

FOLLOW JESUS

THE PRINCE OF PEACE

A scenic view of a stone staircase path winding through lush green hills and mountains. The path is made of flat stones and leads up a grassy slope. In the background, there are more hills and mountains under a clear sky.

BY WILLIAM R. HUNT

Follow Jesus. He is the
Bread of Life
Christ
Good Shepherd
Holy Servant
Lamb of God
Light of the World
Lord
Master
Mediator
Messiah
Hope
Prince of Peace
Rock
Redeemer
True Vine
Wonderful Counselor

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Old Paths Tract Society
11298 Old Paths Lane
Shoals, IN 47581

Introduction

New Testament courage is not the absence of danger or of the feeling of fear. It is a willingness to follow Jesus and be an excellent soldier for Christ, even though we have the feeling of fear.

Jehovah-Jireh

Nathan J. Stone says the Hebrew word *Jehovah-Jireh* is the word that Abraham used when he said “God will provide” in Genesis 22:8. We see Abraham had great faith in God in a time of stress. We who are fathers know that Abraham loved Isaac. Notice verse 2: God knew also that Abraham loved Isaac. Yet in essence God said, “Abraham, give Me your greatest treasure, Isaac.” Abraham, from past experiences, knew that all he had came from God.

Job, in chapter 1 verse 21, in the time of his suffering, said, “. . . The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” It is a blessed time in a person’s life when his faith is greater than his stress or their suffering. With Abraham, I, too, want to go on record that “God will provide.” We have seen it twice in the last two days.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
God the Father.

If, Because, or Regardless

We know, through Christ's suffering, not all suffering is associated with sin (Hebrews 5:8). There are many examples in the Bible of suffering where the person's sin was not the cause, yet God allowed suffering. It is hard for many of us to understand why God allows suffering, yet we know He does. We also know He sets the boundaries, and does not forsake us, though we may not sense His presence, or understand why. Read Hebrews 11:35-39.

Someone said there are three types of Christians that follow Christ. Type 1: "If." Type 2: "Because." Type 3: "Regardless." Which type would you say are the following people who suffered for God? **Apostle Paul** in 2 Corinthians 6:4-10 and 2 Corinthians 11:23-27. **Job** in Job 1:12-20. **Three Hebrew children** in Daniel 3:14-26. **Daniel** in Daniel 6:13-21. **Those** in Hebrews 11:35-39.

God Sets the Limits

Job 1:1-22 is a word picture of a discussion between God and Satan. Satan in essence tells God, “Job only serves You because of his possessions. Take his possessions away, and Job will curse You to Your face” (see v. 11). God had told Satan that Job was a perfect and an upright man, one that revered God, and had separated himself from evil (v. 8).

God said to Satan, “Job will serve Me regardless of his possessions.”

Satan said to God, “Let me at Job’s possessions, and I will show You I am right.”

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand” (v. 12a). Please notice: God set the boundaries that Satan must work within. I urge you, place all your confidence in Jesus. You may not understand what you are going through, but Jesus sets the boundaries.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
a pardon from sin.

Never a Fool

In Job chapter 1 we read of God staking His reputation on having a relationship with man that will stand despite circumstances. Satan had accused God of building His relationship with Job on protecting and prospering Job. God set the boundaries Satan was allowed to work in. Job and his wife lost, in one day, seven sons, three daughters, 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 she asses, and unnumbered servants. Job's wife lost her financial security and, more important, her family. In Job 2:9b, Mrs. Job says to Job, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die." Could she be saying, "Job, you are a fool"? Man is never a fool for placing all of his confidence in God, and wholly following Christ.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the throne of grace.

Out of the Mouth

We know God staked His reputation on having a relationship with man that will stand despite all the loss and suffering Satan was allowed to cause. The following displays Job's response: Job had just lost everything. God recorded what Job said: ". . . Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:21, 22).

Job, sitting on an ash heap, scraping himself, says to his wife after she questions his integrity, ". . . Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" God's Word says, "In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (ch. 2:7-10).

Jesus said, "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart." You also can have this type of relation with Jesus.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
cleansing from all sin.

Rejoice!

In Job chapter 1, Job had lost all his possessions, yet maintained his integrity. In chapter 2, God records Job was still a perfect and upright man. Satan now knows Job did not serve God because of possessions. Satan said to God, "Job serves You because You keep him healthy. Job will sacrifice everything, and he will curse You to Your face, that his life may be spared or prolonged" (see Job 2:4, 5).

God again set the boundaries for Satan to work within and staked His reputation on having a relationship with man that will stand under even severe conditions. "So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown" (ch. 2:7). Remember: Job, his family, and his friends did not know about the discussion between God and Satan. Rejoice: we can have such a relationship with Jesus that will stand every test Satan brings our way.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
His peace.

Lessons from Job

In Job 1:1, God said Job was perfect. In Job 42:7, He says in essence to Eliphaz, “My servant Job has spoken those things that are right about Me.” Christians have a lot of different opinions about Job. They also have a lot of different opinions about God. I will take God’s opinion rather than my own opinion about Job.

I also want to know God’s opinion of myself every moment. We should have learned some great principles from the book of Job. 1) God sets the boundaries for Satan. 2) Sickness and troubles are not necessarily caused by sin. 3) Trials bring enlightenment from God. 4) God rewards faithfulness to Him. 5) God knows where we are and what we are saying when we feel God has deserted us. 6) We must live by faith and not by our feelings to be pleasing to God. 7) God wants us to pray for those who have wrong opinions about Him.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the path through the wilderness.

Our Great God

How loving and gentle, how mighty is our God? Read Isaiah 40:11-26. Notice the following: care for His sheep; the size of the palm of His hand; knowledge of the dust, hills, and mountains; what He compares the nations to; how He handles the sky; His thought about rulers and earthly judges and their destination. Finally, read Isaiah 40:26. Look at the sky, and see who created these things? Who brings out the stars one by one? He calls them all by name. Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing. You can place all of your confidence, trust, and care in Him. He knows your troubles and frustrations, and He cares for you. Rest in Christ.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
heaven.

Leaven and Life

Matthew 13:33 speaks about leaven, which is equivalent to our influence for the Kingdom of God. We need to be very careful that we don't pollute or destroy our influence for God. I have never heard a sermon preached on how essential our influence is to the kingdom of our Heavenly Father. It appears to me to be the greatest asset a Christian has while in this world that God can use to His glory and in building His kingdom. Preaching, teaching, singing, and witnessing fall short if our influence doesn't match our life and conduct.

It takes a long time to build a tall brick smoke stack, but it can be destroyed in seconds. It also takes time to build a good influence for Christ, but it can be destroyed in seconds. Let us live pleasing to Christ, not be an embarrassment to Christ.

Build My Church

In Matthew 16:18a, Jesus said, “. . . I will build my church.” My greatest need and the need of the church is that God the Holy Ghost would teach us how to be more wholly devoted to God and to the building of Christ’s church, to grow in God’s love, grace, wisdom, and knowledge, enabling us to point men from the kingdom of darkness unto the kingdom of God’s only begotten Son, Jesus the Christ (Colossians 1:6-13). Paul in his prayer in Ephesians 3:14-19 teaches the above is possible. God through Zechariah 4:6 reveals to us how He works: “BY MY SPIRIT.” Paul said, in 1 Thessalonians 1:5, “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost. . . .” Remember, you are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. Read Matthew 5:13-16. May we all be filled with the fullness of God.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the springs of living water.

Christ

What is the gospel of Jesus Christ? (Romans 1:16). Christ died for our sins; He was buried; and He rose again the third day. Over 500 witnesses saw Christ. (See 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.) Christians have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to His rich grace (Ephesians 1:7). Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this evil world, according to the will of God our Father (Galatians 1:4).

Christ, who is even now at the right hand of God, also maketh intercession for us (Romans 8:34). Christ is the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (ch. 1:4).

You can place all of your confidence in Him. He cares and died for you. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (ch. 11:33a). "How much better is it to get wisdom than gold!" (Proverbs 16:16a). "For wisdom is better than rubies" (ch. 8:11a). "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

The Gospel Is Good News!

What is the gospel of Jesus Christ? (Romans 1:16, 17). The gospel of Christ is the POWER OF GOD unto salvation to everyone—both Jew and Gentile—who believeth. The just shall live by faith. “. . . God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (ch. 2:16). “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in [God’s] sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (ch. 3:20) “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (v. 23). The Gospel reveals hope for all mankind. God showed that Christ is at the throne of mercy, where God’s approval is given, through faith in Christ’s blood, that any sinner may be reconciled back to God, if that person is willing, by faith, to allow Christ to be Lord and King of his life (vv. 25, 26).

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the mercy seat.

Supernatural Work

Through the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:22), mankind has access to a supernatural work of God in the soul (Romans 10:13). See the following list: redemption (1 Peter 1:18, 19); forgiveness of sin (Ephesians 1:7); peace with God (Romans 5:1); peace of God (Colossians 3:15); cleansing from all sin (1 John 1:7); deliverance from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's Son (Colossians 1:13); adoption into the family of God (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5); witness from the Holy Spirit that our sins are forgiven (Romans 8:16; Hebrews 10:15-17); an inheritance from God (Ephesians 1:11); partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4); leadership by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14); an High Priest sitting on the right hand of God making intercession for us (Hebrews 8:1; 7:21-25). Read Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33. The heavens and the earth will pass away, but His word will never pass away.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the wisdom of God.

Which Group?

“And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned” (Hebrews 11:15). Albert Barnes made these comments on verse 15: “The same thing is true of all the people of God now. If they choose to return to the world, and to engage again in all its vain pursuits; there is nothing to hinder them. There are opportunities enough. There are abundant inducements held out. There are numerous frivolous and worldly friends who would regard it as a matter of joy and triumph to have them return to vanity and folly again. . . .” Compare Hebrews 11:13-16 with Luke 8:5-15. The people in Hebrews belong in which group in Luke?

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
His cross.

Purpose

When God created man, what was God's purpose and plan for man? Man would be holy and without blame before Him in love (Ephesians 1:4, 5). It was not the will of the Father which is in heaven that any should perish (Matthew 18:14). Man was to have dominion or rule over all of God's creation pertaining to the earth (Genesis 1:26-30). Man was to trust in the Lord with all his heart, and lean not unto his own understanding; and in all of his ways to acknowledge God, and let God direct his paths (Proverbs 3:5, 6). Joshua understood God's purpose for man when he said, "Not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke" (see Joshua 23:14). Place all your confidence in what God has spoken.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the Light of the world.

From Dead to Alive

Colossians 2:13 should motivate every Christian to place all his confidence, influence, affections, and goals in and for Christ. Notice these words and their meaning: “being dead in your sins . . . having forgiven you all trespasses.” FORGIVEN = to grant forgiveness, to pardon. ALL = everything. TRESPASSES = unintentional error or willful transgression.

I knew an old man who had spent the most of his life in the hole of a prison in Missouri. The day he stepped off the bus in Pineville, Missouri, he stood and gazed a long time eastward, then to the south, next to the west, last to the north. As he looked with joy, I knew he saw something that brought pleasure to his whole being. He had been pardoned and sent home to die. He now saw a new world. When Jesus pardoned me, I, too, saw a new world. I found the pearl of great price (Matthew 13:46). All men can experience what I have experienced: a pardon.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
being fruitful for God.

Nobodies

“. . . Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called . . .” (1 Corinthians 1:26-29). The greatest advent the world has ever known had just taken place. In Mark 16:9-11, death had just lost its sting, the grave its victory. Jesus, the First-fruits from the grave, had risen. God had an announcement to be made to the world.

Whom did Jesus pick for the job? Jesus did not pick the elite or the mighty, but a woman who, as far as society was concerned, was a nobody. She was a woman from whom Jesus had cast out seven devils. Many of us are considered “nobodies” like Mary Magdalene. But God will use us if we are willing to wholly follow the Lord. Oh! the joy of being dead to selfish desires, goals, and ambitions, and serving Jesus wherever He need us.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
fellowship with God.

Even As Christ

Paul's desires for the Colossian Christians were that they ". . . Be filled with the knowledge of Jesus' will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Colossians 1:9); that they ". . . Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to [Jesus'] glorious power (vv. 10, 11a). That Paul might ". . . Present every man perfect in Christ Jesus (v. 28), he commanded them: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth (ch. 3:2). "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (vv. 12, 13). These are my desires for you.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
a life worth living.

He Is Worthy

Paul reminded the Colossians what God had done for them. “. . . Made us meet [or able] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:12-14). “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled” (v. 21). (Thayer’s Greek Definition of the word “alienated” means to be shut out from one’s fellowship and intimacy.) They were not allowed into the presence of God before Christ redeemed and reconciled them back to God. “And ye are complete in him,” in Christ (ch. 2:10a). Place all your confidence in Christ. He is worthy.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
a life worth living.

This Is Possible

A continuation of what God had done for the Colossians: “And ye are complete in him, . . . In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” (Colossians 2:10, 11). Clarity on Colossians 2:11 is given by Paul in Romans 2:29. “But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” The following is of help on Colossians 2:11: “And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God” (Deuteronomy 30:6). “. . . And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.” (Acts 15:8, 9; see ch. 2:16-18). Jesus said in Matthew 5:8a, “Blessed are the pure in heart.” God makes it possible for us to live pleasing unto Him.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
an inheritance from God.

The Saviour

The following are the Biblical views of the Saviour of the Colossians. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16, 17). "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shall thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail" (Hebrews 1:10-12). Place all of your confidence in Jesus the Christ who changes not. He upholds all things by the word of His power.

Satisfaction

In Philippians 3:8a Paul wrote, “. . . I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” Paul knew that education and religion would not satisfy the soul. He had known both. It is evident Paul was convinced one could not place any confidence in the flesh for God’s righteousness. Paul had discovered that to know God’s righteousness, it must be by faith in Christ, which would have resulted in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ which was essential.

Here’s how essential Paul considered his faith in Christ: “. . . I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I win Christ” (v. 8). There is not one question that Paul had placed all of his CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST. I urge you to follow Paul’s example—the only absolute safety.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the knowledge of God.

Big Jobs

Peter said, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34b). God has great confidence in man. He gave them big jobs: Adam and Eve were to subdue the earth. He gave Noah a big job: build a boat that will stand the flood. He gave Moses a big job: deliver two to six million people out of Egypt. He gave Paul a big job: to evangelize Corinth.

Whatever the job God gives, whether big or small, He will supply the strength, the knowledge, the ability, the grace, and all the help we need. He never leaves or forsakes us. He is always present to lead, to guide, and to direct. Oh! the joy to know Jesus has confidence in you and me. Lord, teach me how to humble myself in Your presence. Lord Jesus, I don't want to be a disappointment to You in this life.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way out
of the war zone of the world.

The Holy Spirit's Work

God, through J. Wesley Adcock, enlarged my concept and understanding of the benefits of the Holy Spirit with the following: the Holy Spirit CONVICTS (John 16:7-11). The BIRTH of the Spirit (ch. 3:5). The Holy Spirit SANCTIFIES (Titus 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2). The Holy Spirit PURIFIES THE HEART (Acts 15:8, 9). The Holy Spirit TEACHES (John 16:13-15). The Holy Spirit LEADS us (Romans 8:14). The Holy Spirit CHECKS us (Acts 16:6). The Holy Spirit SHEDS or POURS divine LOVE in our hearts (Romans 5:5). The Holy Spirit HELPS us to PRAY (Zechariah 12:10; Romans 8:26, 27). Adam Clarke's commentaries share some rich truth on these references given on the benefits of the Holy Spirit. Read Jesus' comments on the Holy Spirit in John 16:7-14.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
conquer death and hell.

Confidence

We live in a world full of activity, and very demanding in every area of life. A number of Christians, because of the demands of this world, live on a lower spiritual level than God has planned for them. Jesus warned us about times like we live in (Matthew 13:18-23). The Bible gives Christians a clear solution for victorious life. Here are a few helps: God's covenant for our day—"I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." (Hebrews 10:16b). "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; . . . And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:1, 2, 16, 17). PLACE ALL YOUR CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST.

A New Ship

“Father, glorify thy name.” (John 12:28a). The meaning in this context is, “I am willing to bear any trials; I will not shrink from any sufferings. Let Thy name be honored” (A. Barnes) This should be our goal, the cry of our heart, and our mindset. I challenge and plead with each of you to abandon the old ship “ME” owned and piloted by Mr. Self, and get on the ship “GLORY” owned by the Father, piloted by the Son, Jesus Christ, sailing under the flag, “FATHER GLORIFY THY NAME.” When you arrive at your destination you will meet “. . . A great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, [standing] before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; . . . saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. . . .” Others will be saying, “Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen” (Rev 7:9-12).

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
a good conscience.

Teach Us To Pray

“. . . Lord, teach us to pray, . . . And [Jesus] said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name . . .” (Luke 11:1, 2). May we think of this prayer as foundation blocks for people of prayer. When Jesus said “Our Father,” He taught there must be a relationship. We know the father and children have the same DNA, which shows there is a relationship of nature. Jesus said this relationship was with a Holy Father, and even His name, as well as His nature, was holy. Jesus, in John 15:1-6, taught it was possible for people to have a holy nature, when He said, “I am the vine, ye are the branches. . . .” The vine and the branches always have the same nature. Peter, in 2 Peter 1:4, wrote the same as Jesus taught: “. . . Be partakers of the divine nature. . . .” Paul taught the same in Ephesians 3:19: “. . . Be filled with all the fulness of God.” Oh, what a privilege and honor! That should increase our confidence in prayer.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the gift of the grace.

Jehovah-Jireh

“. . . Lord, teach us to pray, . . . [Jesus] said unto them, . . . Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth” (Luke 11:1, 2). In this foundational block for this devotional we find our Father has a kingdom; therefore He is a king. There are numerous benefits to being a child of a Holy King.

I will list a few: His promises never fail. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. He shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by His only begotten Son. Ministering spirits are sent forth to minister for them that are His children.

Our Father makes available to us the armor needed for any battle: our loins girded about with truth, breastplate of righteousness, our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, above all, the shield of faith.

Remember, “. . . We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12). Rejoice in His goodness. Give Him your best. He cares for you.

Jehovah-Jireh

“ . . . Lord, teach us to pray, . . . “When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, . . . Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth” (Luke 11:1, 2). In this foundational block on prayer we find we are to pray for our Father’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Many desire the heavenly Father’s will to be done, but their will is interfering with their heavenly Father’s will. Is there a Biblical solution? Yes! It is written by the prophets of imparting a different heart. “And I will give them one heart, and one way. (Jeremiah 32:39a). “And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 11:19). Both Paul and Luke confirm what is written: Paul in Romans 6:6-18, and Peter in Acts 15:9. Those who have had heart surgery as spoken by the prophets, and confirmed in Acts 15:9 with heart purity, can die to their own will, that their Father’s will be done on earth.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
all the gifts of God.

Foundation of Prayer

Think of this prayer as foundation blocks for people of prayer. “Give us day by day our daily bread” (Luke 11:3). Those words are easy to say, but to pattern our life by them is much more difficult. One way to cultivate daily dependence on God is to “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.” Our Lord said, “For without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5c).

When we grasp those words, we are beginning to learn to “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5). As we learn to depend on and trust God, we learn that God is the Fountain of all good; that His promises never fail.

As we mature spiritually, and become better established in God’s Word, we realize Hanani the seer was right when he told King Asa, “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him . . .” (2 Chronicles 16:9).

Follow Jesus. He is the Way when
there seems to be no way.

Everlasting Truth

“For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Hebrews 4:2). The consequences of failing to mix faith with the gospel are costly: “So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest” (ch. 3:11). “[God] was grieved with that generation and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.” (v. 10). Their condemnation was the effect of their refusal to believe the truth, and they refused to believe it because they loved their own ways. Notice the emphasis Jesus placed on the familiar words of faith. “. . . The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and BELIEVE the gospel” (Mark 1:15). “. . . Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein [A CHILD HAS TOTAL CONFIDENCE]” (ch. 10:15). “. . . All things are possible to him that BELIEVETH” (ch. 9:23). Abraham displayed great FAITH in God’s word. Read Genesis 15:5, 6. Ask the Lord to increase your faith in His Word. Heaven and earth will pass away, but His Word will not.

No Contamination

“For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto [Israel]: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Hebrews 4:2). Here are a few helps to keep us from facing the same consequences as Israel faced. 1) Realizing the danger of not mixing faith with the gospel. 2) “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Romans 12:2a). The idea is, every day be transformed by renewing your mind constantly. 3) Be very careful not to contaminate your mind through your ears or eyes. 4) Guard the purity God has given you. 5) Guard your conscience, that you may have a good conscience with God and your fellowman. 6) The Psalmist gave us good advice in Psalm 1:1. Walk not in the counsel of the ungodly; don’t stand or make a settled abode in the way of sinners; don’t make bosom friends of those who make a mock of sin, and scoff at goodness and good men.” 7) “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God. (Ephesians 4:30a). 8) Fight the good fight of faith. You are not going to drift into heaven.

Knowing Him

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Philippians 3:10). We have here the cry of Paul’s heart.

What is the cry of your heart? Is it to know Him as your complete Saviour? The power of His resurrection is raising you from the death of sin, into all the life of love. The fellowship of His sufferings is being crucified with Him. Made conformable to His death is so as to be dead to all things here below. If this is the cry of your heart, most certainly you are living pleasing to Christ.

If by accident you should disgrace God, I encourage you to think on Psalm 51:17: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Immediately ask for forgiveness, and continue living a life pleasing to Christ, the Son, God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit.

No Counterfeit

Virtually every genuine has a counterfeit, but a counterfeit cannot achieve the same effect. There is a wisdom of God, and there is a wisdom of this world. Here is what the Bible says about both. 1) Worldly wisdom: “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God” (1 Corinthians 1:21b). “Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” (v. 20b). “That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men” (ch. 2:5a). “This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish” (James 3:15). 2) Godly wisdom: “ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (v. 17). It has value: “Buy the truth, and sell it not” (Proverbs 23:23a); also wisdom, “Happy is the man that findeth wisdom” (ch. 3:13a). Proverbs 16:16 and 8:11 tells us that wisdom is better than gold and rubies. For around 100 years there has been a slow deterioration of power and influence on Biblical sin and holy living in Christendom. Could it be that Christendom has substituted worldly wisdom for God’s wisdom and power? The religious people of Christ’s day did.

A Loving Spirit

In 2 Kings 5:1-4 is recorded the account of a little maid (slave) for the wife of Naaman, a captain in the king of Syria's army. There is a great lesson for us to learn from this slave girl. The Syrians had raided the land of Israel, and taken her captive. Her circumstances were not created by her. There is not one doubt she had been wronged. She had been taken away from her family, her friends, and her country to be a slave. By the standards of the world she had every right to be bitter, angry, rebellious, hateful, and mean-spirited.

But like our Lord Jesus on the cross, when He looked down and said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," she had a love and concern for those who had wronged her. Because of her loving spirit, our God was able to use this little maid to bring Naaman, the leperous, proud, honorable captain in the king of Syria's army to acknowledge our God by saying, "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." If we will follow the little maid's example, we, too, will be used of God to bring Him glory.

With Us

“And the LORD was with Joseph.” (Genesis 39:2a). What were the previous circumstances in Joseph’s life that would cause our Lord to record this for our learning? “Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children,” and his brethren “hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him” (ch. 37:3a, 4b). Joseph’s brethren took him, and cast him into an empty pit (v. 24). They drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites (v. 28). The Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh’s (v. 36). “And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; . . . And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand” (ch. 39:2-4).

The choice is ours. We can let circumstances destroy our character and conduct, and become bitter and mean-spirited, or we can be like Joseph, and live such a godly life that those around us know the Lord is with us.

A Great Example

“But the LORD was with Joseph” (Genesis 39:21a). Circumstances in Joseph’s life had continued to grow worse. Not only had his brothers hated and sold Joseph, which had led him into Egypt as a slave, but in Egypt his master’s wife had pleaded with Joseph to have sex with her.

Joseph said to her, “There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he [my master] kept back any thing from me but you, because you are his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (v. 9). But she would not give up. Day after day she continued to ask Joseph to lie by her (v. 10). Finally this led to her lying to her husband about Joseph, resulting in Joseph’s being placed in prison.

“But the LORD was with Joseph.” Joseph had purposed that neither circumstances nor sinful temptations were going to stop him from honoring his God. God has given us a great example to follow.

Glory In Christ

“Thus said the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, said the LORD” (Jeremiah 9:23, 24). Paul said it this way, “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Galatians 6:14). This is a key to leading a pleasing life to our Lord God, Jesus. Oh! JOY UNSPEAKABLE NOW and through eternity!

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
stability in God.

Without Christ

Prayer is energized by helplessness. Jesus said, “For without me you can do nothing” (John 15:5c).

That’s a hard lesson for some of us to learn; therefore, many of our prayers are never activated. Jesus also said, “If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (v. 7). If we purpose in our heart to make verse 7 a reality in our life, we will realize our helplessness. It will lead us until we are able to trust in the Lord with all of our heart, and lean not unto our own understanding. The eyes of our understanding will be open, and we will begin to understand Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 1:16-23.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
peace with God.

A Remedy Is Available

What is God's plan and remedy for sin? (Read Genesis chapters 2 and 3.) "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Please notice the following key phrases. "[Eve] took . . . and did eat, . . . and [Adam] did eat" (ch. 3:6b). "And Adam and his wife hid themselves . . ." (v. 8b). "And the LORD God called unto Adam . . . WHERE ART THOU?" (v. 9).

Chapters 2 and 3 give the account of the fall of man into sin. Sin entered the nature or heart of man. But God had a plan to rescue man by neutralizing sin with its opposite, Which is to pour God's perfect love into the heart of man as an expulsive power. Read Romans 5:5 and John 15:1-17. The vine and the branch have the same nature. God's love for rebellious man is clearly revealed in God's words to Adam, "WHERE ART THOU?"

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
find the will of God.

Affection

People's heart and affections are attracted to different objects. For some it is pleasure, for others it is sports, video games, travel, TV, cats, dogs etc. The heart of the writer of Psalm 119 was on God and His word. My heart's desire is that every man's heart be like the psalmist's heart. Hear what he tells his Lord in prayer: "I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil" (v. 162). "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver" (v. 72). "Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold" (v. 127). "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (v. 11). "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (v. 105). 2 Thessalonians 2:10 tells of some people who perished because they received not the love of the truth. Oh, to be like those who love His Word! What are the affections of your heart?

Lean Souls

God uses many different instruments to reveal His attributes, power, provisions, and ways. Because of man's selfishness, many times he sees the effect of the instrument rather than God or His glory.

Numbers 11:31 tells us, "And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by [Israel's] camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits [about three feet] high upon the face of the earth." The people saw the quails, or the effect of the wind, but did not see or acknowledge God by gratitude or praise. Referring to Numbers 11:31, the writer of Psalm 106:15 said, "And [God] gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul."

Lord, open our eyes to see God, not the effect which causes leanness in our souls.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
the treasures of God.

Refined

Read Malachi 3:1-4. “He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.” The refiner purifies the silver by heating and continuing to skim off the scum until nothing but his own reflection is seen.

THIS IS MY PRAYER FOR MYSELF. I invite you to make this your prayer also. “Lord, sit as a Refiner of silver over my compassion, my affections, my desires, my goals, my emotions, my passions, my zeal, my will, my choices, my delights, my feelings.

“Oh, Lord, don’t stop the refining process until You see Your image, and only Your image, in the totality of my being.”

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
full understanding.

Pleasing

One of the devotional goals is to live pleasing to our Lord Jesus. Matthew 5:48 reveals one way to be pleasing to the Lord. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” This perfection is referring to our relationships with others. The Lord never asks anything from us but what He provides the means. Here are His instructions to us: love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to those who hate us, pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us.

Read Matthew 5:38-48. His requirements are impossible to the natural man. BUT OH, WAIT: read Romans 5:1-11. Please notice our position and provisions in these verses” justified by faith, peace with God through our Lord Jesus, access by faith into His grace, justified by Jesus’ blood. The key to Matthew 5:48 is that God’s love is poured into our hearts. When you surrender to Him all your heart and will, the Holy Spirit then can fill it with God’s love.

Wait for Good News

In Genesis we have good news and also bad news. In chapter 1 everything is good. In chapter 2 we find God as a farmer who planted a garden. In the center of the garden there were two trees: the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve were told by God not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In chapter 3 we find they both eat fruit from the forbidden tree. Death passed upon Adam and Eve. They were separated from God. It would appear Satan had outsmarted God.

BUT WAIT. The good news is that God did not abandon Adam and Eve for their disobedience. God came calling for Adam. God has good news for us today. He has not abandoned mankind because of their sin today. God is calling men not only to receive Christ, but to place their confidence in Christ. He is the Good Shepherd. Read John 10:1-11.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way
through the storms of life.

Irenaeus

Irenaeus, a second century Bishop of Lyons in Gaul, was asked this question, "For what purpose did Christ come down from heaven?" Here is Irenaeus' answer: 1) "That He might destroy sin, 2) overcome death, 3) and give life to man." What are the SCRIPTURES for Irenaeus' answer? (1) "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him [Christ], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6). (2) "He [Jesus] is not here but is risen" (Luke 24:6a). Also see 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4, 51- 57. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, . . . For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:20, 21). (3) "My sheep hear my voice, . . . And I give unto them eternal life" (John 10:27, 28a). "And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5:11, 12a). Satan was sure he had defeated God in the garden. Praise the Lord. God is the Conqueror. Satan is the loser. Christ's sheep are the winners. They don't need to be discouraged. Have confidence in Christ.

Strength and Confidence

In John 16:7 Jesus said, “. . . It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” This verse is packed with truth which should encourage every Christian. Christ is speaking about what the prophets wrote about. (1) His death (“I go away”): Isaiah 53:4-10. (2) His resurrection: Psalm 16:10; 68:18. (3) Christ COULD NOT SEND THE HOLY SPIRIT UNTIL HE WAS RESURRECTED. In John 7:39 Jesus said this about the Spirit, which those who believed in Him were going to receive. At that time the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not been raised to glory. In the future we will look at why it was expedient for us that Jesus go away. It should build our confidence in Christ, and strengthen us spiritually.

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
find God's goal for your life.

Follow Christ

TO LIVE PLEASING TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, my intention is to be faithful both to my Lord Jesus, and to you. To be pleasing to another being, we must know what he takes pleasure in, and what he hates or despises. There is very little preaching on behavior not pleasing to God. I am going to give Scriptures, and allow them to stand on their own. "Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:20, 21). "These six things doth the LORD hate: . . . A proud look, a lying tongue, . . . A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19). "For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth [divorces]" (Malachi 2:16a). "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination" (Leviticus 18:22). ". . . If ANY man will come after me, let him DENY HIMSELF, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). PLEASE NOTICE the word DAILY. Seventeen times Jesus said, "Follow me."

Pleasing Him

To be pleasing to another being, we must know what pleases him. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psalm 51:17). “. . . Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:1, 2a). “Let us draw near [to God] with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22). “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:29, 30). “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Jesus said, “Follow me” at least 17 times.

Follow Jesus. He is the way to
the city where they need no sun.

Benefits

Note the birth and benefits of Jesus. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, there came wise men to worship Christ (Matthew 2:1). An angel and a multitude of the heavenly host came praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." The angel told the shepherds who were working at their job (Luke 2:9-11).

The shepherds left their work, and went to see the Christ. After having a personal encounter with Jesus, the shepherds went and told others, and the people wondered.

Nothing has changed. Some worship, others go and tell others, and some wonder. But to all Jesus said, ". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Jesus is the Way to peace with God, the Way to a pure heart, to a clean conscience, and to a peace within the soul that is indescribable, plus much more

Follow Jesus. He is the Way to
dwelling in the love of God.

A New Creation

From my own experience I confirm what Adam Clarke wrote on 2 Corinthians 5:17. **“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature**—It is vain for a man to profess affinity to Christ according to the flesh, while he is unchanged in his heart and life, and dead in trespasses and sins; for he that is in Christ, that is, a genuine Christian, having Christ dwelling in his heart by faith, is a new creature; his old state is changed: he was a child of Satan, he is now a child of God; he was a slave of sin, and his works were death; he is now made free from sin, and has his fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. He was before full of pride and wrath; he is now meek and humble. He formerly had his portion in this life, and lived for this world alone; he now hath God for his portion, and he looks not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are eternal. Therefore, old things are passed away.” To experience being a new creature in Christ, one must at some point in life realize saving faith in Christ is a grace wrought in the soul of a sinner by the Holy Spirit. See John 3:6-8.

Help for Seekers of Salvation

What does Jesus offer to ALL people?

Answer: Forgiveness from sins

To be saved, you must acknowledge that you are a sinner. You must believe you are created by God and have enough faith to believe God's Word. Forgiveness is for "whosoever" shall confess with his mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in his heart that God has raised Jesus from the dead. The Bible says *that* person "shall be saved" (Romans 10:9). St. John confirmed this when he said, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). "Whosoever believeth in him [Jesus] should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:15). The gospel of Jesus Christ is for you!

What does Jesus have to offer to the world?

Answer: Removal of sin

If a person travels straight north until he reaches the North Pole and then he keeps moving, he will begin going south. If a person travels straight east, though, he can continue indefinitely, never meeting the west. “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:12). God will “subdue our iniquities” and cast all our sins “into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19b). God said, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:34). Not only does God remove sin and remember it no more, but God also said, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

What must I do to receive God's salvation?

Answer: Believe that God will forgive you of your sins when you ask Him.

Reader, you, too, can be saved and have a personal relationship with Christ. Here is a suggested prayer. "Lord, I know I am a sinner and need to be saved. Lord, I know Jesus arose from the dead and that His blood was shed for my sins. Lord, I'm asking You to forgive me of my sins and cleanse me. Lord, help me grow in Jesus and develop a love for Your Word. Lord, above everything, help me to keep my eyes focused on You and not on people. Lord, Your Word has confirmed that You would save me; I believe You *have* saved me. Please give me a witness from Your Spirit to my spirit that I am Your child. By faith I believe Your Word; still, my faith is weak. Lord, increase my faith. Amen."

Name and Date: _____

Scriptures for Times of Doubt

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35-39).

“. . . Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:20).

Scriptures for Times of Doubt

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

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Ephesians 1:4).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

Scriptures for Times of Doubt

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

“And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day” (John 6:37-39).

“The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah” (Psalm 46:11).

“The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower” (Psalm 18:2).

“In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears” (Psalm 18:6).

“For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock” (Psalm 27:5).

