of God. God will provide insight on how to apply knowledge well, like what time to meet weekly for worship. There are many promises ranging from being strengthened to remaining faithful despite trials. God keeps these promises as He made an agreement with his people. There are abuses of promises such as speaking a Bible verse out loud to unlock the promise or the promise will not come to pass. Or thinking that a Christian is a small god under God that can create situations with their words. God keeps his promises that he made, not abuses.

What is the Christian to do? Christians produce divine fruits as God instructs through the

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Bible. Like a child learning to walk, run, and then run a race, this instruction takes time to cultivate patience. Remember, the pure fruit of patience flows from Christ and his ability to save his people. Patience trains God's children to rest upon God's word while the remaining influences of darkness decrease. The dark influences cause doubt about the Bible and then impatience comes in, especially during challenging times. The Bible's instructions replace such desires as God works in each Christian as trials come and go. As Christians rest upon the Bible, God guides Christians down the narrow path.

The journey of the narrow path means going through difficult times to produce divine fruits. The results of challenging times are removing the influence of sin that still plagues every Christian. Remember, God works powerfully but often slowly in each Christian. May God encourage his people throughout the world with patience among other fruits of the Gospel. Glory be to God as God harvests many fruits. Amen!

Questions:

- 1) Do you lack patience?
- 2) In what situations do you lack patience?
- 3) When are you too passive when you should act?
- 4) How do you doubt God's words leading to being impatient?
- 5) Where through the Bible is God leading you to be more patient with other divine qualities?
- 6) In sharing Christ or teaching other Christians, how does patience help you?

Additional References: Romans 6-7, Galatians 5, Hebrews, Colossians 2-3, 2 Timothy 3:11-17, Ecclesiastes 7:8, Romans 1:18-2:4, 1 Timothy 1:15-16, 1 Corinthians 15.

Chapter 12: Patience Commentary

In Christ's Gospel, Christians have the divine fruits of love, joy, and peace, as seen in previous chapters. Christ, the pure and holy one, is the foundation of having divine fruits. Any person can produce the appearance of peace or affection. It lacks the power of God and what God accepts. No Christian is like a pilgrim finding a great secret. Through trusting in God for salvation, all these divine fruits with other benefits come to the Christian. Jesus is the bridge of light into salvation. The bridge of light is where God produces divine fruits. As God plants and harvests, the Christian should seek to follow what God directs in the Bible. Remember, God is not cruel to withhold necessary gifts. God provides gifts to Christians, Christians will serve!

God provides many attributes to all his people. The Gospel is for the person born into death, as the liar goes astray from birth. If a man is good or born without darkness, then the Gospel is not for this person. Please review the lengthy discussion about Pelagius from the 4th century near the beginning of this book. The world can produce many fruits, like love and peace. The medical field in many countries has methods to encourage joy, among other fruits. Christians only can produce fruits of God coming from the Gospel. Outside the Gospel is the broad path that can have illusions of peace and affection. One may have peace, but evil taints it. It does not rest on Jesus. When the soul lives in the sea of darkness, it does not matter if the person has some joy or affection. The consequences of everlasting imprisonment in conscious hell outweighs being nice now. Genuine fruits flow from the light in Christ alone.

Habakkuk 2:3 NASB 2020 3 “For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hurries toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it delays, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay [long.]

with

2 Peter 3:9 NASB 2020 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

And

Ecclesiastes 7:8 NASB 2020 8 The end of a matter is better than its beginning; Patience of spirit is better than arrogance of spirit.

And

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Romans 2:3-5 NASB2020 3 But do you suppose this, you [foolish] person who passes judgment on those who practice such things, and [yet] does them [as well,] that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and restraint and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

And

Romans 9:21-23 NASB 2020 21 Or does the potter not have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one object for honorable use, and another for common use? 22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with great patience objects of wrath prepared for destruction? 23 And [He did so] to make known the riches of His glory upon objects of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

What is patience? Patience is suffering during a difficult time while calmly waiting, following God's words. Every Christian still can serve God in trying times, as God provides the ability. A difficult time can be anything, including suffering. Suffering may mean being mocked and persecuted, like Christ was. Persecution would be threats to be killed, like being stoned like Paul. Softer forms of persecution come, as in being mocked when speaking with words that Christ forgives from darkness. Or when Christians do not take part in corrupt deeds, persecution may come. Persecution is often being forced to take part in a corrupt deed or suffer the consequence. Trials are another form of suffering. When Christians have a lack of work, medical needs, or a lack of daily needs, a trial begins. Patience says do not to react with darkness in the situation, but remains calm.

Persecution is not breaking a good law issued by the government and being in trouble, or someone disagreeing over an opinion.

As the Christian suffers, what is the right response? Is responding with anger and impatience praiseworthy of God? The Christian's answer is looking at God's word. Each Christian should trust the living words of God. A part of patience is waiting calmly in the trial. The trial will end. Remember Christ when he remained silent and calm during accusations from the Jews before Pilot. Waiting in a trial brings out areas where darkness still has influence. Instead of remaining calm, the worst qualities come out. The Bible has a way of calming and instructing when dark areas appear. See 2 Timothy 3:10-14, Hebrews 4:12 with Acts 2:40-42.

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For others, being attacked for sharing Christ with words and being a student of the Bible causes temptations. As each Christian shares, threats will come to physically harm. At these times of weaknesses, temptations can bring darkness back into the Christian's life. Temptations are another form of trials. As the temptations come and go, patience is there. God is planting and harvesting this fruit. Is it easy, no! But God is faithful to walk with his people along the narrow path. God says through the Bible, I understand your weaknesses and my strength in you is enough. The Gospel shows itself to be alive in the soul at these times. Remember, God has not left or abandoned the Christian. During these times, the Christian body having leftover effects of sin can cause trouble.

Depending on the translation, the word members will be in Romans 7. Members means the body. The body wages war to practice sin. God's Gospel is greater to practice truth. Practice is how someone behaves day to day. The body may rise with evil desires or temptations, as Christians learn the Bible or share Christ with words. During the temptations, patience does not react. Patience waits calmly for God.

To summarize, God is planting the seeds of patience. Planting seeds often comes in trying times. Calmness with a still mind should be growing. As patience grows, so should the knowledge of the Bible. The knowledge of the Bible should shape the mind. As the mind has instruction, Christians should follow the light in actions more. As Christians seek walking on the narrow path with God, patience becomes a way of life. See Romans 7 with 1 Thessalonians 4:2-8.

God's word supports the Christian during trying times. Other times, the Bible brings refreshment to the Christian. Whether in a peaceful time or in a hard time, patience among the other divine fruits continues to grow. Hard times can be attacks from Satan, the dark world, or evil influences from the body. Peaceful times are when life is easy, while God encourages and strengthens through the Bible.

Remembering God's words is not about having a set of verses to quote in a trying time. The Bible is not a magical formula to avoid hard times. The Bible is not a formula to resolve a situation. Quoting a verse demanding God do this or that is inappropriate. God is not a servant of the Christian waiting for a demand. Instead, the Bible will point to the death of temptations and dark influences. Christ's perfect life, painful death, and glorious resurrection are enough in any trial. Temptations and dark influences have less effect as the Bible grows in each Christian. See Acts 13:32-35, 1 Corinthians 15, Galatians 3:12-14, 1 Thessalonians 4:2-8, Hebrews 9:27-28, and 1 Peter 2:21-23.

Trusting in God is still an essential part of the Christian's journey on the narrow path. Trusting and resting in God is the bridge of light as each Christian walks through life. God helps his people on this bridge by keeping his word for his own purposes and

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praise. Christians follow the will and desire of God. See 1 Corinthians 1:9, Jeremiah 32:40, John 15:5, Romans 8:30, Ephesians 1:11 and 2 Timothy 2:11-14.

Patience requires waiting calmly in any situation. God is not forgetful like a human. Everything works out for God's goals in this world, including working everything out in a Christian's life. Often, this means learning and growing through trials with times of rest and refreshment. For many, patience is a lifelong lesson. Learning how to wait while resting on Christ through the words of the Bible is difficult. Others learn they have gone beyond patience into inaction when action is required. Either way, God is teaching and training his people. God's training includes patience to share Christ with words and to be diligent to learn the Bible. See Ephesians 1:11 with Romans 8, Numbers 23:19, Matthew 28:16-20.

God is the bridge for Christians to walk on. This bridge is faithful to support all who walk across it. God saves his people and then cleanses them from the remaining influences of darkness. Every Christian should rejoice in Christ that the chains of darkness are gone. Any remaining effects of darkness are being dealt with daily. The living words of the Bible grow patience in times of rest and trials. May Christians rest on God as patience grows. Amen! See John 8:34 with Hebrews 7:26-28, and 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

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Chapter 13: Kindness Bible Study

Romans 2:3-5 NASB 2020 3 But do you suppose this, you [foolish] person who passes judgment on those who practice such things, and [yet] does them [as well,] that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and restraint and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, What is the kindness that God shows to his people? The kindness of God is on full display on a tree with the saviour Jesus Christ. The saviour Jesus Christ lived a perfect life committing no evil deeds yet died for the evil deeds that his people gave him. Yes, the only part man adds to accomplishing salvation is adding their darkness and evil. All of God's people still repent as God works through the teaching of his word when the call of Christ goes forward into the dark world.

The pure lamb of God, Christ becomes sin for every Christian, hence God displays kindness. The Fruit of the Gospel in kindness creates everlasting care and rest for all of God's people. Long-lasting love towards a person is kindness. In God's case, his love and care never end for his people. When a person under his care falls back into evil, does God reject them and put them out of his kingdom? No! God will use his perfect wisdom as he disciplines. God's discipline may seem overly harsh for a time, but it purifies his people away from the broad road that leads to death. In disciplining, God restores the person while picking them up from the ditch and puts them back onto the narrow path. God shows his kindness through Christ Jesus in saving from sin, then kindness transforms the Christian. In whatever God does for his people, God remains calm, lacking any harshness.

God's kindness in showing everlasting love is in every Christian. What does this mean? Kindness does not mean being focused only on physical needs, like feeding the poor or affirming someone's evil deeds and thoughts. Kindness means being mellow while avoiding harshness. Whether there are spiritual needs or physical needs, a christian is calm. In the Christian life, spiritual needs come first, like sharing Christ and being a student of the Bible, then physical needs, like helping the poor. The local church needs Christians not focused on what they can get but on how they can serve another Christian and then the world with calmness. Every Christian should look for a way to serve with their strengths and abilities. The goal is to promote the Gospel being heard with words while training Christians or being taught. This may mean setting up chairs every week for 20 years or being thrown in prison for daring to share that Christ is enough to save any person from sin.

Harshness is unnatural for the Christian. The soul is alive in Christ, where kindness lives. Anyone saved by God has a growing kindness that reflects the directions in the Bible. The Christian armed with kindness speaks the Gospel with care and is a student of the Bible while being mellow. The kindness that the Christian has comes from God, who first loved his people with death of the cross. Amen!

Questions:

- 1) How would you define kindness?
- 2) In what ways do the people surrounding you change how you view what kindness is?
- 3) On the cross of Christ, do you see kindness? To what extent? If not, why not?
- 4) After coming and being pardoned from your sin by God, do you see God's kindness more? If not, why not?
- 5) In what ways does God, through the Bible, show kindness in a local gathering of Christians?
- 6) What sin is preventing you from showing more kindness at home and towards anyone?

Additional Texts: Isaiah 30:18, Romans 10:12, Psalms 31:19, Ephesians 2:7, Ezekiel 11:19, Titus 3:3-7, John 3:36, James 1, Psalms 18:23-27, Romans 10, Matthew 28

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Chapter 14: Kindness Commentary

God has been merciful in providing patience to his people. What does this mean? Patience means that through the Gospel, every person pardoned through Jesus Christ remains calm. With calmness, the Christian waits for God to fulfill his word. The Bible is alive and guides the Christian in the soul. In a practical sense, when a Christian is under attack, imprisoned, mocked, and rejected, God's words are alive. Instructions from the Bible reveal the narrow path. Walking on the narrow path should reveal the common faith. The common faith is having the same convictions from Christian to Christian, coming from the Bible.

Christians act on convictions differently, but the same convictions over time are there. Through the trials of life, God strengthens and encourages. The Bible with the Holy Spirit instills convictions, leading to strength. Patience is growing in each Christian as the Holy Spirit does his work. Dark influences are being removed from each Christian, especially during trying times. Among God's work, patience is one of many fruits being produced. God is the planter of divine fruits while harvesting ripe crops of divine fruits. Any divine fruit can be planted and harvested during peaceful times. Christian, do not lose confidence that God is near, despite wondering if he is there during trying times.

The world can produce many outward fruits, like peace and patience. Having these worldly fruits lacks the power of God. The person who is consumed by the corruption of darkness cannot have true peace and kindness from God. Christ does not live in them. The liar goes astray from birth, which means everyone is a liar. Since a person in darkness goes astray from birth, this evil twists and corrupts everything it touches. The power of the Gospel is visible today as kindness, love, and patience manifests in each child of God. See Psalms 58:3, James 2:8-12, 1 John 1:8, and 1 John.

Romans 2:3-6 NASB 2020 3 But do you suppose this, you [foolish] person who passes judgment on those who practice such things, and [yet] does them [as well,] that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and restraint and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who WILL REPAY EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:

With

Titus 3:3-7 NASB 2020 3 For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one

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another. 4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and [His] love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we did in righteousness, but in accordance with His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He richly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to [the] hope of eternal life.

And

2 Corinthians 5:20-21 NASB 2020 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin [to be] sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

And

Acts 8:1-4 NASB 2020 1 Now Saul approved of putting Stephen to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except for the apostles. 2 [Some] devout men buried Stephen, and mourned loudly for him. 3 But Saul [began] ravaging the church, entering house after house; and he would drag away men and women and put them in prison. 4 Therefore, those who had been scattered went through [places] preaching the word.

How does God show kindness to humans? Christ dying on a cross shows kindness. Why does Jesus Christ dying as God and Man on a cross show God's kindness? Christ's perfect life, death by the Romans, and resurrection in the tomb leads to salvation. Salvation living in any person is God's kindness. The divine doctor Jesus cures the illness of darkness starting at birth. This cure leads away from the broad path of darkness onto the narrow path of light, where Christian worship and praise comes from. When a Christian praises God, it is not for becoming rich or having good health, but that their crimes against God are pardoned. God's people say with much sadness yes, I offended God and broke his justice, but God's grace is greater. Christ alone appeases God's justice. Again, rejoice as the cure for the illness of evil has come. No Christian should think of God as unkind for any reason, as the cure for deadly illness is here. See Romans 5 and John 1:13-14, John 3:16-18, Matthew 27:23-26, Hebrews 9:28, 1 Peter 2:24, Acts 4:33, Hebrews 9:15, 1 John 2:1-10, Isaiah 53:12, and Matthew 24:40-51.

As God shows kindness to Christians, how does a Christian show kindness? When Christians speak with words that Christ saves to a group or a single person, this is the best way to show kindness. During speaking, Christ saves alone, the Christian displays

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God's divine fruits. Galatians 5 lists the divine fruits. The message is hard, but the messenger is not. Every Christian is the messenger. God, through his messengers saves, leading to God displaying more kindness. Remember, salvation is not a right or demand, but comes with a broken soul over darkness. The broken soul sees the kindness in Christ as he says you are forgiven from darkness. Go now and stay away from the darkness. God's kindness gets better through being a student of the Bible. God teaches, walks, and interacts with his cleansed people. The Christian takes part in this instruction and interacting. How? God uses Christians as teachers to teach other Christians. Since Christians have God living in them, God shows himself through speech and actions. See Romans 3 and Ephesian 2:8, Acts 8:26-38 with Romans 10.

Often there can be confusion between does a Christian meet a physical need or a spiritual need. Both needs, when possible, should be met. In Matthew 28:16-20, God's people have directions to share Christ's forgiveness with words and then be a student of the Bible. Local churches should seek to help the poor and the needs of Christians. But not at the risk of abandoning this direction given by God. It should be possible to help the poor or a physical need while seeking God's direction of spiritual needs first.

James 2:14-20 NASB 2020 14 What use is it, my brothers [and sisters,] if someone says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," yet you do not give them what is necessary for [their] body, what use is that? 17 In the same way, faith also, if it has no works, is dead, [being] by itself. 18 But someone may [well] say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." 19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. 20 But are you willing to acknowledge, you foolish person, that faith without works is useless?

With

1 Timothy 5:8 NASB 2020 8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

And

Deuteronomy 15:11 NASB 2020 11 "For the poor will not cease to exist in the land; therefore I am commanding you, saying, 'You shall fully open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.'

God is directing Christians to be watchful for the physical needs of the poor. Genuine

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faith leads to kind actions and speech, as God directs in the Bible. Physical needs like feeding the poor or helping a Christian with a home outweigh spiritual needs. Sharing the words that Christ saves is more important than providing pain medication to the dying person. Often meeting to encourage another Christian to leave an area where darkness lives outweighs physical needs. Physical needs and spiritual needs need balance. Ask God for wisdom to find balance. See Matthew 28:16-20, James 1, 1 Timothy 4:13 with 2 Timothy 3:15-17, and Romans 15:26.

When a Christian does not care for the physical needs of his or her own home, he or she is worse than the person who kills, steals, and lies. Yes, a Christian who does not care for their family and others under their care is worse than a person consumed by darkness. The lack of concern or providing when possible for their home shows the lack of salvation living in this Christian. See 1 Timothy 5:8.

Faith and actions of faith should not be confused. Christ completely saves with no help. Actions of faith flow from the cleansed person. The Bible provides direction for how Christians should live with faith. A faith that does not lead to action is dead and not a genuine faith. Murderers and liars are better than this person with a dead faith. The Christian faith is not about studying a Bible to have knowledge about God, as demons know about God. Faith in Christ means being cleansed from the sickness of evil. This cleansing in each Christian should be active, leading to concerns about spiritual and physical needs. If kindness in speech and action is missing overtime, it needs to be asked if Christ lives in this person. Some seem to be grumpy or have a cold way of expressing themselves, allow no confusion with a lack of kindness when they are kind. See James 2:19.

The role of the Church is not to help the poor as to provide food, shelter and clothing. The purpose of God's people is to proclaim the Gospel, then teach Christians. God provides direction in how Christians should use any wealth or income, as in Acts 5 and Romans 15:26 with 1 Corinthians 16:1-2. If a Christian or a local church has the desire and the ability to help the poor, remember Matthew 26:11 with Mark 14:7. Helping the poor is good. Remember, local churches have the direction to share with the lost and teach the whole Bible to Christians. Study the book of Acts to see that local churches were busy spreading Christ's word in public speaking to crowds or individuals. Then Christians received instructions after God saving. See the Book of Acts with Matthew 28:16-20.

With God's strength, may every Christian put God's kindness into action and into speech. Amen!

Chapter 15. Goodness Bible Study

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 NASB 2020 11 To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will consider you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, 12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, in accordance with the grace of our God and [the] Lord Jesus Christ.

From God through the Gospel, goodness flows. What is goodness for the Christian? It is following what is good according to the saviour Jesus Christ through trusting him for forgiveness of darkness living in the soul. Being good is on people's lips. Darkness twists it. Darkness is the opposite of what God directs through his word. Instead of following a path of light, darkness appears to be good, as evil appeals to someone lost in the sea of sin. What is the cost? Rejecting God's goodness. Why does it matter? Offending God comes with consequences in the next life. For the Christian, it is to seek God, who is goodness himself.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are goodness itself. To have virtue, every person needs God in them. The Gospel needs to be rooted in the soul. The chains of darkness need to be replaced with freedom through trusting in Christ. What is this freedom? Being pardoned from all evil through Christ is freedom. God the Father gave a people to Christ to be pardoned through His atonement on the cross. Every Christian's sin and shame is on Christ now. Every child of God who sought Christ to save should see themselves as pardoned with humility. The death of sin and its shame is gone. Light has replaced darkness through the Gospel. God produces divine fruits like goodness in each Christian through the Holy Spirit and the Bible.

The Gospel brings God's goodness to his people. Being virtuous is not about having rules to follow, completing a course on discipleship, and having 10 steps. Having virtue is reflecting God's pure character, flowing out of Christ. The Bible and the Holy Spirit plant seeds of virtue. The seeds of goodness transform the Christian's mind. This is a work of God as Christians seek to follow their creator. As goodness grows, Christians should seek with words to share Christ and become better students of the Bible. God in the Bible explains the common faith. God is among his faithful people seeking after him. When a Christian falls back into darkness, God will restore the Christian out of his goodness.

Discipleship is the soul being transformed by God. This remains true when Christians struggle in dark places, God will restore. How is the soul transformed or restored by God through the Bible? The word of God trains, corrects, rebukes, guides, and enlightens as God the Holy Spirit performs his role. True students of God are not the

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most knowledgeable. Virtuous students are ones who the Holy Spirit has transformed into the changeless faith, as described in the Bible.

God has people serving him around the world. God rescued many from the sea of darkness, which everyone is born into. Yes, the liar goes astray from birth, seeking darkness with evil intent and offensive actions towards God. God saves his sheep and brings them into the church. Male pastors lead the church, with male teachers teach the souls that God has saved. These men should teach the Bible by first reading the Bible publicly. After reading the Bible publicly, Christians should listen to an explanation of the excellent way of God. To have the word and Spirit working in the soul is being a part of the local church. Learn from men who God has especially equipped to train a local gathering of Christians while reading the Bible at home.

The teaching from the Bible should be a common thing as Christians gather weekly. Come, listen, and learn from God through male pastors or male teachers. Seek to learn from men called by God, who God has qualified to watch over and lead local churches. The Holy Spirit is alive with the Bible to transform Christians as they listen. Seek to be a part of God's church to be filled with God's will and desires leading to goodness.

- 1) How do your bosses, teachers, and friends define virtue?
- 2) How do these people influence you towards wrong that seems to be good?
- 3) In what areas has God taught you in the Bible about goodness?
- 4) Where is God currently pointing through the Bible to areas where evil still reigns and corrupts goodness?
- 5) In what areas do you prefer a cloak of darkness over the Lord's goodness?
- 6) How are distractions and other worthless activities keeping you from being taught the Bible weekly in a local church?

Additional Texts: Book of 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy, Romans 15:14, Ephesians 5:9, 2 Chronicles 24:16, Matthew 21:13, Mark 12:29, Deuteronomy 6:4, John 8:33-35, Ephesians 1:1-11, Galatians 3:24, 2 Timothy 3:15-17, John 10, Jude 1:3, 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1.

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Chapter 16: Goodness Commentary

When a Christian speaks of Christ's forgiveness, God's kindness is present. Evil taints each human. God came in sending a Christian as a messenger sharing that Christ forgives. Every human could be left in the darkness starting at birth. God saves his people at his mercy. The Holy Spirit, who is God, washes away the filth of evil while renewing the soul. After listening and receiving grace, the new Christian becomes the messenger sent into the world to share that Christ forgives. Divine kindness now lives in each Christian. Besides sharing Christ, kindness takes on other forms. Needs can be physical or spiritual or both. Helping a struggling Christian with a spiritual need or helping the poor are other forms of kindness. Kindness is the renewed soul of light seeking to help someone else with calmness and a divine care.

The world produces a type of kindness tainted by darkness. Many seek to help the poor, whether by serving food or donating money. The concern for the soul is lacking or misguided. Many want to share false ideas that do not come from our creator, while others do not see any spiritual needs. Every human is in Adam hiding the true state of the soul starting at birth. When Adam fell into darkness, humans fell into this illness of evil. Adam poisoned humans as darkness passes from previous generations to the next. The liar goes astray from birth, showing that the illness is present. The illness of sin leads to the dark soul being tainted when someone feeds the poor. Christian kindness lacks this illness with the soul of light. When a Christian serves the poor versus someone lost in darkness, the Christian is looking for an opportunity to share Christ with words. The non-believer does not see the darkness, hence does not see the spiritual need for Christ alone. Kindness is a form of seeking goodness.

2 Chronicles 24:14-16 NASB 2020 14 When they had finished, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada; and it was made into utensils for the house of the LORD, utensils for the service and the burnt offerings, and pans and utensils of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually, all the days of Jehoiada. 15 Now Jehoiada reached a good old age and he died; he was 130 years old at his death. 16 And they buried him in the city of David with the kings, because he had done well in Israel and for God and His house.

Goodness is a favourite topic for discussion. Goodness could be anything depending what is popular. Look at the kings or priests of Israel. King David, or priests like Priest Jehoiada, did what was pleasing in God's sight through God's grace. In 2 Chronicles 24, after Jehoiada's death, Israel sought after darkness in false beliefs to worship false gods. Look at Jesus Christ when he entered Jerusalem for the Passover and the crowd shouting Hosanna, Son of David, in Matthew 21. Later in the week the crowd is shouting kill this man. A person or group of people can follow what is good for a time. Cleaning the

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outside is what many do. The soul has the illness of darkness. For a time, the outside may seem good. The rebellious soul against God will resurface, leading to darkness. God is missing in the soul, as salvation is lacking. This is the reason morals change. God's word re-balances and corrects to lead people as God restrains. Darkness comes when God does not restrain evil. God is not obligated to do so. Darkness may seem to be gone at many times, darkness will return. As the world keeps changing, like a ship being tossed around in a storm, Christians often feel like this ship. The Bible acts like an anchor in teaching and directing as needed. The Christian's soul has security with God. Christian's souls are souls of light forever. See 2 Samuel 8:15 and 2 Chronicles 24, 2 Chronicles 24:17-18, Matthew 21, Matthew 27-28, and John 10.

God, the Holy Spirit, washes to cleanse away darkness from Christians. Before the Holy Spirit came to cleanse, this person was sick with the illness of evil. No one can remove the darkness living in each person. Christ, the great God and saviour, comes as the only solution for the illness of sin. Christ is the divine doctor for sin. Sin is rebellion directed at God. Rebellion says I will ignore God's direction. God responds with justice lasting forever. God says you take the consequences of rebellion forever. The disease of sin causes each person to follow dark passions, leading to dark actions. Darkness taints every action and thought. Evil taints good actions. The soul needs to be cleansed with new desires. A new soul leads to good thoughts, actions, and speech. It is not enough to do the right action, as darkness taints it. Darkness needs to be removed. Cleaning the outside is not enough. If God accepts tainted good actions, there are many paths to God with self-salvation. Self-salvation is being good enough that God will accept someone. Therapies and other religions cleanse outwardly by changing thoughts, speech, and actions. Christ, the divine doctor, only can cleanse the darkness from within.

God does not accept self-salvation. Self-salvation leads to God's everlasting justice. A person needs Christ through the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration is cleansing the soul of darkness by the Holy Spirit. The soul is reborn during regeneration. The soul turns to light away from darkness. Darkness that causes daily crimes against God is gone. After darkness is removed, the person is clean with a new soul with light. The soul of light leads to actions, thoughts, and speech free from darkness. Each person needs to be regenerated in salvation to become a Christian. God does this freely, holding nothing back. God's power extends into the rest of the Christian's life as God shows divine goodness through each Christian. See John 1:13-14, Titus 3:5 with 1 Thessalonians 4:8, 2 Corinthians 5:17 with John 3:36 and Hebrews 3:14-19, and Romans 3 with Psalms 58:3.

Regeneration in Christ has cleansed every Christian. May praises be on the lips of Christians since God has saved. Gone is the illness of darkness. Light now lives in the soul. Like any non-believer, the Christian would be dead in sin without God's washing.

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Anyone who is infected with the illness of darkness, as in Ephesians 2, is a walking corpse lacking life and light. Life, power, and light live in the soul of each Christian. There is no pride or boasting about how great the Christian is. God is the one who saves freely out of his character by drawing his people to himself, leading to repentance. What does this lead to? Goodness being sought. God teaches what is virtue through the Bible. To seek goodness is to follow virtue found in the Bible. See John 6:35-50 with Ephesians 1:1-12, 1 Peter 1:1-2, 2 Timothy 2:10, and Romans 10.

Every Christian has God the Holy Spirit in them. Christians have the power to walk with virtue. The soul is reborn with the power of God. There is no reason for any Christian to lack direction. Christians have a written text to explore and examine. Along with a written text, there is the power of God enabling pure living, leaving no Christian any excuse. A Christian cannot say I cannot do well when I have the option. This Christian needs greater understanding of the Bible to direct them. The power of God and the Bible need to be combined to seek goodness. Without instruction, this power has no direction, as feelings and experiences are not enough. Knowing the Bible without power is knowing what to do, but lacking the ability to follow God's direction. Many Christians seek experiences to have more power and new directions from God. Remember, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 with 2 Timothy 1:7-8. God uses the method of the Bible to provide instruction for everything in the Christian life. The Christian life is a life of good actions and thoughts. God uses the Bible directly or indirectly to reveal every good action. The Bible is enough to train Christians in everything that God wants Christians to do. Nothing else is required, along with God's sovereignty. Sovereignty leads the Christian as the Bible instructs what to do in every situation. Divine power and following the directions of the Bible are what is required to seek virtue. See Acts 1-2 with 2 Timothy 1:7-8 and 2 Corinthians 2:5.

Many Christians wonder how the Bible will lead in all areas of life. Christians have the mission to share Christ with words. And be a student of the Bible. Being a student of the Bible means to learn what the words mean, then put them into practise. The mission of learning Christ and sharing Christ will point to how each Christian should live. Decisions made in daily life focusing on the mission will guide the Christian. Sometimes making decisions that allow for sharing Christ with words is wise. Taking a better job to feed your family to show Christ's love is best. The Bible directs Christians to have balanced choices. Balanced choices are decisions seeking God's mission while meeting other needs, like food and shelter. How does a Christian find balance? In God's wisdom and God's sovereignty. God directs the Christian's steps with his sovereign control. Christians should seek from God how to apply knowledge well. A common example is a Christian looking at a new job while spreading the Gospel with words more. The Christian prays about the situation, asking for insight into what they should do. God brings the solution into the Christian's life as the Christian seeks for work. The Christian

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should recognize the solution that was prayed for in time. See Psalms 33:10-11, Proverbs 16:1, Proverbs 16:33, Proverbs 19:21, and James 1:5.

The Bible needs to be the influence in the Christian's life to seek good. How does the Bible become the Christian's influence? God sends male teachers and male pastors to teach God's people. Apostle Peter taught the Jews and Apostle Paul taught the Gentiles. God sends males to teach today. A male is someone who is a biological male with male DNA and body parts. Someone who feels they are a male is outside of 1 Timothy 3. Why? A pastor is to be a husband of one wife or one woman. 1 Timothy 3 addresses the problem of husbands having many wives as this was a concern in Apostle Paul's day. God provides the direction for a male to be faithful and enjoy one wife. God equips male pastors and male teachers to guide the Christian through the Bible. These teachers and pastors are called in the local gathering of Christians or what is called the local church. No male can declare himself to be the pastor or teacher, as God does not call in this way. God calls in the local church. Again, listen to the men that God sends. Virtue is the path provided by the men that God sends to train his people. See Genesis 1-5, Timothy 3 with 1 Timothy 2:12, Titus 1 with Acts 14:23 and 2 Corinthians 8:16-21, Acts 2, Acts 4, Acts 6 with 1 Timothy 3, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Timothy 4-6, and Acts 20.

God will send men to serve in the local church as God gives gifts to each Christian. The pastor's role and teachers' role is to guide Christians into the clarity of truth. Reading of God's words at home should be common. The local church provides care as in oversight and brings balance. In Hebrews 13:17, Christians have direction to submit to the care of pastors or elders and others prescribed in the Bible. Pastors and elders are the same thing. A Christian who will not submit is not following what is good, but seeks rebellion. This rebellion is against God. This Christian will not submit under the care of the local church. It shows a prideful soul that is more concerned with their own authority. Remember, Christian, you are not God nor should you take the place of God. God calls Christians to listen to qualified men. Qualified men need to be submitted to. If someone becomes disqualified, the local church should remove them from teaching. See Hebrews 13:17 with James 3:1 and Jude 1:3.

As pastors or teachers teach, what is their goal? The goal of teaching is to point to Christ. The Bible has built-in features to guide Christians to the common faith. Christ is in the directions that apply to all Christians. Christ appears throughout the Bible, not in every passage. Any understanding that limits or removes Christ from the passage is a poor understanding. The grammar of the Bible needs to be followed. Grammar allows the passage to speak God's intent. God wrote about Christ. Genesis to Revelation, Christ is there through grammar. How is knowing the Bible connected with virtue? Christians should have a common faith. From a common faith comes knowing what is good. Christians should hold to the same truths as the Bible does not change.

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The well-travelled path, as in the common faith, is where all Christians should walk. A Christian's body can still provide dark influences that can mislead in an understanding of a passage. This happens to pastors if not careful. Christians need to learn where dark influences mislead in reading a passage. Self-control should kick in, saying I may want to read a passage like this, but this is my body speaking, waging war against my renewed mind. The maturing Christian learns self-control over their body to exclude dark influences. This includes a better way of understanding the intent of the Bible, away from dark influences. God has provided past teachers and pastors to learn from. There is no time limit on good teaching.

Men wrote books, statements of faith, questions and answers about God, and dealt with heresies in the past. Reading from the past shows Christians today where there are dark influences hiding God's intent in passages. Christians today can see where past Christians became imbalanced too from various influences. Still, learn from other Christians in the past and other Christians today. See Romans 7, Hebrews 4:11-13 with 2 Timothy 3:15-17, and 2 Thessalonians 2:15 with 2 Thessalonians 3:6.

Christian, learn from the Bible. Read the Bible at home to educate the soul. Listen to living and past pastors to educate the soul. This education should lead to an understanding of virtue, as the soul is full of the Bible. Instead of being tossed around with false ideas from the soul that is starving, have a soul full of the Bible. Remember, in the Gospel, Christians have the power to pursue God with purity. There will be times when the pursuit of God weakens. This is a season in life where God is going to teach a lot. Christian, continue seeking what is good when life seems dim lacking God. God is right there close by because Christ lives in the Christian's soul. Again, fill the soul with the Bible, as this is the method that was given to understand him better. In understanding God, the Bible becomes well known. Look at past feelings, experiences, and personal beliefs, as the Bible will guide the soul. See Colossians 2:8 and Revelation 3:14-22.

Christian rejoice! Seek goodness as God speaks through the Bible alone. Amen!

Chapter 17: Faithfulness Bible Study

Matthew 23:23 NASB 2020 23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the Law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these [are the things] you should have done without neglecting the others.

Many call Christ their saviour to resolve guilt. Where does false remorse come from? The guilt often comes from seeing slight defects in oneself, like lying, stealing, or gossiping. Attempting to be good before others causes some guilt. This person sees Christ as the saviour for another reason, not for their offences before God. Jesus becomes the guilt saviour for small blemishes and self-esteem. This person does not want the Bible in their soul as the guide and master. In reality, Christ comes to save his people from their darkness and rule in their soul through the living words of the Bible. The Bible produces divine fruits. One of the divine fruits is faithfulness, leading to God ruling in every believer's soul. Faithfulness is being consistent with what the Bible reveals. As God plants and harvests faithfulness in Christians. Christians spread the Gospel and teach through local churches as in the Great Commission as seen in Matthew 28.

The one who missuses the saviour Jesus Christ for guilt or another reason will say many pleasant sounding words that are spiritual. How many claim having felt God's presence? Many claim feeling God's love? Others claim that they have knowledge of God through reading the Bible. There is no hope unless the saviour saves from darkness into light. It does not matter if someone prays or quotes the Bible. True faithfulness leads to walking on the narrow path with a common faith. False forms of faithfulness lead to praying and quoting the Bible, but lack following the common faith.

Every person born into Adam's family has evil, needing a cure. Christ Jesus is the cure that forgives anyone in Adam's family. Christ forgives his people as they become children of light. Once, every child of light was under condemnation from God's justice. This leads each to eternal punishment of being alive under God's justice forever. Remember, at birth, no one is good or seeks after God in themselves. At birth, open rebellion towards God begins with many fruits of darkness. Darkness manifests itself in young children as they scream needlessly to manipulate parents. Without Christ as the anchor, everyone is in the sea of death and evil. Christ, out of his mercy, leads his sheep away into fields of lush pastures. Yes, the saviour of the world, Jesus Christ, deserves all praise as he leads his sheep into light. In God's merciful light, the soul has new desires. Christians mature with the same faith. What does that mean? Being of the same faith requires holding fast to the unchangeable faith, as in what the Bible teaches. Why does the faith not change? God, as the author, does not change. Poor teaching and making the

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Bible read as each person wants is what causes a difference of opinion among Christians. The religious leaders of Christ's day followed some ideas from in the Bible while twisting the message of Christ. Yes, these leaders quoted the Bible and were spiritual throughout life, including leading in the temple. But they missed Christ and his Gospel in the Old Testament. Faithfulness to God means understanding the timeless faith and walking on this path. Through the Bible, whether reading at home or learning from a pastor, teachings of the faith are present. The Holy Spirit taught Christians in the past through many dark times and false teachings. There is this repository of knowledge of the Holy Spirit's teaching in creeds and confessions. With humility, learn from many places to see the timeless faith to be faithful.

Being faithful to God doesn't mean being spiritual. Someone in Adam's family tree can pray. Someone can show mercy to the poor. Only in Christ can anyone have true faithfulness to God. Learn from the Bible while understanding the past to be faithful. Amen!

Questions:

1) What comes to mind when you see someone who claims to love Jesus Christ but refuses to listen to the Bible?

Note, there is a difference between a Christian who struggles in an area versus someone who does not care to follow what God directs with excuses.

2) Where in your life do you resist following God's directions?

3) Do you remember when God comforted you through the Bible, saying I understand your weaknesses when you are not faithful?

Additional References: The Book of James, 1 Samuel 15:22, Jeremiah 5:1, Micah 6:8, Matthew 9:13, Matthew 12:7, Mark 12:31, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Romans 5 with Romans 10, John 3:36. Jude 1:3, 1 Peter 2:1-3, Acts 13:48, Matthew 28:16-20.

Chapter 18: Faithfulness Commentary

Previously, topics like patience and kindness flowing from salvation brought the reader encouragement. God is the one that brings about salvation, as faith is a gift and not an ability by any person. Without this faith given by God, no one would repent, as no one can submit to God in their depraved state from birth. From birth, everyone in Adam's family tree desires lies with a multitude of many offences towards God. But Christ stands in the place of his sheep and says, "I will take your offences as a criminal and your sentencing upon myself while I hang helpless on the cross for you." The sinless Christ, full of grace and light, becomes the criminal on the behalf of his people to grant them true faith. When many non-believers listen to the Bible, the Holy Spirit works, the gift of faith opens the eyes of rebellious and lost people to their crimes. As repentance comes to turn many away from darkness, a change of the soul from loving darkness to embracing the light comes. The gift of faith leads each Christian to turn away from evil for the rest of their lives. Now, instead of being a servant in the kingdom of Satan, Christians are servants of God in his kingdom. See John 8:12, Ephesians 2:8, Acts 16:14, Romans 10:8-10, 1 John 1:6-7, and Romans 3:25.

This Gospel of Christ washes away the debt owed to God for all convicted offences committed by God's people. If someone enters heaven, it is because of God taking on their sin on the cross. Christ's atonement washes away darkness. If the atonement covers everyone's sin from Adam until the end of time, everyone will be in heaven. Why? If the atonement pays for sins, it means the darkness in everyone's soul is forgiven. The atonement saves people from sin, not make it possible to be saved. God does not waste the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. God saves his sheep, and the sheep listen to Jesus Christ as the curse of sin is gone from the sheep. The Christian is a new creature, not because of making the right decision to believe in Jesus, but through the atonement removing darkness into a new life. See Matthew 25 with John 10:1-30 and 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 and Romans 5.

Many use Jesus in a way not to deal with the darkness of the soul, which leads many to misuse Jesus. Why? Jesus is not a divine therapist. Jesus often becomes the divine therapist who gives steps in how to be good and kind, like how to deal with a slight problem with lying. Or God becomes the emotional saviour to resolve some guilt for lying. God is the divine doctor for the person who is on his or her deathbed needing a heart transplant from a corrupted heart to a heart of unconquerable light.

2 Corinthians 7:5-12 NASB 2020 5 For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts on the outside, fears inside. 6 But God, who comforts the discouraged, comforted us by the arrival of Titus; 7 and not

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only by his arrival, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted among you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more. 8 For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it—[for] I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while— 9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to [the point of] repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to [the will of] God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. 10 For the sorrow that is according to [the will of] God produces a repentance without regret, [leading] to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication [of yourselves,] what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. 12 So although I wrote to you, [it was] not for the sake of the offender nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your earnestness in our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God.

Is it possible to have a sorrow over anything like stealing or needing emotional comfort that never leads to true salvation? Yes, there is a place for someone to feel sorrowful, but use Christ to hide or suppress their sorrow. Being known by God is foreign. How is Christ used to cover worldly sorrow? By making Christ do something he never promised to do. What someone does is take a statement that is true, like God comforts the weak, then makes Christ the comforter for all your problems yet without dealing with a darkened soul. Someone will look towards God as a divine comforter for a sad day, a tough day, or to feel well.

Another example of worldly sorrow is using Christ for better self-esteem. Someone quotes the Bible about them being a royal family member or being special. As each person thinks of themselves more highly than they should, it leads to an inflated view of oneself. Instead of being humbled by God, serving the great king, it becomes I am this or that with lots of emotions. Instead of maturing in knowledge about the common faith, it becomes seeking the emotional highs coming from I am special with a darkened soul. For the person using God for emotions, the mind will not learn the faith. Why? The person's goal is to have emotions, not knowledge about God. Think of a young child knowing a word or two, but they do not understand what they are saying. Knowing the faith goes beyond quoting the Bible or self-esteem. Genuine faith in Christ involves knowing the Bible in a greater way than knowing one or two words while having companionship with God.

As many use Jesus Christ for emotional comfort or to mask guilt for lying, they come across a passage about being good. The Bible says do not steal, so the person stops stealing, but the heart of purity does not exist. Yes, someone may have more emotional support or feel less guilty about whatever, but there is no concern for everything God

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has revealed. Only through true repentance with a changed soul by God can anyone have a heart of purity instead of darkness. Only through a godly sorrow over a darkened heart will one hear the shepherd's voice. Being known by God through Christ Jesus allows each Christian to hear the shepherd's voice through the Bible. But for the person who uses Jesus to cover or resolve guilt, God is not speaking with his divine voice.

A quiet life is following the shepherd's voice through the Bible. Whatever God directs leads to the common faith, which is the divine fruit of faithfulness. Remember, there are false forms of a quiet life, like a woman should not wear pants. Or a man wears a suit. Christ, through the Holy Spirit, strengthens each Christian for a lifetime to live the quiet life.

Sadly, many Christians are stuck in just being good or following morals. Often, being good is to get something from God. Or God will not provide a wonderful gift. The Christian becomes like a person in other religions where they provide offerings to appease a higher being for something. The quiet life is not about twisting God's arm for a healing or a blessing, as this is self-centred. If one watches, listens, or reads so-called people of God coming in Christ's name, they teach God will give a blessing if a certain requirement is completed. If a Christian fasts enough, prays enough, says amen at the right time, receives a word of God without doubt or gives money, they will receive something from God. The Christian is saying to themselves I must do this for God to be merciful to me. Then this idea blends with Christ to make me feel good with some morals on top of having a pure life. Faithfulness is not based on what each Christian does, but what the saviour did and is doing now among his people.

Faithfulness grows into a quiet life, seeking God. The divine fruit of faithfulness is not praying, reading the Bible, or going to church. Faithfulness is understanding the timeless faith. A faithful Christian is not someone who does the most, but the one growing in knowledge of the faith. The Bible leads to conviction. Convictions grow into action as God works in each Christian. Someone can pray at home but miss the point of prayer. Many treat attending worship weekly as optional. While others attend weekly because they have always attended every Sunday. True faithfulness taught by the Bible leads to refreshing green pastures where someone prays, reads a Bible, and attends with the other Christians on the Lord's Day. See Revelation 1:10, 1 Corinthians 16:2, and Acts 20:7.

Psalms 1:1-3 NASB 2020 1 Blessed is the person who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 2 But his delight is in the Law of the LORD, And on His Law he meditates day and night. 3 He will be like a tree planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

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With

Psalms 23:1-4 NASB 2020 1 A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd, I will not be in need. 2 He lets me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. 3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For the sake of His name. 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

The pastures of God are a place where God's servants delight in God's word. As the Bible accomplishes its goals, God comforts while disciplining each Christian. The divine doctor Jesus Christ becomes more alive as how dark the soul once was becomes realized. Praise and worship of God increases as the Bible shows what grace is, even in the boring parts like genealogies. God speaks through the Bible alone to encourage, give guidance, and teach his people.

What is this true and timeless faith? It is the faith given to the saints once for all. Christ gives this same faith to all of his sheep who he paid for with his life on the cross. The Holy Spirit teaches the timeless and unchangeable ideas of God. As God is not mute, but speaks through the Bible with clarity, hence it is important to hear and read good ideas about God. Since God is unchangeable, the faith remains the same between each Christian. Having an opinion about God is not good enough. A conviction needs to be in the timeless faith. Many can argue why the Bible must mean this or that and sound convincing while being stubborn. This is not good enough, as the true faith is not an opinion. The goal is to be a Berean to search the Bible for the faith well. See 2 Timothy 3:16-18 with Jude 1:3 and 2 Timothy 2:14-15.

Acts 17:10-12 NASB 2020 10 The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 Now these people 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. 12 Therefore, many of them believed, along with a significant number of prominent Greek women and men.

As Paul taught, the people of Berea saw Paul was repeating what God means in the Bible. God's divine intent or what God means is to accept the common faith from the text of the Bible. Why are there differences between Christians who look at the same passage? Ask yourself these questions:

- 1) Am I following the rules of grammar when I read a Bible?
- 2) How do my personal struggles or weaknesses affect how I read a section of the Bible?

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3) How does the area I live in affect how I read the Bible?

4) How do I make the Bible agree with my opinions and beliefs? Remember, everyone has thoughts on topics.

5) There are ideas in the Bible that Christians dislike. How does your dislike for an idea cause you to distort the meaning of a passage?

If someone answers, I do not have any influences on my reading of the Bible, but I just accept the Bible. They have not thought through the questions. Tradition blinds! This person has traditions without knowing it, which affects how they read the Bible. For many, they do not think the Bible has a coherent message, but the Bible is about what I believe. If God has not provided a coherent message besides an opinion, what is the point of having Christ? There is no point since being in Adam and being on a deathbed is an opinion that does not affect humanity. God speaking through the Bible becomes irrelevant, as the Bible is not true, but just an opinion. Either the words mean something with the same intent from Christian to Christian or the Bible is full of meaningless words, hence a waste of time. Why should any non-believer pay attention to the message of any Christian when the Bible has no coherent message besides an opinion?

Each Christian still has influences that affect how they read the Bible. Some have poor grammar and struggle to understand English or French. Others are blinded by something and it changes the Bible's intent. Often, living in a certain area or time causes many to assume the Bible must mean this or that. The reason there are differences between Christians is not the Bible, but the reader. Each Christian has to be very careful about how they read a passage. Best practice is to read before and after a passage while learning from others, including teachers from the past.

Studying the Bible is wonderful, as it nourishes the soul of every Christian. Learning from past teachers and pastors helps one realize what influences them and to what extent. Men in the past struggled with the same issue of being influenced. As a Christian learns from the past, influences that affected pastors or teachers are often noticeable. These men are like each Christian today, but remember the Holy Spirit. In the past, the Holy Spirit spoke in the same way. With clarity, the Holy Spirit speaks to correct the weaknesses of each Christian throughout history.

The faith is common among God's people throughout history. Is there a place to look for where the Holy Spirit taught in the past? Yes, in creeds and confessions. Christians wrote summaries of the Bible to teach and warn of error.

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2 Thessalonians 2:15 NASB 2020

15 So then, brothers [and sisters,] stand firm and hold on to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word [of mouth] or by letter from us.

With

2 Thessalonians 3:6 NASB 2020

6 Now we command you, brothers [and sisters,] in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother [or sister] who leads a disorderly life and not [one] in accordance with the tradition which you received from us.

As much as it sounds nice to read the Bible and the Christian will know God, in the New Testament there is a call to receive the faith. Notice here the word tradition or traditions is in the Bible. For many, this word is bad, and it is not a part of the Christian life.

For others, the summaries of the faith take the place of the Bible. Like anything else, there are abuses with everything. The question is, has God articulated a common faith throughout history until today and in the future? Yes, God speaks in every generation as seen in the faith given once for all. The tradition of creeds and confessions is what God has been teaching throughout history. But these creeds and confessions bend the knee to the Bible. If the Bible becomes a servant to anything, God's voice becomes silent to someone else's voice.

There are slight to sizable differences among creeds and confessions. Some groups decide the Pope can add more books to the Bible. Others have used documents to deny God's intent found in the Bible. Yes, there are abuses of using creeds and confessions of faith.

A confession or creed is only valuable as much as it captures the meaning of the Bible. Christians need to be encouraged to learn from past teachers in creeds and confessions as they explain the Bible. Many questions Christians have today were answered in the past. Whether a teacher living in the 21st century or a 4th century pastor provides good teaching, does it matter? To the maturing Christian, they receive the words of Apostles and Prophets through the Holy Spirit. Remember, the Holy Spirit was working in the 4th century as he works today, so it does not matter when someone lived to teach.

For many, start with the London Baptist Confession of 1689, as it has been updated to Modern English. Then go from there into the Apostles' Creed, Athanasian Creed, Nicene Creed, and Chalcedonian Creed. Or read Martin Luther's published books or study from

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pastors in the past. Depending what someone reads, one can see why Christians defend the Trinity or hold to all in Adam die.

The balancing act of reading the Bible with learning from the past leads to the faith.

To be faithful means to follow God's divine intent of the Bible. In Christ, there is the kingdom of light leading to common faith. Each true Christian is in this kingdom of light and is to learn the common faith that is shared over thousands of years. Learn from the Bible while learning from the past. God is the same in the past, today, and tomorrow, with unchangeable faith. The unchangeable faith leads to the divine fruit of faithfulness. Faithfulness is the narrow path of the timeless faith founded by Christ Jesus. Amen!

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Chapter 19: Gentleness Bible Study

1 Peter 3:14-16 NASB 2020 14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE IN DREAD, 15 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, but with gentleness and respect; 16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who disparage your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

Gentleness is a fruit given to each Christian by God. God grants each Christian the ability to control themselves while having the Bible alive in speech and action. Conflicts while being meek still occur. Avoiding all offences is impossible, as truth creates heat with darkness. Heat is conflict or an offence. The strength of meekness is having the ability to turn away offence with soft words.

Outbursts of irritability or coldness towards others are foreign to gentleness. Irritability or aggression in action and speech shows the mind is not calm lacking self-control. This Christian needs to learn to be calm in the mind as the Gospel of Christ brings peace with God away from sin. This peace in the mind comes from the forgiveness of sins that start at birth, then comforting truths that calm the mind. Once peace is in the mind, self-control comes, as the mind no longer reacts to evil influences.

Think of a construction worker given instructions to build a building for storing food. The government wants grain silos to store extra grain because of drought. The builder ignores the building plans. Instead, the person builds a large building for sheep. This builder is nice and patient toward others, but did not follow the instructions given. The Christian becomes this builder when they seem nice and patient but ignore the Bible. When the Christian refuses or wastes opportunities to tell the person about their darkness, this Christian does not have gentleness yet.

A construction worker is working in another part of the country, building a silo. The worker follows the plans down to the smallest details. This man is argumentative and consistently yelling. Once the silo is complete, the town is happy to see the construction worker leave. A Christian can follow or give the appearance that they follow the Bible, but they have no control of themselves. Yes, someone may share the good news of Christ but leave a sour taste in their audience because of being offensive. Gentleness has not made an appearance yet.

Think of a builder who works quietly and follows the plans given to him. The builder is mindful of the building plans while keeping his strength under control. His mouth shows

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patience as construction annoys many, but speaks when it is wise to inform the town's people of the silo's progress. The Christian is to be like this builder following the Bible, but his spirit is calm with a peaceful tongue that speaks difficult ideas. Gentleness has shined through this Christian.

Gentleness is about balance of strength while knowing when to speak or act in the Bible's directions. Another word for gentleness is meekness. Gentleness knows when to use soft words to turn away wrath while having the right reason. As the Bible instructs, each Christian should seek for a calm mind with wisdom. Remember, without the crucified Jesus Christ, true Gentleness is not possible, as sin from birth opposes true gentleness.

Christ frees Christians from the darkened soul starting at birth. Grace is enough when the Christian is weak. Grace is enough to provide self-control to avoid offence, while it provides strength to follow God's directions. With grace and God's ongoing work in the Christian, gentleness becomes a noble way of life. Amen!

Questions:

- 1) Are you naturally more pleasant or want to follow instruction according to truthful friends?
- 2) If you are more pleasant, in what areas do you not want to follow the Bible? Remember, God has forgiven all the sins of his people. There is no shame in Christ.
- 3) If you are more likely to follow instructions, why is your mind and behaviour lacking control and balance? Remember, a part of God's instruction is to be gentle and meek.
- 4) How do you struggle with following the Bible while avoiding needless offence?
- 5) Where is God through the Bible directing you to learn soft words that avoid or remove offence?
- 6) Have you prayed for wisdom to be meek? Remember, God gives wisdom to his children. See James 1.

Additional Texts: 2 Timothy 2:25, Proverbs 15:28, Proverbs 22:21, Proverbs 15:1, Psalms 119:46, James 3:12-14, Galatians 6:1, Romans 1, Romans 8, 2 Timothy 3:10-12 with the Book of Acts, 2 Corinthians 12:8-10

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Chapter 20: Meekness Commentary

Meekness is difficult. The sinful world calls everyone to boast about oneself with a unique ability. Along with boasting about oneself, the world calls for living beyond what a person needs. Seeking after riches, power, strength, property, and money becomes someone's life. For many, being poor with a lack of power and strength is a common companion. When poverty becomes a common companion, the soul becomes afflicted with worry and doubt. Why is the world like this? When Adam fell, each person was poisoned with sin as darkness leads each person to seek riches or many down the path of poverty. Though one man brought death into the world, as Adam is the first Adam. Evil from birth causes many to rule over another while gathering many riches for themselves. Laziness combined with poor decisions blinded by darkness leads many to poverty. Instead of peace in the soul leading to gentleness, each seeks for power while gathering items and to laziness from lack of motivation to work. See Genesis 2-3 and Romans 5.

The non-believer seeks after their passions of pride to the lusts of laziness. God knows no one at birth unless God comes to someone in the womb like John the Baptist. The restraining work of God to purge the effects of sin is missing. Thinking too much of oneself is common, along with a lack of control over impulses of sin. Laziness is a lack of control to realize when it is time to work to live. But the Gospel says come to Christ to control evil impulses to work hard or be content seeking what someone needs. Remember, Christ is the second Adam bringing life to his people called from darkness. The impulses of sin are criminal acts towards God. God, as the divine ruler, sees the criminal acts of each person. After this life, God will reveal justice, as no one is innocent. Yes, this may seem harsh. As God is pure and evil is offensive, God responds. God proclaims that those who do not seek the shelter in Jesus Christ will receive an eternal penalty. Each person's criminal acts go beyond not working hard enough or seeking too much. Each person has not worshipped God as God directs by replacing God with other items. God responds by providing shelter in Christ Jesus, who is the divine doctor. Or each person after this life will face the penalty of sin. When there is still time, embrace Jesus Christ, who forgives as you rest on him. Christ will take your place as the criminal and take the penalty of evil on himself instead of you. Be free if you are not already! See Mark 9, Matthew 25, 2 Thessalonians 1, and 1 John 1-2.

With Jesus Christ dying on the tree and proving each Christian's crime is gone, this leads to meekness.

Psalms 18:32-35 NASB 2020 32 The God who encircles me with strength, And makes my way blameless? 33 He makes my feet like deer's [feet,] And sets me up on my high places. 34 He trains my hands for battle, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. 35

You have also given me the shield of Your salvation, And Your right hand upholds me; And Your gentleness makes me great.

And

Zechariah 9:8-11 (NASB 2020) 8 But I will camp around My house because of an army, Because of him who passes by and returns; And no oppressor will pass over them anymore, For now I have seen with My eyes. 9 Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout [in triumph,] daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is righteous and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. 10 And I will eliminate the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be eliminated. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the [Euphrates] River to the ends of the earth. 11 As for you also, because of the blood of [My] covenant with you, I have set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

And

Galatians 6:1-4 NASB 2020 1 Brothers [and sisters,] even if a person is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual are to restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness; [each one] looking to yourself, so that you are not tempted as well. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks that he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have [reason for] boasting, [but] to himself alone, and not to another.

And

Philippians 4:4-6 NASB 2020 4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentle [spirit] be known to all people. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

Once every Christian was in sin, but Jesus Christ found each Christian. Jesus says to the mind to be at peace as evil living in the soul is gone. The chaos of sin fighting to overpower another is gone. Love for truth is growing until God takes each Christian home. A renewed mind of peace from sin is in each Christian because of the Holy Spirit washing Christians from darkness as Christ took each Christian's place. This is where true meekness starts. Meekness is controlling strength and abilities while following God's truths while often avoiding needless offence. Gentleness often is balancing two ideas in thought, action, and speech. See John 6, Titus 3:5-6, 1 Corinthians 5:16-20, and Ephesians 2:8-10.

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Each Christian is a renewed person, with a mind that is reborn away from darkness into light. Meekness is a person who follows the truth while controlling their ability and strength. Meekness in the new mind allows each Christian to see what is the truth instead of fighting as a non-believer does. During the walk on the narrow path of truth, how a Christian should speak or act becomes more clear as the truth grows. Working hard to avoid poverty or being content after needs are met is on this narrow path. Meekness helps to provide motivation as God directs Christians to work while not boasting or seeking after riches. How? Gentleness provides a balance between many difficult things. The Bible introduces ideas that each should work while being content. Gentleness finds the balance. Or Christians struggle to know the Bible. Let each Christian with a bent knee ask for wisdom. God provides wisdom, hence Christians should pray for wisdom often, as this is a sign of meekness. Knowing one's limitation is balancing being confident while knowing to seek help. While walking on the narrow path with wisdom, the Christian understands a non-believer will still become offended when an offence is not being sought. Or the Christian recognizes there are times to stand upon the truth with strength that will offend. See Romans 1 and James 1.

Every Christian has been in situations where sin comes rushing forth and takes over. Gentleness leads to self-control. Meekness responds instead of sin. Self-control develops and tempers speech, thought, and action. Growing self-control is an act of God that is present in each Christian as peace away from sin grows, leading to gentleness and tempering impulses. Does meditation or therapy stop impulses? Yes! Meekness is not about being meek but following the Great Commission. For the Christian, it is about proclaiming Christ to the lost and often teaching or interacting with stubborn Christians. All Christians have difficult times as there is a struggle with sin still, often to the point of being stubborn. Gentleness sees how to approach the Christian who is struggling and knows how to proclaim Christ's forgiveness to the lost. See Matthew 28 with the Book of Acts.

As much as it is comfortable not causing trouble, meekness has a backbone. Backbone is the direction that God provides in the Bible that is the same for all Christians. Do not worry about trying to keep a law or standard to enter heaven as a person can not. Christ, through his death and resurrection, has granted access to heaven for his servants. To get to heaven is through Christ. Christians still seek to follow the general moral patterns seen throughout the Bible summarized in Exodus 20. Many confuse pointing to Exodus 20 means Christians are under the Old Covenant. Christians are not under the Old Covenant anymore, but are in the New Covenant with their saviour, Jesus Christ, with grace. Grace found only in Jesus fuels the walk upon the narrow path to follow the direction summarized in Exodus 20 and other parts of the Bible. See Romans 3:31 with Romans 8:4 and the Book of Hebrews.

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The Fruits of the Spirit support each other and are not isolated from each other. Each fruit stems from the trunk of the Gospel of forgiveness found only in Christ Jesus. The forgiven life leads to many fruits that work together. Without the deep peace of the soul, it is more difficult to have self-control. A wild mind leads to impulses controlling actions and speech. The wild mind is still fighting God, even if someone seems meek.

Remember, peace in each Christian grows over time along with other divine fruits. With growing love with meekness, the Christian will approach life with more truth or become more mellow. As Christ increases and effects of sin decrease, having a wise speech with an enlightened mind leading to pure actions becomes normal for each Christian. See Matthew 7:13-14, John 3:30, Romans 1 and James 4:4.

With a common faith found in the Bible, there will be times Christians say I follow God's word. But this is done with a peaceful approach. Many want to become stubborn and want to argue. Then state this is my belief while quoting the Bible. Often, the belief is an opinion that a Christian has, which has nothing to do with the Bible. Being stubborn and wanting to argue for a belief or opinion with passion is not a fruit of God. This is a fruit of sin. When a Christian makes a stand, it is because God has been clear on the subject or the Christian has an opinion separate from God's words. If a Christian has an opinion, be careful not to make God say the opinion when God is silent. The Bible provides clarity on where to take a stand. With a peaceful mind, the Christian takes a stand from the clarity of the Bible. From a peaceful mind, the Christian does not seek to offend. The Christian is concerned with the conversion of the non-believer, not themselves. The Christian is concerned they do not offend God with uncontrollable impulses, but show God's attributes at all times. Standing up for the truth is not being stubborn and fighting for what someone believes in. Hold fast to what God says in the Bible while controlling strength or abilities, not confusing the Bible with an opinion or a belief. See Galatians 5 with Jude 1:3, 1 Corinthians 16:13 and 1 Peter 3:15.

For others who are more quiet and speak little, remember 2 Timothy 1:6-8.

2 Timothy 1:6-8 NASB 2020 6 For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. 8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with [me] in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,

God has given each Christian a spirit full of love, power, and self-control. There is no reason to be stubborn and then argue as a Christian. Or show too much strength or ability that offends. For those who are more quiet, each Christian can speak while

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standing upon the common faith. In Jesus Christ, there is a balance between standing for the truth. Amen!

Chapter 21: Self-Control Bible Study

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NASB 2020 24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but [only] one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. 25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. So they [do it] to obtain a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way as not [to run] aimlessly; I box in such a way, as to avoid hitting air; 27 but I strictly discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

In each person, there are many thoughts and desires. These desires lead to actions and speech. Actions and speech need to be tamed. Without the Gospel, evil desires and thoughts will rule actions and speech. But God knows each Christian through Christ's death. Through Christ's life, death, and resurrection, it grows fruits to restrain evil and then kills all remaining forms of darkness. Christians still have the remaining effects of darkness living inside their bodies that carry each away. Christ's Gospel kills these influences. The divine doctor Jesus Christ removes the heart of darkness. There is a new, perfect heart of unconquerable light that plants a tree. Christ's Gospel grows into a tree with branches. The branches bud into many divine fruits including self-control. The divine fruit of self-control regulates the Christian. Self-control is the ability to control oneself.

Christians should live to serve God with the fruit of self-control. Christians can become entangled with many dark distractions seeking darkness for a time. Worry and doubt will replace God's fruits as darkness becomes a common friend to the Christian. Or the Christian will remember the mission of God given to Christians. The mission of God is telling the world to come to Jesus and teach all that God has written to followers of Christ. The Christian who has their eyes set upon God through taking all the Bible seriously becomes a mighty warrior. Instead of being entangled with the armies of darkness, the Christian runs behind enemy lines with the banner of truth. The Gospel light saves many who are drowning in evil. The enemies of God fight against God's light coming through God's people. Self-control with God's protection allows the Christian to continue the battle. The battle continues when each Christian learns the Bible and learns carefully the words of God. This ongoing training from pastors and teachers allows Christians to know the light to continue on the narrow and pure path of God.

The narrow path is opposite to the broad path. The narrow path is learning what all the Bible says over a lifetime while going out and proclaiming Christ to the lost. Self-control leads to the ability to sit and learn God's words. As the Bible works in the soul of each Christian, self-control grants the ability to resist being entangled by sinful affairs. Without self-control, a Christian would follow any desire. As each Christian learns to

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control themselves, each Christian lives a life where darkness decreases while the banner of light is more visible. Life for each Christian becomes a life devoted to the Great Commission, as in Matthew 28, and continues into the Book of Acts with Christians like Timothy.

If a Christian becomes entangled and focuses on a more broad path where darkness lives, God is not the issue. God does not tempt or cause anyone to commit evil, but the opposite. Poor decisions from lack of self-control leads to being entangled with darkness. Remember, the Christian is free from sin and can fend off temptations, as grace is enough.

When a Christian becomes entangled with darkness again, the Bible collects dust on a shelf from lack of reading. The soul focuses on darkness as the Bible that is alive becomes mute. God, as the divine shepherd, loses none of his people, but will discipline his people back onto the narrow path.

Think of self-control as a fortified defence ready to jump into action. Self-control leads Christians to listen to God, who speaks through the Bible today, and to stay on the narrow path. The Bible with God working causes each Christian to stay on the narrow path.

Remember, self-control is the divine fruit to govern and control oneself. The divine fruit of self-control is in each Christian as God grows many branches in each Christian. May God have the glory. Amen!

- 1) Has the Gospel led you to greater self-control? Yes or No?
- 2) Would honest friends or spouses say self-control is growing in you since God saved you from darkness?
- 3) In what ways do you become entangled with darkness again?
- 4) In what areas is God speaking through the Bible to have self-control?
- 5) Have you sought God for forgiveness where you lack self-control?

Additional References: 1 Peter 1:18, 2 Timothy 2:4, Hebrews 12:4, Philippians 2:12-16, Proverbs 25:28, Proverbs 29:11, Book of Acts, Romans 1, Genesis 3, James 4:4, John 10:25-30

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Chapter 22: Self-Control Commentary

Self-control is the last of the divine fruits of God in Galatians 5. Dark desires and passion rule over a person when the soul has nothing but darkness. Ten steps will cure and prevent many behaviours. Many types of therapy will cause anyone to control impulses of darkness, even when it appears God works mightily in a person lost in darkness. Ten-step programs and different therapies lack the divine power of Christ's Gospel to create a pure heart. The fruit of self-control from the Gospel is missing. The Christian is seeking to worship God through self-control, which is not being moral for the sake of being moral. Christians do not lie for the sake of not lying. Or do not steal for the sake of not stealing. God desires Christians to live a life free from darkness, leading to worship.

Christ with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit is the only path forward for a heart filled with unconquerable light. In Adam, there is nothing but darkness without any light. Through Adam, death comes to everyone as everyone offends God, as each fights God as God's enemy. There is no light in the heart. Many cover their dark heart with behaviours that seem good. Many do not steal or lie. Often sin will appear as light, leading down the dark path to death. Being in Adam leads to death as the body stops functioning, then another death after this life, as seen in Romans 5 with 1 Corinthians 15. Without Christ, false religion and therapy will suppress impulses of evil. While the dark soul remains in control. See Romans 5, John 14:6, James 4:4, and 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

The Gospel leads each Christian to live a life that is guided by the Holy Spirit through the Bible with self-control.

Proverbs 25:28 NASB 2020 28 [Like] a city that is broken into [and] without walls [So] is a person who has no self-control over his spirit.

And

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NASB 2020 24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but [only] one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. 25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. So they [do it] to obtain a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way as not [to run] aimlessly; I box in such a way, as to avoid hitting air; 27 but I strictly discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

And

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2 Timothy 3:1-5 NASB 2020 1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, slanderers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness although they have denied its power; avoid [such people as] these.

And

2 Peter 1:5-11 NASB 2020 5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in [your] moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in [your] knowledge, self-control, and in [your] self-control, perseverance, and in [your] perseverance, godliness, 7 and in [your] godliness, brotherly kindness, and in [your] brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if these [qualities] are yours and are increasing, they do not make you useless nor unproductive in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For the one who lacks these [qualities] is blind [or] short-sighted, having forgotten [his] purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brothers [and sisters,] be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choice of you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

What is self-control? Self-control is the ability to control or regulate desires, passions, and impulses to worship God. For Christians, there is no reason to live where desires and passions rule and take you away from worship. Remember that in Christ Jesus, many fruits come along with self-control. In God, there is control over dark passions or good desires needing to be restrained. For each Christian, more self-control develops as the light of the Gospel grows in the soul. No Christian has an excuse to live without self-control. One cannot worship God without self-control.

Worship is seeing the worth of God in the Gospel while seeking to follow all that God directs.

Think of someone living a wild and uncontrolled life. They are always late for appointments and events. They argue needlessly, following any idea that comes to their mind. Often, they have no money left for food and basic items after spending all their pay cheque on foolish things. Keeping a job is difficult as they do not show up on time for a shift. When they show up to work, they argue with their boss. When someone visits their home, it is a mess with dirty dishes piled in the sink. Someone like this has no self-control. No Christian has any excuse to live like this person. Christians can regulate themselves by being on time, holding their tongue, watching how they spend money, and

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keeping an orderly house. Why?

Darkness Adam passed onto his children is dead as Christ killed it in the soul. Yes, in 1 Corinthians 15:22, Christ brought life to the dead soul where Adam brought death. If the Gospel does not include the idea all die in Adam, then Christ is useless as Christ comes for the darkness Adam passed on. The darkness passed on in everyone leads to many forms of evil in each person. Remember, humanity is not under condemnation because of Adam's evil, as Adam must account for his actions. Humankind has condemnation because of what Adam passed on to his children. Adam's sin illness spreads to each new person from birth, leading to physical death. Without Christ, physical death leads to eternal death as the liar goes astray at birth. As the darkness of evil leads to its last fruit, as in spiritual death, it leads to everlasting conscious hell. For many, this seems harsh. Think of tens to hundreds of millions of crimes being committed against God by each person. God revealed his justice system in Exodus 20 with 1 Corinthians 13, showing what the crimes are. God is not like the modern justice system excusing behaviours and looking for motives. The evil soul flows into crimes against God as God sends messengers through the church. But everyone in Adam suppresses the truth as in Romans 1 and ignores the messengers. Yet, God protects the church and sends his children out with the message to trust in Christ Jesus. Despite God's call to the way of life, someone who dies in darkness made the daily choice to follow their dark desires. No one is innocent and seeks after God. God responds to those who choose to follow evil by declaring them criminals. A part of the consequences is an eternal prison called Hell, where there is no escape. There is hope in Christ who makes the lost children of Adam alive with Christ taking upon himself the immeasurable offence. Once alive in Christ, death is gone with the ability to control oneself. Christians will win the war against passions and desires through regulating oneself. See 1 Corinthians 15:22, Matthew 25, Psalms 58:3, Romans 3, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:10-20, and Ezekiel 36:24-30.

Each Christian has the Gospel with the Holy Spirit, leading to a self regulated life. God speaks today through the Bible alone, as the Bible is alive. The words of the Bible see into the soul of each Christian to reveal motives, desires, and intentions. God is transforming his people into faithful friends as the Bible and the Holy Spirit work together. Christians have a special appointing in the Holy Spirit who leads and teaches. The Bible provides a clear path forward as in the narrow road. Christians need the Holy Spirit along with the Bible. The Holy Spirit leads Christians on the path taught through the Bible. A Christian cannot say I have the Bible, but I do not need the Holy Spirit, as a human cannot understand spiritual words. Another cannot say I have the Holy Spirit, but I do not need a Bible, as God will lead me. God never promises to provide direct revelation at all times and places. God promises the Bible will equip Christians. The Bible teaches, rebukes, corrects, and trains for every good action for Christians. As

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Christians walk on the narrow path, Christians become more faithful friends with God. Self-control lights the narrow path for Christians. For Christians, the narrow path is easier as each regulates his or her life. See Hebrews 4:12, Philippians 2:12-13, 2 Timothy 3:15-17, and 1 John 2:27.

The narrow path of self-control is sharing Christ to the lost and being a student of the Bible. Before a messenger of God can go to an unbelieving world lost in darkness and Adam, each Christian needs ongoing training. Learning about God through the Bible is essential to life, or the Christian stays as an infant. Many Christians refuse to take all the Bible seriously and ignore the sections that offend them. Someone like this is an infant not ready to serve in God's kingdom. Either this person needs a strong rebuke to feed on God's word or they need saving from darkness. Sadly, many Christians become I want this from God as local churches become a babysitter for spiritual infants. As God works in a person, they walk on the narrow path with no exception. It is natural and normal for Christians to become learners of every text of the Bible, not some parts of the Bible. When Christians ponder the Bible, it leads to what Christians taught and defended throughout the ages. The teachings of God are common among every Christian.

The Christian learns the common faith. Naturally, each Christian should go out and share the message of Christ. Many have a negative view of publicly promoting Christ, as many think of poor examples. Self-control, along with good teaching, shows a compassionate but clear way to proclaim Christ. A message with respect and care will go out and say run to the bridge of Christ, who bridges the gap over the valley of death to life. Christ, who is the divine doctor, cleanses Adam's darkness as the only solution. Many in darkness will suppress the truth and attack the messenger, but some will come to Christ. A few here and there will be spiritually born again as death dies in the soul. To control fear and shyness, among other passions, self-control regulates to share Christ. A life spent on sharing Christ and being a student of the Bible leads to God saying, well done, faithful friend. Each Christian knows they are nothing but dust, deserving death. God says you have followed my words. Now take this reward. Christians should not see this reward as gaining salvation in Christ. The reward does not affect whether Christians stay in the light of God. See Ephesians 1:13, 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 with Matthew 25:33-40, and Matthew 28:18-20 with the Book of Acts.

Christians often become distracted with darkness from the world or good things. The dark world for a time can trap any Christian into anything common among the non-believing world. Christians, like the men and women from the days of the Kings of Israel, fell into evil, but God did not cast out his children. God forgave King David, who took Uriah's wife and caused her to become pregnant when Uriah was in battle. David solved this situation by having Uriah killed, as Uriah would not be with his wife. God forgives his children while teaching and disciplining. God disciplines his children often

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through providing consequences or not preventing consequences from occurring. See King David in 2 Samuel 12. Distractions following the dark world will bloom like a flower for a time. Once the season for blooming is done, consequences of those fruits come as the Lord's disciplines. See 1 Corinthians 10:10-14, John 10:28-29, 2 Samuel 11-12 and Hebrews 12:6.

Good things often become distractions. A good thing becomes a distraction when done at the wrong time. Apostle Paul wanted to go to Asia to proclaim Christ, but God said no. When the Apostle Paul attempted to go to Asia, Paul could not go. Like Apostle Paul, many ideas in the Bible can become a distraction if done at the wrong time. How? Prayer can become a distraction when a parent should feed hungry children. Studying the Bible becomes a distraction when a male should teach on the Lord's Day or for a Bible Study. At work, when a Christian should work to complete a task, they are too busy sharing Christ. As rest becomes laziness, these good things become sin, starting with good intentions. When a Christian lacks self-control, even good things lead back to darkness. Christians can forget to care for their children, refuse to serve God in a greater way, lose a job for not working, and become lazy. Whether a dark trap snares a Christian or good actions at the wrong time, Christians need self-control provided in the Gospel. See Acts 16:6-8.

Christians still struggle with influences that need to be put to death. Satan is a roaring lion attacking Christians in dark valleys of trials. Or a Christian will struggle with the remaining influences left in their body while the soul is a new creation. The body still has left over effects of sin that lead to temptations that war against the new heart. If Satan is attacking or the body is influencing, self-control to live well comes through the Gospel. Self-control says Satan will be resistible and the body's influences will die. It is very difficult most times for the Christian to tell why they go astray with many influences leading to actions. Many claim it is Satan always attacking, or this influence keeps distracting, hence why I become distracted and sin. This shows a life that lacks self-control. In self-control is the ability to conquer and win against any darkness or distraction. Christ grants power to control thoughts and actions in each Christian. Look at the Fruits of the Spirit, which are fruits of the light. No Christian has an excuse to stay in their darkness and remain distracted. An excuse is any reason or thought that says I do not need to control myself or distractions are fine. Many Christians do struggle for their whole lives in certain areas, yet with minor to major victories. These weak areas become less of an issue as they become areas to watch. Christians care about these weak areas. The Christian who makes excuses is different. This Christian does not care about sin or a distraction. When darkness or a distraction overtakes the Bible, there is no concern. The darkness or distraction starts small, then grows to bring a Christian to a place they would never have thought. This is a life either in part or fully out of control. Remember, a life out of control is not a spirit filled life as the Holy Spirit brings divine fruits. The fruits of

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God lead to a life devoted to sharing Christ's forgiveness of sin while being a student of the Bible, as seen in Matthew 28:16-20. See Romans 6-7, Romans 6:17, Colossian 3:5, Ephesians 5:3-6, James 4:1, 2 Corinthians 5:17, and Hebrews 8.

If a Christian lives a life devoted to everything but sharing Christ and being a student of the Bible, something is wrong. Christ is the one that grants salvation, leading to certain actions like sharing Christ and learning the Bible. This Christian needs to look deep inside themselves to see if they are of the faith. Someone of the faith lives with daily prayer, daily bible study, fasting and reflecting on the Bible. A Christian cannot say I cannot share Christ or be a student of the Bible, as this is the Holy Spirit's commission to every Christian. The Holy Spirit is in every Christian, leading to what the Bible directs. The Holy Spirit, who is God, descends and fills people as seen in Acts. They went to share Christ and be an excellent student of the Apostle's teaching. See 2 Corinthians 13:5-6, Book of Acts, Acts 9:17-22, Ephesians 1:13, and Ephesians 4:30.

Matthew 28:16-20 is a life devoted to serve God. How does sharing Christ with words and being diligent in learning the Bible affect every moment in life? When the Christian is alone, their minds focus on daily responsibilities while thinking about the Bible. This may mean a simple verse or reviewing a more complex idea. At home, the Christian studies the Bible while keeping in mind there is a common faith. The Christian is not looking for what they believe but the teachings given to each Christian. True faith points to being a part of a local gathering of Christians where a male pastor or male teacher teaches weekly. The Christian learns like a young child listening to their parents. Over time, the Christian should have encouragement and strength to say Christ forgives through speech. Christians in their life repeat the pattern of speaking and learning as opportunities come along with rest and God strengthening. If the Christian is more focused on politics, movements of the day, distractions, and anything else, something is wrong. If the Christian holds up a political sign or builds cars or collects items, but cannot tell someone to come to Christ, their soul lacks the Holy Spirit. See Matthew 28:16-20 with Romans 10 and Act 17:10-15 with 2 Timothy 2:15.

The soul lacking the Holy Spirit is clear. Self-control among many fruits should be observable with growth. If there is a Christian who's life is a mess lacking in every fruit, it is all right as long as the good fruits bear more fruit. When someone comes to Christ, their life is full of darkness. God works this darkness out through the pattern mentioned above. Therapy only covers this darkness, lacking the ability to cleanse it. Where rudeness once lived, gentleness and love take its place. When shyness prevents someone from speaking, the power of God causes someone to speak about Christ. The Holy Spirit does this to promote God's kingdom that is coming either with rewards or judgment. If this is lacking in Christians when there should be growth, the Holy Spirit is not operating. The Bible with the Holy Spirit is not operating, as the Holy Spirit may have a

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grievance or there was never any salvation in the soul. Self-control regulates, but it comes through the Holy Spirit guided by the Bible. See Ephesians 4:30.

Self-control is the pathway to follow the narrow path. A Christian's life can be simply described as:

- 1) Being a student of the Bible at home
- 2) Praying privately or with other Christians
- 3) Sharing that Christ forgives through words
- 4) Attending regularly the gathering of Christians
- 5) Listen to teachings of God when gathered regularly with Christians
- 6) Live a life free from distractions and fighting ongoing distractions.

The Bible goes into much detail on these subjects if someone wants to dig deeper. The life of the Christian is to be transformed by God and to follow what God directs. God provides rest as in healthy hobbies or other activities. If these hobbies or activities do not distract from Matthew 28:16-20 but enhance Matthew 28:16-20, the hobbies are fine. When a hobby or activity becomes a distraction, it needs to be reigned in.

Many find this harsh with terms like this is legalistic. Take these words to heart.

John 14:15 NASB 2020 15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

And

1 John 2:3-5 NASB 2020 3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoever follows His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

To be God's child is to follow his direction. If that is too harsh, come to Christ for forgiveness of sin and stop following a false faith. Christ forgives from evil and strengthens Christians to follow the Bible. If someone is a Christian, the pattern of learning the Bible and sharing Christ is normal among many other directions given by God. As each Christian grows, there will be a struggle in many areas, but the life follows the narrow path. Self-control, along with God working, keeps each Christian on the narrow path. Amen!

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Chapter 23: Divine Fruits with devotion to God

Ephesians 6:7-8 NASB 2020 7 With goodwill render service, as to the Lord, and not to people, 8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, he will receive this back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

In previous chapters, God's divine fruits are discussed for each Christian. Christians do nothing to receive the divine gifts as salvation brings the fruit of God. The power of the Gospel brings excellent divine gifts. It is deception if a Christian thinks they must do something for God to receive excellent gifts. Medical services only promise tainted peace or love. Other religions can produce tainted fruits. Do not confuse the divine fruits of God with tainted fruits brought about by other methods.

Nothing a Christian does will stop God from accomplishing his task among his people, as God makes his people more like himself. God may, for a time, put a Christian under discipline for seeking after darkness, but the divine fruits will develop. If God does not remove the remaining effects of darkness to sanctify, then Christian, you have no part of God in salvation. Sanctification is the process of God removing darkness from the Christian's life. God disciplines who he loves. See Hebrews 12:4-12.

Christian, you have the fruits of God active in you. Take full advantage of all these fruits. Why does God provide gifts to Christians from the Holy Spirit? Christians have these gifts to serve God and other people under the care of the local church. God's mission is to have Christians share Christ with words while learning the Bible. Learning the Bible well means putting it into practice. The fruits of God allow Christians to share Christ. With patience and respect, sharing Christ is done. Fruits like hope provide hope for the soul, knowing Christ's death defeats sin. When Christ comes with words, hope becomes alive to the new person entering God's kingdom.

God's mission is to have his people share Christ with words and to learn the Bible well. The words of the Bible lead to actions as the words accomplish a task. Remember, only through Christ with his grace in someone does the Bible become a lifestyle that God accepts.

<u>Divine Fruits</u>	<u>Summary</u>
Love	A life where the Christian seeks to lay down his or her life to follow Christ through following the Bible. Emotions should be a part of this divine fruit. The soul still leads each Christian, not emotions leading.
Joy	Christians know the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ saves from

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	darkness. The soul is full of delight, knowing darkness is gone. This brings many pleasant emotions. With joy in the soul and emotions, Christians seek to follow God through his word with obedience and joy.
Peace	Christians know in the soul that the war between them and God has ended. Only through Christ dying, then God reaching out to a person is the war ended. God's mercy and favour saves Christians from continuing evil offences that are against God. There is a genuine relationship with God that will never cease. The cessation of war leads to the soul being at peace. Christians have peace in the soul. Calm emotions are in the soul, knowing Christians are no longer at war.
Patience	In the Christian's soul, is the attribute to suffer, but without following darkness. Anyone who seeks to live a pure life with God will suffer. God provides this divine fruit for Christians to bear under, suffering with peace to follow all that God directs. Patience is not, I feel as an emotion that I am suffering, but is to suffer. Suffering involves trials and being attacked for trusting in Christ for salvation. Attacks mean things like being put to death, being forced into poverty, and having property destroyed. Persecution for Christ is more than someone saying I disagree as a hurt feeling. Despite this, Christian continue on the road with God when it is unpleasant.
Kindness	Christians will be slow to speak and quick to provide help. Kindness avoids having a temper while meeting various kinds of needs. Many pleasant emotions may accompany this fruit from a soul filled with kindness. Christians should allow the Bible to define kindness, as kindness requires difficult things that are not pleasant. Sharing Christ with words will be unpleasant, as Christians tell someone they are wrong about everything, then explain grace.
Goodness	Christians will seek what is good that God defines through the Bible. Goodness requires the death of opinions and ideas to have the Bible reign in the soul of each Christian.
Faithfulness	Christians will seek after the timeless faith found in the Bible. Faithfulness is seeking after a common faith given once to the saints. Emotions can cloud the Bible and then deny the common faith. A Christian's mind needs to understand the Bible first. Emotions should follow later.
Gentleness	Christians will control personal strengths to build the kingdom.

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	Gentleness allows a Christian to be bold with the strong and use less strength for the weak. The kingdom of God grows through sharing Christ and learning the Bible, it requires knowing how much strength or what ability to use. Sometimes being direct is required, but other times, having a soft tongue is required. Often saying no to work or another activity to be with family grows the kingdom. Gentleness is about moderation through wise thinking. Emotions can help or distract or both depending on the Christian.
Self-Control	Christians will control actions and thoughts for God's mission. Self-control is not an emotion to feel under control. Christians are to be self-regulated to share Christ and to learn the Bible well.

Remember back to chapter 4, it does not matter how many parts a person has. Throughout this book the remaining effects of darkness from the body and new soul of the Christian are a common theme. God wants every part of the Christian to worship him. Emotions are useful to worship when they reflect the new soul. Other times, emotions become the Christian's enemy, as emotions can carry someone away back to darkness. The bodies of Christians, Satan who tempts, and worldly influences can draw the soul into darkness for a time. Every Christian faces this struggle, remember Christ forgives all sin while working in each Christian to remove dark influences.

Emotions can cause Christians great difficulty. Many want to feel God there. There will be confusion over is God's presence an emotion. Others desire to purge all emotions, as emotions are not useful. Emotions are to be led by the soul that has the mind, ability to think, and has memory, among other functions. Often, emotions need to be ignored as they move away from God and his word. Other times, the expression of emotions is good, as emotions help as the soul leads to the worship of God. Either way, Christian's emotions cannot be a guide. The Bible in the renewed soul must lead.

Many Christians want to dissect themselves to see different parts. When a Christian becomes too fascinated with parts within them, seeking God's mission becomes a distance memory. How? Instead of seeking God with every part in each Christian, some parts seek only after God. Others try to figure out how a person works, but lose sight of God. How? Instead of bringing God praise, the Bible becomes a guide into the deepest parts of a person. The direction of God is not dissecting parts but worshipping God as a whole person.

Romans 12:1-2 NASB 2020 1 Therefore I urge you, brothers [and sisters,] by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God,

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[which is] your spiritual service of worship. 2 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.

The body has the soul worshipping God through sacrifice. What is this sacrifice? Going out to share Christ with words and learning the Bible well is this sacrifice. The Bible should lead the soul, becoming the guide on how to act and think. Emotions may be helpful after being controlled by the Word of God in the soul. Many of the divine fruits of God require not feeling anything but making tough decisions. God's grace is there to help with tough decisions. Self-control requires denying oneself of desires and feelings. Goodness seeks to follow what is good. Faithfulness requires the death of personal opinions, as the common faith is not an opinion. Faith is receiving what God says in the Bible, which will conflict with personal opinions. Some divine fruits should invoke emotions. Joy knows Christ saves, hence, thankfulness should rise to God for salvation. Peace knows the war with God has ended, hence, feelings of walking with God should be present. When a divine fruit expresses itself, every part of the soul should be engaged, leading to presenting oneself as a living sacrifice.

Remember back to a time when you, Christian, started a project. First, there is often a lot of passion, then the emotions die out. Often, the project ends without completion unless self-control is present.

2 Timothy 1:7 NASB 2020 7 For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

The Holy Spirit is not about feelings or sensing something strange. Having a sound mind with self-discipline and self-sacrifice are the signs of the Holy Spirit in you, Christian. The divine fruits of God are present when having a sound mind. Christian look towards the signs of God in you and other Christians. Desires, emotions, and passions fade, but God's gifts in the soul keep growing.

Learning the Bible well to put into practice requires humility, as many things need to die in each Christian. Take a favourite sin like lying or stealing. It needs to be put to death. Once put to death, God replaces it with something good, like being truthful and having contentment. Christ being shared with someone who could ruin and bring misery into a Christian's life brings fear. Negative feelings often come during challenging situations. The fruits of God are there to lead the soul in difficult times. What do these divine gifts lead to?

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Bold actions come from gifts of God. The divine fruits of God, as described in this book, are not for sitting at home to waste time. At home, there is time to pray, think of other Christians, help your neighbour and read a Bible among other spiritual activities that the Lord brings. When outside the home, there are opportunities to share Christ with words. Pray about how to speak about Christ and for opportunities to share Christ with words. Sharing Christ requires some ability to relate to a non-believer. If a non-believer speaks in French, but the Gospel comes in English, how will they understand? When a non-believer has beliefs in a religion, Christians can learn about their religion and relate Christ to explain grace. Paul related with the Jews and Gentiles in different ways. All these spiritual activities require many gifts from God to bring worship to God. See Matthew 28:16-20 and the Book of Acts.

John 14:20-23 NASB 2020 20 “On that day you will know that I [am] in My Father, and you [are] in Me, and I in you. 21 “The one who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will reveal Myself to him.” 22 Judas (not Iscariot) *said to Him, “Lord, what has happened that You are going to reveal Yourself to us and not to the world?” 23 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will follow My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make [Our] dwelling with him.

Christians have no excuses to not follow God’s mission. For the Christian who wants to make excuses, does a love of Christ live in your soul? The Holy Spirit, with the divine fruits of God, among other gifts, provides the ability to follow what God directs. There is no reason for any Christian to lack the ability, as God has equipped his people for the mission. In God’s hand, Christians have opportunities to follow God’s mission. Go forth with the fruits of God and follow God’s mission. Amen!

Conclusion:

Revelation 22:1-2 (NASB 2020) 1 And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river [was] the tree of life, bearing twelve [kinds of] fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree [were] for the healing of the nations.

With

Psalms 51:5 (NASB 2020) 5 Behold, I was brought forth in guilt, And in sin my mother conceived me.

Many can be loving or kind, but it does not prove God's salvation is in someone. Many religions, ideas, and medical services can produce outward fruits like self-control. Having some self-control or any other fruit is not enough to please God. Darkness from evil taints everything. Take a caring and loving person worshipping a false God or medical service. God does not accept the fruits as good. The fruits of darkness from a dark soul are present in a person. Christ does not live in this person, but has justice waiting. Like every person without Christ, God sees the tainting effect of evil and offences committed against him. Unless God provides grace and faith, God will have eternal justice ready for any person who is not in his kingdom. An eternal place awaits each person to take responsibility for their crimes for eternity. Hell is this place. The misery of crimes against God will be present in Hell, but Christ can save today. Turn and trust in Christ as God being the saviour. Christ will cause each person to avoid tainted fruits leading to death. Christ takes the place and receives the justice for crimes committed by the Christian.

Christ lives in the Christian soul, leading to divine fruits. Some effects of darkness are still present in the Christian, but divine fruits combat to reign over such remaining effects. The Fruits of God are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. God plants these fruits and has them grow over a lifetime. Christians will notice when Christ saves, many effects of darkness exist when looking back at their life. Later in life, Christians should notice God has grown many fruits. Other Christians should notice these fruits as Christians gather. Salvation found in Christ is not dead, but alive with power and transformation. Let no person deceive you, Christian, that Christ is dead in a grave. God, through the Holy Spirit, is working to cleanse Christians of the remaining effects of fruits of darkness. Why? To send Christians on a mission.

God's mission is spreading that Christ saves from evil with words and to learn the Bible well. This mission applies to every Christian. One difference from other beliefs is having

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God's fruits present and alive in the soul. When sharing Christ with words, being impatient is a temptation. Patience resists being impatient while self-control controls impulses to argue. Learning the Bible takes time. Seeking what is good as defined by the common faith in the Bible is the guide for Christians. Christian, God saves you for the mission, hence follow this mission trusting in God to help you. God will provide for Christians needs, like providing fruits of God, or a better understanding of the Bible or physical needs, like food. When God calls his people home, know Christ will welcome you home, Christian, with open arms as a faithful servant. Amen!

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