

Being Known by God: Volume #1

Concise musings on the benefits of being known by Jesus Christ.

By Douglass Webb

The God who Comforts from the Darkest Valley

Psalms 23:4 (NASB 2020) 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.

With

Matthew 4:14-17 (NASB 2020) 14 [This happened] so that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet would be fulfilled: 15 “THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES— 16 THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED.” 17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Outline:

- 1) Christians have fears and doubts
- 2) Having darkness in the soul is the darkest valley
- 3) Christ is the conqueror of the darkest valley
- 4) Christ is with his people during trials.

Please read additional references: Psalms 58:3 with Romans 3 and Ephesians 2, Psalms 91:5, Psalms 138:7, John 3:36, John 10:25-33 with John 6:30-52, 2 Corinthian 3:5, Philippians 2:12-13, Revelation 5:8-9 with 1 John 1:6-7 and Romans 5:8-10.

What fear is before you, Christians? Lack of food, illness, nowhere to live, and persecution from walking with Christ are dark valleys. For others, it is concerns that life brings, conflicts with friends and family, concerns for the future, and the struggle of committing a particular evil action that haunts many of God’s children. Christians, who do you look at? Christ, the great God and Saviour.

Christ is the light coming over the mountain, bringing light into the darkness. There are many dark valleys in life. What about the darkest valley each person is born into? Each person is born with the curse of darkness coming from Adam. What is the curse? Adam passed on his dark nature to his children. Adam’s children passed on this darkness, so everyone is in open rebellion against God, starting at birth. Remember, the liar goes astray from birth. Darkness is present in everyone, as darkness reveals itself after birth.

Christ is the light because he conquered the darkness. Where did Christ attack the darkness to destroy it? Look no further than the cross. The broken body of Christ with his blood poured out shows the appeasing of God's justice for his people. Yes, who God the Father gives to Christ, He will save. Christ shines as dawn into the darkest valley of Adam's curse. Rejoice! Christ, the great God and Saviour, crushes Adam's curse and additional acts of darkness each person commits. Christ cleanses the curse of Adam and additional acts in Christians alone, not every person. What great praise and joy should raise from anyone known by God to God? What about other dark valleys that God's people must walk through?

The dark valleys like illness, lacking food, lacking shelter, and struggles with reoccurring evil actions are genuine concerns. Where is God amid the storms of darkness as the light of Christ seems hidden? God has not left Christians while the storms come. God knows Christians through true faith as Christ hung on the cross, dying and coming back to life. Christians, the storms are conforming you to be more like God. Dark valleys purge the remaining love for darkness and the remaining effects of darkness, so every Christian will serve God better. Where is God?

God is with his people, holding them with great security. Christ holds Christians close in his hand, never letting go as He saves many from God's justice. Feeling something does not mean God is near. Feelings change often, especially in dark valleys. Look at God's words in John 10:25-33 with John 6. Christ will save everyone who God the Father gives to Him, and nothing can remove Christians from God's hand. Look at the Ark having dry land to rest on. God never forgot Noah and his family. Look at King David's life. King Saul chased David to kill him. David's son chased him, seeking his father's throne to rule over Israel. Did David succumb to dark valleys? No! Christians, God knows his people, so He will not forget you, but help. Hold fast to what the Bible says, not a feeling appearing that God is near. God is near as he holds you close. Amen!

Questions:

- 1) Do you think God is always near?
- 2) How does darkness influence you to think God is far away?
- 3) Which verse in the Bible shows you God is always near?
- 4) Do you understand that despite the dark valleys, God is transforming you?

Summary:

God sees the darkest valley each human must face. Going astray from birth is the greatest threat in life. Adam introduced darkness into the world. From birth, children of Adam go astray as they carry the burden of darkness. The great God and Saviour Jesus Christ sees the greatest threat to humans. Christ volunteers to come as a human without darkness to suffer on the cross. On the cross, Christ conquers the greatest threat to humans. Now God welcomes Adam's children into the light. God's people should not look towards the feeling of God being near. Each Christian should know that God is near because the Bible says so. John 10:25-33 explains that God keeps his people close in his hand, watching and caring for them as a shepherd. Amen!

The God that brings the most valuable Item

Psalms 101:4 (NASB 2020) 4 A perverse heart shall leave me; I will know no evil.

With

Matthew 7:22-23 (NASB 2020) 22 “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ 23 “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; LEAVE ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’

Outline:

- 1) Darkness in humans spreads deceptive words
- 2) God works in the dark heart to grant faith
- 3) What is the faith that God gives
- 4) The Bible is the good shepherd’s voice

Please read additional references: Exodus 20, Psalms 119:115, Jeremiah 14:14, Jeremiah 27:15, Matthew 25:12, John 3:36, John 10, Romans 8:6-12, 1 Corinthians 2:13-15, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Galatians 5, Ephesians 2:8 with Acts 16:14, 1 Peter 1:15.

Many people say money, fame, comfort, and riches are the most important items in life. Darkness has no limits in each human starting at birth, as it puts deceptive words into the mouths of non-Christians. Deceptive words go even further. Many without the light of Christ make up ideas to replace God and his word. Instead of seeking Christ now and forevermore, they seek evil desires to create other religious books to bring salvation. Yet, there is no other hope outside of Christ, as darkness will bring great eternal ruin. There are true promises of comfort and riches found in salvation, but eternal judgment awaits for the speaker of deceptive words. Run fast to Christ, who will deliver on his promises, as God cannot lie. Why?

The greatest need is God coming with his salvation. Is anyone good enough that God will accept anyone? No. Can anyone earn God’s favour? No. Praying enough, fasting enough, or performing enough actions will not save. To be known by God is trusting in Jesus Christ alone. The great God and Saviour Jesus welcomes non-believers. God grants faith and grace to his people, causing them to trust in Christ. Let no one think trusting in Christ is a human decision. God is acting in the non-Christians, giving faith and grace, leading to life as He works in the heart. After God works in the heart, non-Christians turn away from darkness with a change of mind. Through repentance, every

non-believer trusts in Christ to cleanse and forgive darkness. This is the most important thing to have.

Remember, if God acts in opening the hearts of non-Christians, God is just to do so out of his mercy. Each human is the rebel towards God with consistent offensive acts from darkness. Please look at James 4:4. God would be just to leave everyone in darkness, since each person is at war with God.

God has come with salvation, opening the hard heart of darkness through faith and grace. What is faith? Faith is resting on Christ, trusting him to save from darkness. What is grace? Grace is God applying his favour to the person lost in the sea of darkness. God's favour comes from Christ giving up his life. Christ takes the consequences of darkness on himself while giving freedom from darkness through favour to anyone with true repentance. God knows his people like the good shepherd. Anyone known by God is the sheep listening to the good shepherd. Listen to the shepherd, Christians, but where are his words? The 66 books of the Bible are the shepherd's words to study and follow. There is no need to listen to someone speaking with a dark heart, either twisting God's words or replacing God's words.

Christians, you have a Bible. Do not waste your time listening to hearts needing salvation, but listen to the pure words of God. There is rest from the darkness in the Bible. As darkness still affects Christians. Correction will come through the Bible to remove the effect of remaining darkness. God's words contain instructions for finding rest and avoiding darkness. Christians learn what it means to follow God in the Bible. Your life is a living example of God, which everyone will see. Seek to keep God's standards as revealed in the Bible, as God reveals what he expects from his people. Grace that is favour to save becomes the strength to follow God's instructions now.

God is not a harsh master, throwing someone He knows out from his kingdom over a struggle. Grace saves, as Christ took God's justice on himself, providing favour to his people in darkness. Christ gives grace that continues as strength to walk the narrow road. The Bible explains the narrow road. Grace is enough strength to follow the Bible, as God is a gracious master. Christian, take your Bible and study it along with grace strengthening you. Listen to the Shepherd's words, through reading the Bible and listening to godly men explaining the shepherd's words. There is no need to listen to any other voice, as darkness hides itself in the appearance of it being light. Amen!

Questions:

- 1) What voices draw you away from the shepherd's voice?

- 2) How does darkness tempt you to embrace darkness again?
- 3) Do you find rest in Christ? If not, why? Where has darkness drawn you away from God, the shepherd?
- 4) Where is God the shepherd correcting you?
- 5) Where are you resisting correction?
- 6) As time allows, have you been studying the shepherd's voice found only in the Bible and listening to men explain the Bible?

Notes:

- 1) Sheep only listen to their shepherd. Sheep will ignore everyone else who is not the shepherd.

Summary:

Every human is at war with God. Deceptive words leave the mouths of every non-Christian, either twisting or replacing the Bible. God, out of mercy, saves some as each repents of the darkness living in them. Now God becomes the pure shepherd speaking through the Bible. Christians, listen to your shepherd as grace sustains you to follow God's instructions.

The God who gives Words for Life

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

With

2 Timothy 2:14-15 (NASB 2020) 14 Remind [them] of these things, and solemnly exhort [them] in the presence of God not to dispute about words, which is useless [and leads] to the ruin of the listeners. 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a worker who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

Outline:

- 1) Questions from life
- 2) Salvation is the greatest question needing an answer
- 3) The Bible reveals the answer to salvation
- 4) Learn the Bible to know God's mission

Please read additional references: Matthew 20:16-20, John 1:1-15, John 14:15, Romans 10, 1 Corinthians 4:6, 2 Thessalonians 2:15, 2 Timothy 3:14-17, Titus 3:5 with Romans 10, Hebrews 4:11-13.

Everyone seeks words of life that will help to solve struggles in life. Some want words of comfort, while others want tough questions answered. Some tough questions are: Why am I here, or how do I have more peace in life? Darkness in each human has the blinding effect of hiding God's words that will explain what each should ask. God's words will present many questions, with God answering each question. The greatest question each person should ask is, how do I deal with this darkness living inside of me? Christ is the answer.

Christ, the great God and Saviour, answers this greatest question. Darkness starts in the womb as each inherits darkness. Adam and his children pass on this darkness to every generation. How is someone to deal with their darkness that God will find pleasing? The answer is to turn to Christ. Christ dies on the cross, coming back to life, proving the defeat of darkness. Christ, through the Holy Spirit, cleanses darkness through repentance. God's people find freedom from darkness through Christ alone. When Christians speak the word of God to non-Christians, some find the solution from darkness. Please see Romans 10 with Acts 16:9-15 and Titus 3:5 and Hebrews 4:13-15. Where Adam brings death and darkness, Christ is the superior Adam bringing salvation. Please look at Romans 5. A part of God's living words is salvation, that cleanses from

darkness. The heart that once loved evil now loves light. The light should lead to a greater understanding of God through his words. Many Christians stop knowing the words of God as they have salvation, as these Christians have protection against hell.

Many assume having salvation in Christ is enough. It is not enough for Christians, as God cleansed Christians for a mission. God is not just saving people to provide protection from God's justice, as in eternal conscious hell. Remember, God is not the offender. Each person deserves God's justice, but God saves out of kindness. Out of kindness, God gives Christians a mission. What is this mission? Christians need to become a student of the Bible while proclaiming Christ with words. God's words cleanse from darkness. If Christians did not proclaim Christ's cleansing power through words, how would there be new Christians? There would be no new Christians in the local church. Christians learn the word of God and proclaim Christ through words.

A part of God's words is learning how to stay on the narrow road. From young to old, Christians need greater instruction. The narrow path that Christians are on after salvation has many trials and difficulties. Has God left his people alone with only protection from hell? No. God goes beyond salvation with a text the world cannot understand in their darkness. Christians are of the light with fellowship with God the Holy Spirit. Christians have the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth in the Bible. Trials come through various stages of life. Texts of the Bible and memorized Bible passages speak. Yes, the Bible speaks since God speaks through the Bible alone. God has given his known people a guide, as in the Bible. Christian study it and put it into deeds. When the trials come from being young, the Book of Proverbs gives direction to young Christians. As Christians come close to going to be with God after this life, the Bible speaks of an unbroken fellowship with God forever. The Bible becomes essential to the Christian. The Bible is enough for every task in life. Please see 2 Timothy 3:12-17.

Christians go astray when the Bible becomes about gaining knowledge only. Yes, Christians should know what the Bible contains. Many can quote verses, yet do not understand them. Others learn the Bible in education, but cannot see their need for salvation. Some create their own religion from the Bible as they find verses that agree with themselves. There must be a better way.

When the Bible explains a teaching, through the words on the page, God is speaking. The Holy Spirit is there who will help in understanding the Bible, so Christians are not alone. Hearing God speak requires handling the Bible well. What does it mean to handle the Bible well? God spoke to his people in a way that humans can understand. Humans call this a language. Christians read a Bible of a language that you know. Why? God's thoughts are there to be read. Be careful not to go beyond the language on the page. God

wrote the Bible in a certain way, be sensitive to how God wrote the Bible. All the Bible reveals God, His character, darkness entering the world, the solution for darkness in Christ, and how the world will end.

Pastors living in the past wrote good teachings in what are called creeds and confessions. Creeds and confessions summarize the Bible as excellent teachers and pastors who spent their lives handling the Bible with care, wrote it down. Why write excellent teaching? Writing good teaching is for Christians to learn from. The 1689 Confession of Faith is a good example to help Christians to understand the Bible well. Christians do not reject the past. Why? Pastors in the past have great insight. Listen to pastors and teachers, whether living or with God, that follow the common faith. The common faith is the ideas in the Bible. If Christians are careful to listen to the words of the Bible, then each Christian will know the common faith. Christians do not become difficult and refuse to listen to pastors or teachers that God has sent to his church. Instead, listen to pastors and teachers who have handled the Bible well, whether living or with God. God uses the Bible through pastors and teachers to teach Christians. Christians read the Bible too as God works through the reading of it. The standard for Christians is not an opinion about the Bible, but following the words on the page of the Bible. Christians, seek the Bible and not your opinions about what you think the Bible should mean.

Christians do not go beyond the words of the Bible. Embrace the Bible. Why? The Bible reveals God and who He is and what He expects from humans. Humans have many questions that seem important, but often miss the most important question. God answers the most important question in life: what should any human do to resolve their evil starting at birth? God will save some through repentance, making Christians, then send all Christians out on a mission. The Bible continues speaking to guide Christians throughout life as God the Holy Spirit does his work. Christians, listen with care to your Bible, as all Christians should be sensitive to how God wrote the Bible. Amen!

Questions:

- 1) What questions do you want answered?
- 2) How do your questions compare to the greatest question of needing salvation?
- 3) Where does the word of God speak to you about how salvation has cleansed you?
- 4) Are you exploring the riches of the Bible beyond salvation?

- 5) Where have you misused the Bible to avoid understanding God's message?
- 6) How can you improve your understanding of the Bible?

Summary:

The greatest question needing an answer is, where is salvation for darkness? Christ is the solution. The cross of Christ, the death of Christ, and Christ coming back to life shows darkness to be defeated. Look towards Christ alone for salvation. After God removing the darkness, God provides the questions and answers in the Bible. Christians can access important questions with answers from God. All Christians should handle the Bible with care, so as not to miss what God is saying through the pages.

The God who Descends to reveal the Truth

John 1:32-34 (NASB 2020) 32 And John testified, saying, “I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. 33 “And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’ 34 “And I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

with

1 John 2:25-28 (NASB 2020) 25 This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. 26 These things I have written to you concerning those who are [trying to] deceive you. 27 And [as for] you, the anointing which you received from Him remains in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you remain in Him. 28 Now, little children, remain in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not draw back from Him in shame at His coming.

Outline:

- 1) The Holy Spirit with Christ works through moral law and grace
- 2) Christ's grace is enough to save forever
- 3) The Holy Spirit with Christ speaks through the Bible alone
- 4) Pastors and teachers need the Holy Spirit and Christ to teach
- 5) Christians need to receive the common faith

Please read additional references: Exodus 20 with Romans 7:4-6 and Hebrews 4:12, Jeremiah 31:33-34, Jeremiah 32:37-41 with Revelation 21, Ezekiel 37:25-27 with Revelation 21, John 3:5, John 6:45, John 14:16-17, Romans 3:31 with Matthew 5:17, Romans 7:4-6, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 2:12, Galatians 5:13-14, Ephesians 1:13 with Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 4:9, Titus 3:5-6, 1 John 2:20, Jude 1:3, Revelation 21.

God cares for his people. Christ brings salvation, saving with his grace from the chains of darkness. The moral law reveals the darkness. What is moral law? Moral Law is the moral standard that God wants every human to follow, as seen in Exodus 20 and seen throughout the Bible. The New Testament takes the moral standard from Exodus 20 and repeats all ten commandments while removing parts only for Israel. Moral Law summarizes God's character, dividing between light and darkness. No human can follow this standard, as darkness taints speech and action. God, the Holy Spirit, uses the moral law and grace. How? The Holy Spirit uses the moral law to reveal darkness. After the

moral law reveals darkness, grace through the Holy Spirit comes. Christ's grace is the saving power of God. Where grace and the Holy Spirit are, Christ is there, as the Holy Spirit magnifies Christ. See John 15:26.

The Holy Spirit magnifies Christ. There should be no surprise that when God the Holy Spirit is at work, Christ is present. Christ is present in saving through his favour made possible on the cross. Yes, the cross makes God's favour of saving from darkness possible from Adam to Christ's return. The moral law condemns as grace says to God's people you are free of your condemnation. God's just condemnation is hell forever. God's favour releases humans from darkness and the legal judgment from God. How marvellous is grace that frees from darkness and removes God's people from their just condemnation?

No Christian follows the moral law with perfection after salvation. Christ says, be free of your darkness and of the condemnation revealed by the moral law. Is the Christian to give up and say I am free from darkness, so why live a pure life? No, may this never be. Study Romans chapters 2 to 3, especially Romans 3:31. Christians adhere to the moral law instead of nullifying it or leaving it behind. Christians can deny darkness and follow the moral law. Is the Christian saved through keeping the moral law? No, may this never be. Trusting in Christ alone saves Christians. No religious ceremony like eating bread and having an alcoholic drink like wine to receive grace can save. Christians, trust in your saviour Jesus Christ, who gives enough grace forever to save. Christ with grace says there is no more condemnation for Christians, yet enables Christians to follow the moral law. To understand what God directs, including the moral law, study the Bible.

Christians study God's written word often, as the Holy Spirit reveals its meaning. There is no need to seek strange sensations, thinking it is the Holy Spirit. Many see the Holy Spirit as a giver of sensations, bringing good feelings. Others use the Holy Spirit to fall on the ground shaking while appearing to be unconscious. This is not the Holy Spirit. These sensations or strange activities do not reflect the God who brings purity to his people. The Holy Spirit communicates ideas to equip the church to share Christ's salvation through words. The purity of God grows where the Holy Spirit is working. God's purity is reflecting God in action and speech. The Bible discusses God's purity throughout its pages. Should Christians reflect the character of God? Where should Christians look for purity? The Holy Spirit communicates purity through the moral law and directions found within the new covenant. Grace becomes strength to follow whatever God directs. The moral law becomes the method of God pointing out where darkness still lives in Christians, as grace comforts saying Christ appeased the consequences of darkness. Christ, through grace, secures Christians in time of struggles with darkness. The Bible becomes the only book where God is speaking in fellowship

with his people. Embrace the Holy Spirit with the Bible. The Bible is the place to hear and learn from God. Christians go to God and learn where he speaks. This does not mean Christians reject being in the local church to learn. See Acts 2.

Christians do not reject the role and authority of the local church. New Christians know very little about God. What are the new Christians to do? Some sit at home reading a Bible, thinking God will reveal spiritual words to me. Others join into the local church to learn. Local churches have the responsibility to teach the common faith to Christians. The common faith is the teachings presented in the Bible. Churches with their male pastors and male teachers need to be well-educated about the Bible to teach the common faith. Education does not mean having many degrees from a school. Male pastors and male teachers are to know the common faith well through studying the Bible and learning what the Holy Spirit says through the pages of the Bible. The Holy Spirit used men before to communicate the common faith. Pastors and teachers need to teach the common faith known to older generations. Teachers and pastors must put aside what they think the Bible says, as their opinion is not relevant to receive the common faith. Receiving the common faith means to accept how God expresses himself and following God's ideas. What does this have to do with Christians? When male pastors and male teachers do not know the Bible well and cannot teach the faith, how will anyone listening learn? Why should Christians join the local church? If the teaching amounts to nothing or if teaching treats adults as children to avoid complex ideas, then there will be no growth. This makes Christians wonder why should I join the local church. When churches mute God by not knowing or teaching the Bible well, they should not expect true Christians to grow and mature to serve in the local church. The local church has the authority to teach, as seen in Acts 2:41-47.

Both Christians and Churches should unite where men who can teach the Bible clearly do so while teaching with depth. As able men teach, they should be able to teach the Bible with clarity. Christians, listen to these men. Why? Acts 2:41-47 and Hebrews 10:23-25. The Bible directs Christians to gather regularly. When together, Christians should explain the Bible or listen to the Bible being explained. God ordained this structure to mature his people. The Holy Spirit will be active pointing to Christ. Churches that teach the Bible, will see the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Why? The Bible is being taught, with the Holy Spirit being active. Christians are hearing about Christ as the Bible speaks of Christ from Genesis to Revelation. Please see John 5:32-46 and 1 John 5:9 and Hebrews 4:11-13. As men teach, there should be a message every week to speak to Christians and a message a week to teach a particular teaching like the Trinity. Setting aside special times is necessary to address a subject hurting the local church.

Local churches will have to decide how best to teach. Confessions summarize the Bible as they explain specific teachings. The 1689 confession is a good example. Verse by verse teaching provides the general ideas that God wants to communicate. Both are required to teach the common faith. Why? The common faith contains knowing specific teachings and general teachings. For Christians to be strengthened by God while hearing God speak means knowing both. All Christians should know the teaching of the Trinity, which is a specific teaching. Knowing about the Trinity is not enough. General teaching puts the Trinity back into history where Christians can know what to expect from God.

May Christians serve God in the local church. Why? Each has spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit. Please see 1 Corinthians 12:1-7. The teaching of the Bible should encourage growth and use of these gifts. For any Christian to be useful in the kingdom of God means years of learning from good teaching and learning the common faith. What is the common faith? What is the faith of God? The common faith is not Christians deciding what he or she believes. Accepting an idea not found in the Bible is not the common faith. The Prophets and Apostles wrote the faith as found in the Bible. Ideas must be within the words of the Bible through the use of language. The Bible contains the spiritual words that reveal God's thoughts. The Holy Spirit makes these spiritual words known. Christians are not to make up the faith. Christians should receive the common faith as they read the Bible. In the past, Christians received the faith too, since God is active in the past, today, and in the future. When Christians in the past and Christians today follow spiritual words of the Bible, there is agreement. This agreement should lead Christians at any time to affirm the same ideas, whether in the past, today, or in the future. The common faith guides local churches on how to use spiritual gifts to magnify Christ.

God goes even further in providing instructions with the Holy Spirit promoting Christ. Moral Law reveals darkness starting at birth, it also unveils God's character and His actions. God's character does not leave his people powerless or without the ability to follow him. God equips his people to follow the moral requirements found in Exodus 20. Christians still uphold the moral law as seen in Romans 3:31. Grace is there as strength. The new covenant starting in Acts and ending at the end of Revelation provides greater instruction for Christians. Christians are not to read the direction given to Noah to build an Ark and build an Ark themselves. Building an ark is for Noah alone. See Genesis 6 through 10. Christians should not expect to have a powerful river or sea stop flowing to form dry land like for Israel. Please see Exodus 14 and Joshua 3 to 4. Why? These directions and acts of God are for Israel alone. The new agreement, along with the moral law and grace, provides instructions to follow. These instructions do not save from darkness. A soul that is freed from darkness follows the instructions with desire, loving to follow the light. Genuine faith leads to following God's instruction, assuming the

instruction is still to be followed. See James and Hebrews. As local churches teach these instructions and about God, the Holy Spirit is there to mature Christians through God speaking in the Bible alone.

When a disagreement arises over a meaning of a passage, what should Christians do? Look towards the Bible and the Holy Spirit. Find the clearest passage to understand unclear passages. Find the meaning of an idea from the best and clearest passages. Let the Bible define its own meaning of words. Always read before and after a passage to understand what a section says. Remember, the Holy Spirit reveals the spiritual meaning of the words using a human language. Follow the rules of whatever language the Bible is in. Be humble and learn from the past. The Holy Spirit worked in pastors and teachers who came before, like he works today. Join in the local church to hear men prepared to teach the Bible. The Holy Spirit has not directed Christians to stay home and read a Bible to replace joining in the local gathering of Christians. Each Christian's goal is to agree with the common faith, as seen in every generation. The Bible should not be changing. The common faith is not changing. Past male teachers and male pastors become exciting to learn from as they explore the common faith. Christians have many resources. God is knowable and what he expects is clear, while grace is there as strength.

God is faithful to his people through the Holy Spirit. Do not dismiss the Holy Spirit as he works in every Christian's mind. The Bible is there to be explored through the Holy Spirit, revealing spiritual words. God's spiritual words should encourage Christians to see Christ and follow their saviour. Amen!

Questions:

- 1) How do you see the Holy Spirit?
- 2) Do you see the Holy Spirit together with the Bible or separate from the Bible?
- 3) Do you see the Holy Spirit working through the Bible, revealing the spiritual meaning of words?
- 4) In what areas is the Holy Spirit revealing through the Bible alone that you should reflect God's purity more?
- 5) Are you seeking to follow the common faith through the Holy Spirit through your pastor and pastors who are with God now?

Summary:

The Holy Spirit is active in the Christian's life. Where the Holy Spirit is, Christ is present. Why? The Holy Spirit points to Christ. The Bible alone defines who Christ is and what he does. A feeling is not Christ, or a strange behaviour like shaking on the ground is not Christ. Christ is saving his people from darkness then saying, yes moral law condemns, but my grace covers you. Christians should begin learning about God in the local church. Local churches should teach Christ, as the Bible is about Christ with the Holy Spirit working. Over time, new Christians should learn the common faith and serve God in the local church. Amen!

The God Who equips his people

John 15:26 (NASB 2020) 26 “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, [namely,] the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, He will testify about Me,

With

1 Corinthians 12:2-13 (NASB 2020) 2 You know that when you were pagans, [you were] led astray to the mute idols, however you were led. 3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus is accursed”; and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit. 4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. 6 There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all [persons.] 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another [various] kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. 12 For just as the body is one and [yet] has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

With

1 Corinthians 12:27-31 (NASB 2020) 27 Now you are Christ’s body, and individually parts of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, [and various] kinds of tongues. 29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not [workers of] miracles, are they? 30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? 31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And yet, I [am going to] show you a far better way.

Outline:

- 1) Christ through the Holy Spirit should be the Christian focus.
- 2) Signs of the Holy Spirit’s work and presence.

- 3) The Bible explains God's work as He is present.
- 4) The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to his people.
- 5) The gifts are used to follow Matthew 28:16-20.
- 6) Christians use spiritual gifts by maturing through learning the common faith.
- 7) Christians and local churches should work together to use spiritual gifts.

Please read additional references: Genesis 2 to 10 with Romans 3 to 5, Psalms 5:4, Luke 4:40, John 10:20-30, Acts 5:14-15, Romans 10, 1 Corinthians 13, Ephesians 1:4 with Titus 3:3-7, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, and Hebrews 13:17.

The Holy Spirit magnifies Christ. Christ should be the focus of God's people, as the Holy Spirit is active with Christians. This is the role of the Holy Spirit. Wherever Christ is, the Holy Spirit is working. Wherever the Holy Spirit is present, he magnifies Christ. If Christ is not present among Christians, then Christians have missed the Holy Spirit. To have Christ working, Christians cannot violate the teachings of the Bible. Why? The Holy Spirit, who wrote the Bible and teaches the Bible to Christians, follows his own words. When Christians forget his words, the Holy Spirit cannot work without discipline. How is the Bible forgotten? Christians who lack knowledge and understanding of the Bible, and who ignore its teachings to follow ideas, will not experience the Holy Spirit's work within them. How do Christians know when the Holy Spirit and Christ are present?

The only way to know if Christ is present is to examine and explore the Bible with great care. This does not mean finding random verses that a Christian or a group of Christians like, then saying this is the work of the Holy Spirit. May this never be! The misuse of the spiritual gifts is a good example, like having a woman be called as a pastor by the Holy Spirit. This is an abuse of the Holy Spirit. Why? Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 call pastors to be males only, so a woman can never be called to be a pastor by the Holy Spirit. Another example is worship. The mind should be active through spiritual songs like singing the Book of Psalms that show great sorrow with God's hope. God's grace is a resting place for his cared for people, while God's justice remains against the non-believer. Many songs make God out to be loving only with good feelings. These songs never go into great detail about God's justice and the darkness in the human soul. A last example is that every Christian can speak in tongues, as seen in Acts 2. 1 Corinthians 12:27-31 in the original language of Greek asks if all Christians can speak in tongues, then answers with no! All these examples quote the Bible. Quoting the Bible is not enough. The only way to know if Christ is present is to be careful to seek good teaching in the Bible.

The Bible explains clear signs when Christ with the Holy Spirit is present. Here are some signs.

- 1) Handle the Bible with care as Christian's study it and learn it - 1 Timothy 2:14-18
- 2) The Fruits of the Spirit are active in Christians with growth - Galatians 5:19-24
- 3) Love is more important than spiritual gifts as it is the better way - 1 Corinthians 13
- 4) Christians obey God's words with grace as strength - John 14:15
- 5) The Great Commission is the life that Christians seek for - Matthew 20:16-20
- 6) A life of sacrifice to follow the Bible with grace as strength - Romans 12:1-2
- 7) A life of putting remaining darkness to death - Romans 8:12-16

Every Christian struggles with the Bible references above. Remember, God has you close and secure in his hand, so you cannot lose your salvation. If you could lose salvation through your actions, you would have already. God's standard is having no darkness in the soul, thoughts, and action. For someone to approach God to have God accept him or her they need to be born without darkness and have no evil in speech or action from birth to death. No human fits this description. Please see Psalms 58:3 with 1 John 1 and Psalms 14:3. Christ is the only one to bring life. Through Christ, God secures His people. As Christians struggle, Christ's atonement covers Christians forever. Amen!

God, through the Bible alone, explains how to know if Christ is present. Again, look towards the Bible, not your opinions or beliefs about the Bible. The Bible explains how to know what is of God's light and what is of darkness. Look towards the Bible and follow what it says after examining it. Understand the words of the Bible. Compare the Bible to where you think Christ is present. God, through his word, will correct you if you listen. Put away your pride and own beliefs. Remember, your goal is to join in the common faith. Read pastors and teachers from the past or Confessions of Faith like the 1689 Confession that shows the difference between the darkness and the light as the Holy Spirit taught throughout the ages. Christ is present through the Bible, revealing truth to Christians in the past through the Holy Spirit, like He is today. There should be an agreement with Christians from the past and today, as the Holy Spirit is not forgetful of what He wrote in the Bible. Never fight good teaching from excellent teachers, whether in a confession or in a book. The Bible is always the ultimate standard to guide Christians throughout all ages.

What does Christ being present have to do with the Holy Spirit equipping his people? God cannot dwell with darkness. Can God use darkness for his goals? Yes, look at the cross. The cross requires the unjust killing of the innocent Christ, which the light cannot do. God's people are to be God's light on the earth. God is present in his light. No Christian or group of Christians can serve God with darkness. The Lord's discipline will come. God's desire during discipline is to restore his people to the light. The narrow path is full of God's light. Christians will go back to the narrow path as God leads each. A woman cannot be a pastor, so God does not dwell there or be present. Christians cannot abuse the spiritual gifts and expect God to work through the gifts. These things will bring about God's discipline. Christians instead walk in the light as the Bible directs you to what the light is and where the light is present. God works among his people as his people follow God's words with God's favour as strength. Remember, God's favour saves his people from darkness, then strengthens Christians to walk on the narrow path.

God equips the local gathering of Christians for what?

Matthew 28:16-20 (NASB 2020) 16 But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated to them. 17 And when they saw Him, they worshiped [Him;] but some were doubtful. 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. 19 “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

The reason the three divine persons of the one God created the church is to have humans become learners about Himself, then go out with the message of hope. Matthew 28 directs Christians to make disciples. How? God works through the words of the Bible as Christians speak the words of God as opportunities present themselves. The Holy Spirit works to wash God's chosen people out of darkness. Then this person, who has a new soul or is born again, becomes a student of the Bible in the local church. See Acts 2 with Acts 13:48 and Acts 16:14.

In the process of being saved by God and then becoming a student of God, other Christians should recognize another Christian's abilities. Be patient, young Christians. Abilities take time to show. Older Christians do not be quick to judge. Christians re-

evaluate other Christians again when it is wise. A Christian's spiritual gifts provided by the Holy Spirit can take years to show or be ready. Why does it take time? Every Christian must start as a baby, maturing into an adult. The leftover effects of being in darkness hide or limit abilities until God removes the darkness. Yes, the soul is born again, while the remaining effects of death and darkness remain. The remaining effects need to be put to death. This is called mortification. Mortification means to put to death. How are Christians to put to death these remaining effects? Listen to the common faith being taught in the Bible. To mature into an adult with great health is to conform to the Bible. Who is the Bible about? Remember who the Holy Spirit magnifies? Christ is central to the Holy Spirit. By revealing the Bible, the Holy Spirit also reveals Christ. The Bible is about Christ Jesus saving and explaining what it means to have salvation. When Christians teach the Bible well, the Holy Spirit actively works among God's people. The Holy Spirit enables people to see Christ as the Holy Spirit reveals God's thoughts as in the common faith. The common faith is what God explains to every Christian, delivered once through the Prophets and the Apostles. Christians mature while learning the common faith, so feast on the Bible. Amen! See Psalms 119:142 with John 5:39-40 and Luke 24:44, 2 Timothy 3:10-17 with Jude 1:3 and 3 John 1:3.

There should be a time for Christians to use their gifts in the local church as maturity comes. Christians, there are places to serve in the local church. Pray that God will prepare you to serve. Ask where you can serve. Elders consider where Christians that you watch over should serve in promoting the common faith in the local church. Remember, God has a mission for every Christian. Christians should share the Gospel of Christ as opportunities come and learn the Bible well in the local church. God is with you as the Holy Spirit lives inside all Christians, so do not be afraid. See 2 Timothy 1:7-8.

Christians, if you starve yourself from the Bible and good teaching, then there is a problem. You will stay an infant and young for your whole life, wondering where God is and what God is doing. God is there, but this Christian is faint and not mature enough to know when God is present. The common faith will mature Christians beyond the need to have a constant feeling of God's presence that He is there. Christians will know when God is present while having rest and relaxation. Rest and relaxation are the life of peace away from the darkness of evil and its terrible effects. The soul and mind of Christians will know God is there working. The common faith does this as it works deep into the

soul.

Local churches are the place where the Bible should be central. What does this mean? The Prophets and the Apostles moved by God wrote the 66 books of the Bible. The words in the Bible came out of God's mouth, written through human hands. God wrote words of prophecy in the Bible. See 2 Peter 1:17-21 with Ephesians 2:19-22 and Ephesians 3:4-7. Teachers and pastors in the gathering of Christians need to explain the thoughts of God that the Prophets and the Apostles wrote. This means pastors and teachers are to teach the common faith even when there is a strong disagreement with passages or their group of churches preaches contrary to the Bible. Why? Christians need to mature. Without the words of the Bible being taught, Christians will stay as infants. Spiritual gifts will not reveal themselves. A practical example is when pastors or elders or teachers cannot continue in their role, there will be no one to take their place. Another good example, the younger Christians will not know the faith well, so they cannot teach it well. This will impact churches and Christians until they lose God's presence because He is not being taught. Mishandling the Bible leads to the absence of the Holy Spirit and Christ. Yes, if Christians do not teach the common faith, then God is not present. See Jude 1:3 with Acts 2.

Teacher or Pastor, if you are unsure what the common faith is, look at the 1689 Confession of Faith. There are similar documents like the Westminster Confession of Faith. Why these documents? The Holy Spirit worked through the Prophets and Apostles and then in God's people after the Apostles. Each generation of Christians has had the Holy Spirit teaching. These documents summarize what God wrote in the Bible as the Holy Spirit revealed God's thoughts through the written words to many generations of Christians. Be humble to learn what generations of Christians have written for the next generation of Christians to learn from. Is the past always right? No. Did these Christians work out many ideas that God wrote? Yes. Teachers and pastors should be able to explore the Bible and see most of the ideas presented in these documents. These documents should provide references to the Bible. Churches should join in the common faith as God wrote it. Why? Christians can teach and summarize the Bible, whether in speaking or writing. Teachers and pastors in the past sought to write the common faith. Christians look towards the common faith found in the Bible and excellent summaries. Avoid the pride that this is my belief because this is what I think. God is not asking you to create your own opinions. This is following darkness still. God is asking you to

follow the common faith once given to the saints to equip Christians to serve with spiritual gifts. See 2 Timothy 2:14-18 with Jude 1:18 and 2 Timothy 3:13.

Besides confessions of faith, there are many other excellent tools, like books explaining passages. Another tool is asking a question, then having it answered while referencing the Bible. An example would be how many gods are there? The answer is: There is one God alone. See Isaiah 45:5. Be sure whatever tool is available that it reflects the common faith.

Local Churches should provide opportunities for gifts to be used. Along with teaching and listening to the Bible, there should be opportunities to serve God with spiritual gifts. Some Christians will use their spiritual gifts to teach the Bible. Many Christians will need other opportunities. Young Christians have many fruits of darkness still. Listen to older Christians who know the common faith and reflect the common faith in their lives. Older Christians, you have the responsibility to the common faith as seen in previous generations. The Holy Spirit should have been working in you for a longer time with many fruits as the Bible trains. If older Christians do not know the common faith and reflect fruits of darkness, God has yet to work in you. There are limited signs of God working over decades. These older Christians lack maturity. Younger Christians should find someone else to listen to. If older Christians are mature, speak with patience. Be ready with boldness to guide younger Christians. Older Christians should be able to guide younger Christians into the common faith as they explain the Bible. Through wise council and feedback, younger Christians in time should find where to serve in the local church.

Remember how the Apostle Paul guided Timothy? The Apostle Paul guided Timothy to teach and to be a pastor. See 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy.

Local churches, be wise and train Christians in the common faith. Christians, be wise and learn the common faith from teaching in the local church. When local churches teach and Christians learn, Christians will share Christ with words better, and they will know what is the common faith. To know the common faith well means God, as in the Holy Spirit, is working among you. Amen!

Questions:

- 1) Do you seek to learn the common faith when it disagrees with your ideas?
- 2) Do you seek to build God's kingdom in how God explains to do it?
- 3) Do you see God present as God's people follow the Bible?
- 4) Do you perceive when God is disciplining you when you disregard the Bible?
- 5) Are you waiting for your spiritual gifts to mature with contentment to have a use in the local church?
- 6) Mature Christians, are you encouraging and using the gifts of younger Christians in your local church?
- 7) Younger Christians, are you learning and listening to more mature Christians in your local church?
- 8) Christians, are you joining in the local church to serve God while maturing?

Notes:

- 1) 1 Corinthians 12:28-29 list gifts asking if all Christian have these gifts. Then answers with **μη**. **μη** is the Greek word for no. Please review Word Pictures in the New Testament by Archibald Thomas Robertson and similar language tools.

Summary:

God, the Holy Spirit, reveals Christ as his role. Christians should see more and more of Christ through the Bible and in their lives. To give Christ greater praise and worship, the Holy Spirit gives out spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are to promote Christ's forgiveness through words and to promote learning about God from the Bible alone. Together with the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, and the Bible teaching about God, Local Churches and Christians should join. Why? When all these parts come together, Christians share the Gospel through words, and the Bible helps them mature with spiritual gifts to serve God better.