



# Discipleship

*An investment that lasts for eternity and yields incredible rewards*

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## ABOUT THIS BOOK

I Thank God that you have shown that you are very serious about following our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by having the copy of this book on Discipleship. There are numerous titles on Faith and Blessings but very few books on this much neglected Discipleship, which our Lord commanded His church to make disciples of all Nations.

We have developed this Discipleship course for our World Christian Fellowship and it has transformed many people lives. We are very sure it will definitely transform you to be a disciple of Lord Jesus Christ.

We have complete video of this course which you can watch it free online at our YouTube Channel the link below.

(<https://www.youtube.com/user/wcflondon/playlists> - choose Discipleship course from the playlist).

I also would like to stress that this book is not for casual reading. The following is recommended for the serious seekers.

*1. Prayerfully read, Meditate and use this book as your manual for Christian life. We have provided enough margins so that you can write and make your remark.*

*2. If you can find one another person and jointly if you can do then it will be more beneficial. So that you will be able share about your struggles and challenges so that two of you can pray together.*

*3. Please do NOT read this like another book at one go. Take one title and study them and until you are able to overcome every challenges in that chapter do NOT go to the next chapter.*

*4. Make a commitment to the Lord that you will complete this book and you will become a disciple and you will make an effort to make at least one another as a disciple.*

Our prayers are with you to complete this book, in case if you are NOT serious enough to be disciple of Lord Jesus Christ then please do NOT read this.

I would like to thank God for using me as tool to bring this to you and I also thank everyone who have helped me to shape me who I am today!





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## DISCIPLESHIP

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The time you are investing to this course is not for now but for eternity. So we kindly request you to take time to read, meditate, ponder and implement in your daily lives.

As Jesus commanded us, that we need to store our treasures for eternity not here.

Matthew 6:19-21 (NKJV)

*“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

The *Great Commission* is a two-sided coin: As is the case with any banknote or currency note, which is printed on both sides to validate its legitimacy.



The Great Commission also bears a twofold mission, underscored in the following scriptures.

*Mark 16:15 – Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.*

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*Matthew 28:19 – Go and make disciples of all nations.*

These two commands are but two parts of *one* great commission. Only by careful observation and obedience can we find and fulfil God's great commission in our lives, thereby fulfilling the will of God in our lives.

### **Evangelism**

Evangelism is the obvious first step in preaching the Gospel as per Mark 16:15. This command is given to the whole body of Christ and not just to an individual. Hence, each believer in Christ should take up this task of evangelism and bring the unsaved into the Kingdom of God.

The gift of evangelism and the specific call of an evangelist are two different parts in the body of Christ. We should not get mixed up with these two. Acts 1:8 asserts that when the Holy Spirit came upon the 120 believers, they received the power to be witnesses. A witness is a person whose life testifies to what he or she has experienced serving as evidence. In the same manner, each believer in Christ Jesus who has received the Holy Spirit is equipped to be a witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 4:11 states that the gifts were given by the grace of Christ for the equipping of the believers/saints. Hence, do *not* confuse the gift of evangelism with witnessing.

An evangelist has a wider role in the body of Christ, whereas a believer is called to be a witness wherever he or she is – home, workplace, or any other place becomes the mission field and the believer a missionary.

Ephesians 4:7–16 instructs on the fivefold ministry within the body of Christ for its complete growth. Any person recently saved if not cared for properly

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and taught the Word of God will end up being far worse than before. Jesus calls this as “twice lost.”

As Matthew 23:15 (NIV) states:

*Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are.*

We should not look at evangelism or the evangelist as the world sees but rather go back and check what the scripture says about it.

Jesus called the evangelists as “fishers of men.” He called out to the apostles and said, “now on I will make you fishers of men.”

Fishes are to be caught from the rivers or from the sea. Once the person has been converted, it is required that the convert be planted in a local church to be built up spiritually as a disciple. This was the practice of the apostles, but not so the case with the modern-day evangelists.

The fivefold ministries mentioned in Ephesians 4:11

*Apostles,*

*Prophets,*

*Evangelists,*

*Pastors and Teachers*

are listed in their order of priority in 1 Corinthians 12:28. There we are told that “God has appointed in the church: first apostles, second

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prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing (that refers to evangelists), and then administrations (literally, ‘those who steer the ships’, referring to shepherds/pastors).”

## **Making Disciples**

Matthew 28:19 clearly admonishes that we are to make disciples in every nation of the world. (‘Nations’ in the Bible generally refers to people groups. In each nation, there could be several different people groups.) Evangelism gets completed only when the convert has been equipped and built up as a disciple, completing the plan of God. It is therefore mandatory that each convert be converted as a disciple. However, in the present era, a diluted gospel is being preached across the world, forfeiting the proclamation of the true authentic Gospel.

As the following passages ascertain:

*In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” (Matthew 3:1–2, NIV)*

John the Baptist preached saying “repent the kingdom of God is at hand.”

*From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” (Matthew 4:17, NIV)*

Jesus also preached the same message. The first promise in the New Testament is found in Matthew 1:21: *She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because **he will save his people from their sins***. Firstly, you need to repent and be saved from your sins. Secondly, you need to believe in the Lord Jesus as the Saviour.

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The preaching of the early church conformed to Word of the Lord, just as we see in the case of Peter on the day of Pentecost:

*Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."  
(Acts 2:38–39, NKJV)*

Following that, Paul preached in Ephesus for three years, as we see in Acts 20:21 (NKJV): *testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

If you have not truly repented of your sins and are *not* saved from your sins, then you are NOT a true believer. This is why today we have so many so-called converts and counterfeit believers who are ambiguous in their standings. Their belief is disputed, without repentance or a change of heart from their evil ways, however still calling themselves believers.

Let us look at what Luke 15:7 and 10 (NKJV) point to:

*I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*

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Take a fresh glimpse at the example of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1– 10:

*Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.” (v8) And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham.” (v9)*

In the above passage, Jesus proclaims salvation over the household of Zacchaeus only after his repentance, followed by restitution. Hence, following repentance that brings about true conversion, the saved person must be directed towards discipleship for God’s plan and purpose to unveil in his or her life. Evangelism that does not lead to discipleship is an incomplete job.

## **Water Baptism**

Once the person is converted, he or she needs to undergo water baptism. Water baptism is the first and basic requirement of a new believer. Matthew 28:19 (*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*) and Mark 16:16 (*He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned*) clearly state the necessity of water baptism. In Acts chapter 2, on the day of Pentecost, Peter clearly mentions the need for the baptism. Also, in John 3:5, Jesus points out that no one can enter into heaven unless they are born of water and Spirit. (If you need a detailed article on baptism, please write to me for a soft or hard copy on the subject of water baptism.) Thereafter, he or she must follow Jesus daily in every aspect of life as His disciple.

## **The Conditions of Discipleship**

In Luke 14: 25–35, we find the conditions of discipleship elaborated very clearly.

In this passage, Jesus lays the conditions of being a disciple along with a parable. This parable talks about how important it is to analyse/assess matters before anything could go out of control, as in the case of a building cost estimation for instance. Jesus wants us to count the cost before building a tower. In the same way, to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, you need to count the cost.

There are three conditions mentioned in this passage by Jesus to be a disciple:

1. Cut off from relationships that could be a stumbling block to following Jesus (v26)
2. Be willing to deny oneself, daily (v27)
3. Give up all material possessions (v33)

*Luke 14:26 – If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.*

### **1. Cutting off from relationships**

The first condition requires that we cut off every natural affinity towards any relationship. Jesus should be given first priority over any other relationship in our life. “Hate” does not mean leaving our natural relationships; we need to respect and honour our parents and other relations. And we are to love God more than anything else. When we do that, God pours out his divine love upon us, with which we will be able to love others around us as they are.



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Luke 14:26, in New Living Bible, puts it as thus,

*“If you want to be my disciple, you must **hate everyone else by comparison**—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple.*

There are many people whom I personally know who were called by God for His ministry but were unable to fulfil their calling because of their parents or their spouse, and in some cases, their children.

It is pertinent that we take Jesus as our role model at all times; Jesus obeyed his mother and looked after his mother and siblings even in the short span of time while He was on this earth. But when he came to attend the wedding in Galilee, he distanced himself by asking his mother Mary, “woman, what do I have to do with this?” (John 2:4).

When it came to handling his relationship with his brothers, Jesus spoke to Peter in a loving way. But when Peter asked Jesus not go to the cross, Jesus rebuked him saying, “*Satan get behind me.*” Jesus told Peter, “*Simon son of Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven has revealed them to you,*” the very next moment he had been rebuked for the things that were not from God (Matthew 16:13–23). This same Jesus, after his resurrection, comes back to Peter and restores him and puts him in charge of his church.

Furthermore, Jesus’ mission statement can be summed up in a sentence from John 6:38, “*for I have come down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.*” Jesus had only one motive and only one aim, which was to do the will of His Father who sent him. Such is what Jesus also expects from His disciples.

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If we could echo the psalmist's realisation, "*Whom have I in heaven, Lord, but Thee? And besides Thee I desire nothing on earth*" (Psalms 73:25), then we have truly fulfilled the first condition of discipleship.

John 14:21 very clearly states that *if we love him we will keep his commandments*. Those who love God are given a prominent and important role to play in the Kingdom of God.

## **2. Carrying the cross and hating your own life**

Luke 14:27 – *And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.*

Here, carrying the cross does not imply literally carrying one like Jesus did. Rather, it talks about denying your self-will – doing your own will or the will of God.

The Adamic nature present in each one of us craves for the pleasures of this world, but the scripture demands that we do the will of God. Our self-life is the main enemy of the life of Christ, which the Bible calls "the flesh." The flesh is a storehouse of evil lusts within us that tempt us to do our own will at all times – to seek our own gain, our own honour, our own pleasure, our own way, and so on.

This criterion is highlighted in Luke 9:23 as thus: "*Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and **take up his cross daily**, and follow Me.'*" Jesus, with the word "daily," very clearly states that it takes only 24 hours for one to become a heart hardened person from a believer. Looking closely at Hebrews 3:13, it is understood that we could be hardened in our hearts in just 24 hours. We will, however, look this up in detail at a later part of the course.

### **3. Giving up all your possessions**

Luke 14:33 – *So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.*

Considering that we own things, we do not possess anything on our own however. The wonderful biblical word is “stewardship,” which means you do not own them but you have the responsibility and accountability of the things you have got.

We see an illustration of this in the life of Abraham. God comes to Abraham when he is 75 years old and gives him a word that he will have son. At 75, it is unlikely for anyone to have a child. Following that, for the next 24 years nothing happens in his life. Just think for a moment how it would have been for Abraham. Then, when he was 99 years, God comes to him again and says that he would have a son. Now the likelihood of this coming to pass changes from very difficult to quite impossible; however, he does have a son the following year. Abraham now very clearly understands that it is not his effort or abilities that has brought forth this child.

Isaac was his son – his possession. Then, one day, God asks him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. And Abraham lays Isaac on the altar and was ready to slay him. But God intervenes and tells him that the sacrifice is not necessary as he has proved his willingness to obey Him (Genesis 22). After that, Abraham realises that even though he has Isaac in his house, he no longer possesses him as his own for Isaac now belongs to God.

We can take Moses as another example: he flees Egypt after killing an Egyptian and he stays at his father-in-law’s for 40 years. At this time, God meets with him in a burning bush, as we see in Exodus chapter 3. God asks Moses, “what is in your hand”; and he replies, “it’s a rod.” God asks him to drop it and he drops the rod as per God’s command and it

becomes a snake. God commands him to pick it up from its tail and it again becomes a rod. After this incident, the rod is called as God's rod in the scripture – never as Moses' rod (Exodus 4:20).

So when you drop whatever you have in your hands at the altar, God turns it into a wonderful gift for His glory. That rod was sufficient for the entire 3 million people to go through the 40 years of wilderness journey!

This is what it means to give up all our possessions. All that we have must be laid on the altar and given up to God. Realise that the house you live and the car you drive belong to God and that he has allowed you to stay and drive for free!

Just make small quick checklist:

- a) Bank account,
- b) Property (house, office etc.)
- c) Job or business,
- d) Qualifications,
- e) Gifts and talents,
- f) Spouse (wife or husband) and
- g) Children

And everything else that you value on this earth has to be laid down all on the altar of God if you want to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Only then can we love God with all of our heart. This is the “pure heart” that Jesus is talking about in Matthew 5:8.

It is just not enough to have a clean conscience. A clean conscience only means that we have given up every known sin. A pure heart means that we have given up everything!

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God does not want us to wait for very many years after our sins are forgiven to understand what discipleship actually costs. This is the reason why Jesus talks about the cost of discipleship as soon as the multitudes come up to Him. In addition, He also says that a believer who is unwilling to be a disciple is as useless to God as salt is that has lost its savour (Luke 14:35).

### **The Way to Discipleship**

Jesus commands us in Matthew 28:20 that the disciples must be taught to obey and practise every single command given by our Lord. In this way, you can be sure that you are His disciple. From His teachings in Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7, we understand that it is imperative that we not only read His commands but also obey them.

*James 1:22–25 (NLT) But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.*

***A disciple must be a learner and a follower before teaching others.***

What really bothers me is that the lives of multitudes of people who call themselves as born-again Christians do not reflect Christ in any way. This is mainly because the Church has failed to convert the believers into disciples.

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Having seen above who can or cannot be Jesus' disciple, let's see how the world will come to know *if we are His disciple*. Jesus Himself has explained it as thus in John 13:35 (NKJV): *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*. Does the life of each and every Christian in our world today conform to this verse? Christian life does not just encompass Bible reading, attending church service, speaking in tongues, mountain-moving faith, paying tithes, singing and dancing, running mega events for God and so on. See how far we have drifted away from the original message that Jesus proclaimed.

You are identified as Jesus' disciple only by your fervent love for one another. The evangelistic meeting that brings people to Christ must lead on to establishing a church in that locality, where the disciples can share their love for one another.

How did Jesus and His apostles conduct their ministry? They fed the multitudes and then they taught them the Word of God and made sure that they did follow the doctrines. John chapter 6 is the one I often refer to for most of my sermons; I suppose had Jesus made a DVD/CD of it, not many would buy it or watch online!

Jesus started with 5,000 men (John 6:2) and was left with only 11 disciples (John 6:70). However, there were multitudes that ate the bread and fish, but when asked to obey the Word, they found it all too much to cope with and left (John 6:60 and 66). Let us not be too absorbed with why they did not do it but get our acts together NOW!

We are more concerned about the *quantity* of our church rather than its *quality*. If we assess the ministry of Jesus Christ in worldly terms, it could be declared a huge failure because He could make only 11 disciples in His 3.5-year ministry. But do just remember that those 11 people changed the world forever!

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This study is not about behaviour modification like Alcohol, Anonymous etc. It's a Spiritual transformation! God will help you with HIS Grace!

*"The way to life is narrow and few are those who find it." — Are you willing to take this way?*

On a serious note, if you are NOT serious enough, then please drop out of this course and do NOT continue any further!

God is looking for people who take HIM and HIS words seriously and obey HIS commandments.

So do WE!!

*Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion?*

*Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly. Matthew 11:28–30 (MSG)*

***Welcome to the family of God!!***



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## **Notes**

## REPENTANCE

*A Condition Necessary for Salvation from Sin*

***“Repentance is a threefold action. In the understanding, it means knowledge of sin. In the feelings, it means pain and grief. And in the will, it means a change of mind.” — Eric Sauer***

### **What is the true meaning of repentance?**

As per the Word of God, *repentance towards God* is the primary and fundamental principle required to establishing a connection between man and God initiating fellowship.

*Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God. (Hebrews 6:1, NKJV)*

Our journey in Christ begins with repentance, which also is an ongoing process – not just a one-off event – that enables us to walk with HIM continually. Repentance is a change to become more like Christ each day in every aspect of our life, in relationships, in behaviour, in speech and in action, whether people see us or not.



Throughout the Scripture, we see God calling out to His people through His prophets asking them to repent. Here's a snippet:

*Yet the Lord testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets." (2 King 17:13, NKJV)*

*And the Lord has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear. They said, "Repent now everyone of his evil way and his evil doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord has given to you and your fathers forever and ever." (Jeremiah 25:4-5, NKJV)*

*I have also sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, "Turn now everyone from his evil way, amend your doings, and do not go after other gods to serve them; then you will dwell in the land which I have given you and your fathers." But you have not inclined your ear, nor obeyed Me. (Jeremiah 35:15, NKJV)*

*"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord God. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin." (Ezekiel 18:30, NKJV)*

*“Repent now everyone of his evil way and his evil doing ...”  
– summarizes the message of the Old Testament prophets.*

Let us now look at their New Testament counterparts:

John the Baptist proclaimed this message after the 430-year-long silence of God:

*And saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand  
(Matthew 3:2, NKJV)*

And Jesus too:

*From that time Jesus began to preach and to say,  
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”  
(Matthew 4:17, NKJV)*

*Unless you repent you will all likewise perish. (Luke 13:3,  
NKJV)*

He sent his apostles to preach that people should repent:

*So they went out and preached that people should repent  
(Mark 6:12, NKJV)*

On his first gospel sermon, Peter, on the day of Pentecost, preached:

*Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you  
be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission  
of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.  
(Acts 2:38, NKJV)*

Paul’s words were:

*Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30, NKJV)*

*Testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:21, NKJV)*

After the resurrection of our Lord Jesus:

*“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.” (Revelation 3:19, NKJV)*

Jesus, after His resurrection, appeared to Apostle John and through him wrote letters to 7 churches, which you will find in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. Of the 7 churches, except for Smyrna and Philadelphia, Jesus commanded all the other 5 churches to “repent.”

Also, all who study the Bible agree that repentance is fundamental and also foundational to Bible teaching. Hence, the purpose of this lesson is to study what the Bible says about repentance.

*What is repentance and why is it important in our life?* – At this juncture, please be aware that not only non-Christians but we, as Christians, also need to repent when we sin. This is a lesson that should be heeded by everyone. Let’s now look at it in detail.

### **The Meaning of Repentance**

Repentance is a “**change of mind**” – a decision, a choice, a determination of the heart, a deliberate exercise of the will – in which one determines to act differently in the future than he or she has in the past. It is a

process that begins with conviction. Conviction is being sorry or broken over our sinful nature.

*For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. (2 Corinthians 7:10, NKJV)*

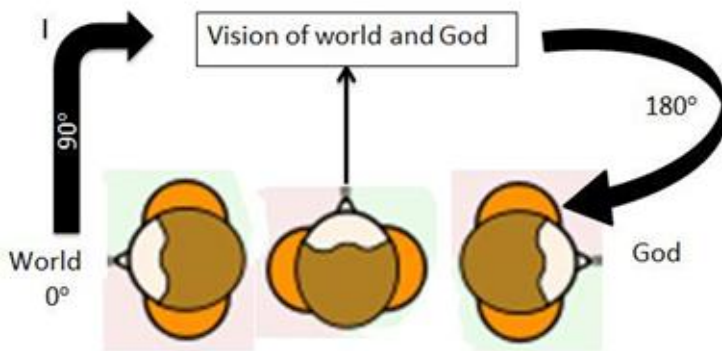
Also, you may read from Psalm 51:1–12.

*Conviction leads to confession.*

Confession is having the same attitude as God towards your sin.

*Confession leads to change.*

A continual change takes place so that Christ-like character is reflected in our life each day!! Thus, this change needs to happen in the root so that the tree that is seen aboveground is good. We are not talking about the superficial goodness, which was what practiced under the Old Covenant. It is not about trimming hedges but uprooting sin from the heart and planting the new seed of God in you so that people could see your goodness and glorify God! Thus, repentance is an act of turning away from your sin and turning to Christ who takes away your sin.



As Ephesians 2:1 says, while we were dead in trespasses, Christ made us alive. We were dead and going away from God towards the world and its lusts. But when we hear the call of God, we turn away from our wicked ways and turn towards HIM. Unfortunately, not many of the so-called Christians take the 180-degree turn from sin towards God, but just a mere 90-degree turn. So they could see both God and world and lust after the worldly pleasures. Your turn must be 180 degrees; otherwise, you will be staying where you are, neither walking towards God nor away from sin. This is the reason why many people do not overcome their sinful nature and just stay where they are despite being Christians say for over 20 or 30 years. As mentioned earlier, repentance is turning away from worldly pleasures and walking towards God. This is not only the first step but also an ongoing process every day of your life.

### **The Means of Repentance**

There are not many means (ways) to repentance, at least not more than one – Jesus is the only way to enter the Kingdom of God.

*“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. (John 10:1, NKJV)*

The above verse clearly states that there would be many who will try to enter through some other means! But Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6) and HE will not accept anyone entering through any other way! Brutally speaking, Jesus is *the* way or *no* way at all!



## **True and False Repentance**

There are many in the world today who are deceived by Satan thinking that they have repented and that they can justify their standing without true repentance. Let's now see a few examples in the Scripture.

The following are those who said, "*I have sinned*":

**Pharaoh** – Exodus 9:27

**Balaam** – Numbers 22:34

**Achan** – Joshua 7:20

**King Saul** – 1 Samuel 15:24–30 Even though Saul acknowledges that he had sinned, he did not want others to know about it.

**King Ahab** – 1 Kings 21:27–29 (NKJV):

*So it was, when Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning. And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, "See how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house."*

Ahab was only afraid of God; he did not truly repent.

**Judas Iscariot** – Matthew 27:3–5 (NLT)

*When Judas, who had betrayed him, realized that Jesus had been condemned to die, he was filled with remorse. So he took the thirty pieces of silver back to the leading priests and the elders. “I have sinned,” he declared, “for I have betrayed an innocent man.” “What do we care?” they retorted. “That’s your problem.” Then Judas threw the silver coins down in the Temple and went out and hanged himself.*

Judas was very sorry and he even went and confessed to the priest, but he did not repent and go back to the Lord.

**King David** – 1 Samuel 12:1–15

David confessed saying that he sinned against the Lord and he repented (v13). He wrote Psalm 51, a wonderful example of true repentance (Psalm 51:1,2,3,7,10,11).

**Apostle Peter** – Matthew 26:31–35, Jesus predicts Peter’s denial; Matthew 26:69–75, Peter’s denial and his repentance.

Peter denied Lord Jesus three times; yet, he repented and turned to the Lord

*Matthew 26:75: And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times”. So he went out and wept bitterly.*

And Jesus restored him after His resurrection.

As we have seen previously (in Eric Sauer's words), true repentance comprises your whole personality – your emotions, your will, and your heart.

## **What Precedes Repentance**

### **1) Acknowledging sin**

*I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin. (Psalm 38:18, NIV)*

*He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. (Proverbs 28:13, NKJV)*

*What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one." (Romans 3:9–10, NASB)*

One of the greatest theologians in history, St. Augustine (4th century), of the present-day Algeria, ranks next to Apostle Paul in my opinion. St. Augustine and his contemporary, a theologian named Pelagius, who hailed from Britain and lived in Rome, contradicted each other on acknowledging sin and the grace of God. Inasmuch as Pelagius' work entitled *Nature* was based on inborn human ability, not God's grace, to attain salvation, a lifelong battle ensued between St. Augustine and Pelagius and Pelagius' disciple Caelestius.

**Pelagianism:** *Pelagianism* stressed complete human autonomy and freedom of the will before God. Pelagius posited three elements to any moral action:

- that we must be able to do it (i.e., possibility),

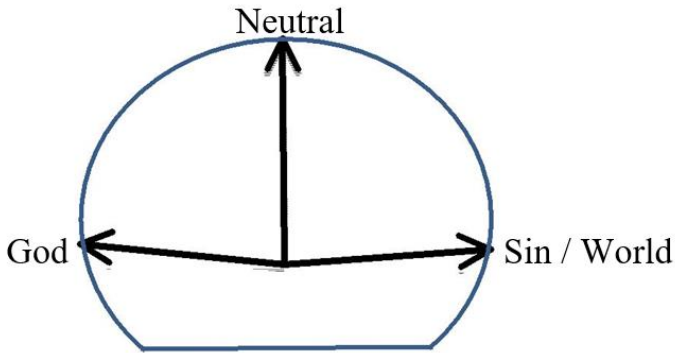
- that we must be willing to do it (i.e., will), and
- that the action must be carried out (i.e., action).

**St. Augustine's Anthropology – Original Sin:** Ever since Adam and Eve disobeyed God, we were born in sin and darkness. Nothing good dwells in us. We are self-loving and self-seeking in worldly pleasures. We were dead. What we need is resurrection rather than doing well on our own.

St. Augustine wrote:

*“Urged to reflect upon myself, I entered under your guidance into the inmost depth of my soul. I was able to do so because you were my helper. On entering into myself I saw, as it were with the eye of the soul, what was beyond the eye of the soul, beyond my spirit: in your immutable light. It was not the ordinary light perceptible to all flesh, nor was it merely something of greater magnitude but still essentially akin, shining more clearly and diffusing itself everywhere by its intensity. No, it was something entirely distinct, something altogether different from all these things; and it did not rest above my mind as oil on the surface of water, nor was it above me as heaven is above earth. This light was above me because it had made me; I was below it because I was created by it. He who has come to know the truth knows this light ...*

*I sought a way to gain the strength, which I needed to enjoy you. But I did not find it until I embraced the mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who is above all, God blessed forever. He was calling me and saying: I am the way of truth, I am the life. He was offering the food, which I lacked the strength to take, the food he had mingled with our flesh. For the Word became flesh, that your wisdom, by which you created all things, might provide milk for us children.”*



**A Comparison:** As you can see in the figure below, there does not really exist a neutral position, for being neutral does not imply freedom, which the world thinks otherwise. Freedom is doing what you want to do and not regretting over your acts in your lifetime.

Pelagius' point is that we are neutral and we either choose to go towards God and do good or we choose to lust after the world and do evil, whereas Augustine very clearly saw the need for man to be resurrected and understood the fact that he was in bondage to sin and to be freed he needs the grace of God.

*A Condition Necessary for Salvation from Sin*

*But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. (Romans 6:17, NKJV)*

## 2) *Feeling Sorry*

Feeling sorry for your sins is an essential part to receive forgiveness. The sorry of the world does not produce repentance, but Godly sorrow does. When Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph, his immediate reaction was, "how could I sin against God?"

**All our sins are against God**; therefore, Godly sorrow allows us to seek true repentance.

*But I confess my sins; I am deeply sorry for what I have done. (Psalm 38:18, NLT)*

*That is why the Lord says, "Turn to me now, while there is time. Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Don't tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead." Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish. (Joel 2:12-13, NLT)*

*Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:4, NKJV)*

*For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death. (2 Corinthians 7:10, NLT)*

The following was written to the believers in Jerusalem by their Pastor James; hence, it is very much applicable to you and me.

*Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. (James 4:8–9, NLT)*

### **3) Giving Up Self-will**

Most of us flaunt an “I-am-always-right” attitude. First and foremost, give this up; secondly, choose to do the will of God – whatever it may cost you – go down on your knees either privately or publicly, even if it is a mighty blow to your ego. In Luke chapter 15, the prodigal son, literally after losing everything in his life – his status, money, friends, and livelihood – returned to his father. When we say sorry and ask for forgiveness, God knows our true feelings behind it. As we read in Luke 15, even before the prodigal son could finish his apology speech, the father accepted him as his son.

### **4) Confession**

Generally speaking, confession implies saying something from your mouth. With respect to Christian life, confession is agreeing with God about what He says and uttering the same. Confession applies both to the promises of God and to His judgments. If there is a promise specific to your situation, within the right context (I am not advocating here the confess-and-possess doctrine), you can say it back to God claiming it. In the same way, if God calls some aspects of your life, attitude, and behaviour as sin, then agree with Him and respond to Him with what he



intends to hear from you (that it is sin). If you try to dub sin as a mistake, slip-up, or any other decent socially acceptable term, then you are not really confessing. There is no redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ for mistakes or slip-ups; only confessed sins are forgiven.

Moreover, there is *one sin* that we all need to be saved from before any others – the sin of *unbelief*. John 16:9, “*of sin, because they do not believe in Me;*” (NKJV). Not believing in Jesus Christ is the biggest sin. This precedes all other sins.

*To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence. (Ephesians 1:6–8, NKJV)*

All our past, present, and future sins are forgiven on a judicial basis; this is the judicial or positional forgiveness that God gives us upon receiving Jesus Christ as our saviour, meaning that we will not suffer eternal judgment for our sins. However, this does not mean that our present and future sins are automatically forgiven at the time of receiving Jesus as our saviour but that the provision (or position) for the present and future is available. When someone takes a position of faith on the redemption of Jesus, the first event that follows is that his or her past sins are forgiven (*justified*). Paul explains this in Romans 3:25 where he makes it clear that it is for the past sins only. At the same time, we can confess and ask forgiveness for any future sins (1 John 1:9) based on the same redemption (*sanctification*) that Jesus offers.

Jesus spoke concerning sins as thus in the Sermon on the Mount:

*Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23–24, NKJV)*

Our relationship with God is intact but our fellowship with God gets disturbed when we sin. Say, for instance, my son does something that is not right and he hardens his heart, because of which our relationship suffers. Though in fact he is my son, the relationship I share with him takes a hit. So to make that right, he needs to confess his sins and make the relationship going. In the same way, when we go against God, please be aware that God is always right and that when we go to Him, HE will forgive us.

*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8–9, NKJV)*

A proper fellowship with God cannot be in place with unconfessed sins in our lives. Therefore, we need to confess our sins to God as soon as we are aware that we have sinned in order to maintain the close fellowship with God. Similarly, we must confess our sins to others when we have sinned against them. While all sin is against God, without reconciling with the person we have wronged we cannot really get back to being in fellowship with God.

Lastly, to put it in perspective, why do we wash ourselves daily? Or for that matter, brush our teeth? It is so that we cleanse our body from all the physical or biological impurities; or else, we might run into health problems. In the same way, since we live in this world, we do get contaminated with the worldly system and also commit sins knowingly or unknowingly in our soul. Just as we cleanse our physical body, our soul and spirit need periodic cleansing as well.

To sum up all the four categories, this is what we do; on God's part, He forgives us only on the basis of what Jesus has done on the cross.

### **The Evidence of True Repentance – The Fruits**

Repentance is an inward matter; once you are changed from within, you will be able to bear fruits.

*Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance. (Matthew 3:8, NKJV)*

The fruit of repentance must be evident in your life once you have repented. Many say they have repented but still continue to live a dubious life. May be they don't get angry with their spouse or children when someone is around; may be they don't speak ill of others publicly, however practising all these habitually in secret. This is not true repentance.

This is like to quickly nip off the bad fruits that show up, for example, anger, gossip, addiction, bad habits, and so on. But what God expects is a change in the root. This is why John the Baptist says that the axe will be on the root of the tree.

You need to identify the root cause for the anger or the tendency to gossip and remove it from your heart – from the root. There’s no point in window-dressing, for eventually the bad fruit will show up. But when you uproot it and plant a good tree, then good fruits will appear. See, for instance, in Luke 19:1–10, Zacchaeus is convicted of his sins and he repents, and he is immediately ready to restore the money – it may be a huge loss but he still says, “I will give fourfold to whom I have cheated also I will give away half of my possession.”

### **Ongoing Repentance**



As in the picture, there are many layers to our being. Ongoing repentance is actually the sanctification process one enters into after being saved. We could have many secret sins in our heart, knowingly or unknowingly buried deep within; unless we shed those off our heart, like removing each layer of the

onion one at a time, true sanctification may not unfold.

As we come closer to God each day, we will come to the realisation that there are certain areas in our life that we need to let go. For instance, earlier I could just tell a white lie and walk away with my conscience not bothering me at all; however, that is so not the case now. Hence, it is essential that we peel off each and every layer of our being, for as we undergo emptiness we allow God’s fullness to take over our being.

**Initial Repentance at Salvation:**

*Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)*

*"I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." (Luke 15:7)*

*When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life." (Acts 11:18)*

**Ongoing Repentance in the Christian Life:**

*I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. (2 Corinthians 7:9–10)*

Thus, every time we go against God, we need to repent. Paul preached over 3 years to the church at Ephesus and he penned the wonderful letter of Ephesians with amazing spiritual truth. When the church at

Ephesus received the Word of God, their eyes were opened and they tore down the statue of goddess Diana and publicly burnt all the books and other valuables related to the deity. However, as time progressed, they lost their first love for God. Jesus writes a letter here to this church that has drifted away from its original course:

*“But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.” (Revelation 2:4–5)*

*“So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.” (Revelation 3:3)*

Hence, it is highly important that we keep a watch over ourselves and look for Christ’s return – the only way to keep us focused on Him is to repent of our sins on a regular basis.

## **Principal Application**

### ***Principal Application - Ongoing Repentance and Discovery of Self***

Say, for instance, you enter a dark room holding just a lit candle. What you see in this light is a vague picture of the mess around. While the light of a 60-watt bulb could enable you to see fairly what the mess is all about, that of a 200-watt bulb may help you spot the majority of the filth and mess, enhancing the clean up. However, nothing could beat the brightness of a 2000-watt focus lamp that could even spot the grit or sand hiding between the threads of a carpet. Now apply the same

phenomenon to your life in Christ where drawing closer to God each day will throw an intensifying light on all the unwanted things/areas in your life that you could get rid of or rectify.

As an illustration, let us apply this principle in the life of Apostle Paul, progressing through the scriptures:

- Paul calls himself as a Jew of Jews; of the tribe of Benjamin; and circumcised on the eighth day; concerning law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning righteousness, **“blameless”** (Philippians 3:5–6)
  
- AD 37–40: Paul on his way to persecute the Christians in Damascus and has just been a witness and instrumental in killing Stephen  
Acts 7
  
- AD 55–57: Paul writes the letter to Corinthians  
As **“least of apostles”**  
1 Corinthians 15:9
  
- AD 62: Paul writes to Ephesians  
As **“least of saints”**  
Ephesians 3:8
  
- AD 64–65: Paul writes his last letter to young Timothy  
As **“chief of sinners”**  
1 Timothy 1:15

Now can you see how the layers of onion (self) in Paul's life were peeled off – not that he was committing sin, but it helped him to draw closer to God and see himself in His light that there is nothing good in him apart from God!

As we progress in our Christian life, if we are able to identify with Paul, we truly discover ourselves, which leads to greater sanctification and holiness in our life. We must remember that the call of God is, 'Be ye holy as I am Holy'. The target is God's holiness.

### **The Stages of Repentance**

The initial repentance is a crisis experience one enters into, whereby having put faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ one enters into new life. What happens at this stage is that the believer is **delivered from the penalty of all of his past sins** and this is called as **Justification**. However, he still has within him the sinful nature and is likely to sin giving into temptation. Therefore, ongoing repentance is very vital which the New Testament calls as **Sanctification**. What sanctification does is to **deliver the believer from the power of sin**. There is a third stage that happens when either the believer dies or the Lord comes and the believer enters into glory. The New Testament calls this as **Glorification** and this brings in the final deliverance from the **presence of sin** itself.



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<b>Stage</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Delivered from</b>
1	<i>Initial repentance</i>	<i>Justification</i>	<i>Penalty of sin</i>
2	<i>Ongoing repentance</i>	<i>Sanctification</i>	<i>Power of sin</i>
3	<i>Home call or rapture</i>	<i>Glorification</i>	<i>Presence of sin</i>

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Thus, eventually, it will no longer be a decision but a desire to please the *One* who loves you!

The early church received constant messages on repentance from the apostles of Jesus Christ so that you can benefit from them.

### **Further Reading**

- 1) Leviticus 26:40, 1 Kings 8:47; 2 Chronicles 6:24–39, 7:14; Psalm 32:5; Jeremiah 3:12f, 8:4–6, 5:3, 44:4–5; Jonah 3:8–10; Amos 4:6–11; Luke 15:18–21, 17:3–4; Acts 19:18; James 5:16; 1 John 1:9.
- 2) Psalm 34:18, 51:17, 31:10; Isaiah 57:15, 66:2, 22:12–14; Job 42:6; Jeremiah 31:19, 5:3, 6:26, Jonah 3:5–8; Matthew 26:75, 11:20; 2 Chronicles 34:27; Ezra 10:1.
- 3) Reference to repentance in Acts: 2:38, 3:19, 5:31, 8:22, 11:18, 13:24, 17:30, 20:21, 26:20.

**Notes**

## SIN

***“Men tell us in these days that sin is what you think it is. Well, it is not. Sin is what God thinks it is. You may think according to your own conscience. God thinks according to His.” —John G. Lake***

### ***What is sin?***

#### **THE DEFINITION OF SIN**

The word comes from an old English archery term meaning “to miss the mark.” Scripturally, sin is defined as coming short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), for all have sinned and fall short of God’s glory; that is, missing the mark of being in the glory that God wants us to be in. God commands us,

“Be holy as I am Holy,” which is the barometer to measure sin with. The glory of God that is revealed in us is directly proportional to the extent of Godlikeness reflected in our nature – thus, the greater the miss and the greater the sin, the lesser the image of God manifest in us. How does one come short of the glory of God? Let us look at some specific definitions of sin in the following section.



## **The Nature of Sin**

First of all sin is disobedience to the law.

*Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. 1 John 3:4 (NKJV)*

Secondly, sin is unrighteousness: unjust, immoral and wrong.

*All unrighteousness is sin. 1 John 5:17(a) (NKJV)*

Thirdly, sin is omission. A person who knows to do good works and does not do them is committing a sin.

*Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin. James 4:17 (NKJV)*

Fourthly, whatever is done *without faith* is sin.

*Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin. Romans 14:22–23 (NKJV)*

Fifthly, the schemes of foolishness are also sins.

*The schemes of a fool are sinful; everyone detests a mocker. Proverbs 24:9 (NLT)*

Finally, the greatest sin of all is *unbelief* in the Person of Son of God, Jesus Christ (John 16:9). Unbelief in general of any of God's revealed word is sin but the greatest of them all is not believing in the Son of God.

*Be holy as I am Holy*

Below is a summary of what is sin according to the scriptures:

<i>1. Transgression</i>	<i>Disobedience to the LORD God's Law</i>
<i>2. Unrighteousness</i>	<i>Unjust, immoral and wrong</i>
<i>3. Omission of known duty</i>	<i>Failing to do good works</i>
<i>4. Faithlessness</i>	<i>Failing to act on faithful conviction</i>
<i>5. Foolish acts</i>	<i>Wicked or reckless planning</i>
<i>6. Unbelief</i>	<i>Not believing in Jesus Christ</i>

I would like you to note here that in this study we are only discussing sin as an *action* and not as a *person* – that is, currently not focussing on Satan who indwells unbelievers giving them satanic nature, or sinful nature, just as the Holy Spirit indwells believers and gives them divine nature upon conversion.

Moving forth, we are to look at sin through the eyes of God, as in the following:

- Sin is abominable to God – He hates it (Deuteronomy 12:31)
- Sin is contrary to His nature (Isaiah 6:3; 1 John 1:5)
- Sin is called as “filthiness” (Proverbs 30:12; Ezekiel 24:13; James 1:21)
- The ultimate penalty – death – is the consequence of sin (Ezekiel 18:4,20; Romans 6:3)

It is important, however, to note that each of the above definition of sin is to be **viewed from the perspective of how God looks at it**, where he judges every *thought, motive, and intent behind every action*. Consequently, *it is possible to be doing what Bible calls as good works (Hebrews 6:1) such as helping someone, praying for someone, sharing the Gospel, singing worship songs, and even preaching, and yet these can be viewed by God as sin*. It is **not the outward action** that determines whether or not it is a sin **but the intent behind it**.

## **The Types of Sin**

### ***Sin***

As per the Strong's Dictionary: H2403 (Sin): an offence [i.e., a single event] – Sin is anything that comes short of the glory of God.

The *Hebrew* meaning of sin: 1) Slipping away from where you should be; 2) erring from the path on which God has put you; 3) not achieving a standard that God has set; 4) missing the mark or the path.

The *Greek* meaning of sin: 1) A missing of the mark; 2) an act of disobedience to the divine Lord.

### ***Transgression***

Strong's Dictionary: H6588 (Transgression): a revolt (national, moral or religious); rebellion.

The *Hebrew* meaning of transgression: 1) A wilful deviation from, and therefore rebellion against, the path of godly living.

The *Greek* meaning of transgression: To go beyond; overstepping the limits.

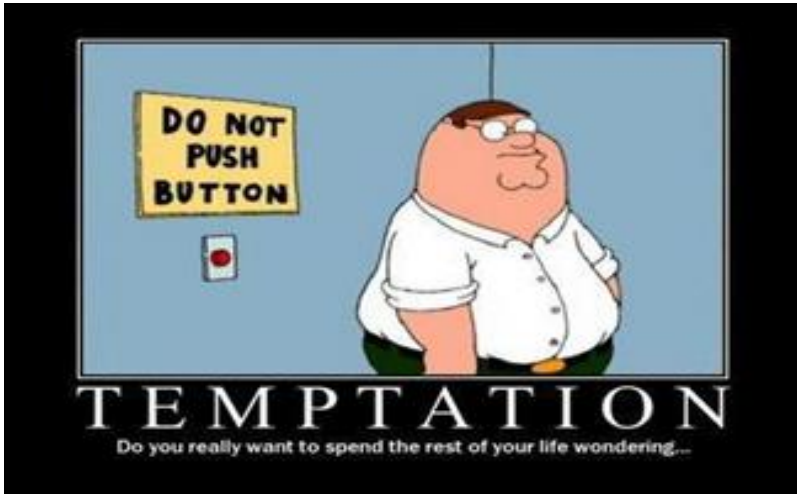
### ***Iniquity***

Strong's Dictionary: H5771 (Iniquity): perversity, that is, (moral) evil:

Thus sin, when repeated against the knowledge of God, becomes transgression, which, if it continues long enough, eventually becomes iniquity that perverts the flesh.

The *Hebrew* meaning of iniquity: Perverseness, bowed down, twisted, to be bent or crooked, to be wrung out of course.

### ***Trespass***



Strong's Dictionary H6586 (Trespass): Knowing exactly what God expects of us but wilfully and deliberately step over the line. Often we are not ignorant of God's will but usually we know exactly what God expects of us, and we choose to ignore His words.

## **The Working (Process) of Sin**

*What is the working of sin in our lives?* Sin is an end result of our response to various temptations. Temptations are lures in different aspects of our lives that seek to draw us away from godliness. When we yield to temptation, the result is sin. But how does temptation come in the first place?

Let us see what the Scripture says – James 1:14–15

*But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (NKJV)*

Here, we can see the complete process of how sin forays into our lives. It begins with lusts – of flesh, of eyes, and pride of life (1 John 2:16). So temptation is nothing but an invitation by various lusts that manifest in our lives. When we say yes to this lust, agree with its suggestion, there is a mating between our will (soul) and the lust that invariably results in conception. There is no premature abortion in this conception but a sure product of sin. Sin when unconfessed, left undealt with, will ultimately result in spiritual death initially and eternal death eventually. Hence, to avoid eternal doom, all that we need to do is say **NO** to the suggestions of lust in our will, emotion, and mind (the constituent parts of our soul).

Let us take a simple example of buying a latest gadget, say a latest mobile phone, and see how sin results. Today, a mobile phone has become an essential commodity and fulfils important needs such as communication. However, when a latest model appears in the market, you might want to buy it. Analyse your real reason to buy it. Is it going to enhance your efficiency of work, fulfilling something that is important and essential



that is missing in your current model? Then, you can go ahead and buy it as it is fulfilling a need. But what happens on most occasions is that you are tempted by the desire to possess the latest model so that you can be first among equals or equal among peers who already have it (***pride of life***), or you are tempted by flashy adverts that show celebrities possessing it or the sexual appeal that is instigated through marketing strategies (***lust of the eyes***), or you are tempted by some feature of the phone that will allow you to gratify sensual pleasures such as fast access to time waster social networks or even sexual gratifications through speedy private access to pornographic sites (***lust of the flesh***). Determine what is your real motive in having the latest gadget? If it is for want and not for need, then you have already fallen into a sin called ***covetousness***.

### **The Consequences of Sin**



There are many consequences of sin that I can think of immediately, but the first and the foremost and also the most devastating one is the breakdown in the relationship between God and you, resulting in loss of communication. If you read in the book of Malachi, the last in the Old Testament, God warned His people over and over again, but they refused

to repent and turn away from God. Following that, for 430 long years, there was nothing but silence from God, yet people carried on with their lives. Whenever I think of those dark years, I wonder how can those people live without communication from God! They certainly would have been communicating with God on their own terms as God said about them in the book of Malachi.

If I may, I urge each one of you to put the relationship between you and God as an essential part of your life – more than food and even breathing itself. Jesus said man shall not live by bread alone (Matthew 4:4); we can just exist by eating food but God wants us to live with HIM in His presence!

As we take Jesus as our role model, let us see how much He values His communication with God. The Garden of Gethsemane – where Jesus sweated drops of blood and where His soul was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death – paints a clear picture of what it meant to Him. The excruciating pain that oozed from his heart does not symbolise the bodily pain that he was soon going to endure but the spiritual pain of losing contact with His Heavenly Father – the ultimate penalty for our sin. Until then, Jesus gladly did the will of God, and had even prayed, as in John 17:4, stating He has finished the work that God had commanded Him to do. But the very thought of going through the heartbreak of losing the presence of His Father, for a mere 3 hours, agonized him more than the actual death itself!

Prophet Isaiah prophesied about this separation as thus:

*Listen! The Lord's arm is not too weak to save you, nor is his ear too deaf to hear you call. It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore. Your hands are the hands of murderers, and your fingers are filthy with sin. Your lips are full of lies, and your mouth spews corruption. Isaiah 59:1-3 (NLT)*

Verily, God won't listen to your prayers:

*No matter how long or loud or often you pray, I'll not be listening. And do you know why? Because you've been tearing people to pieces, and your hands are bloody. Isaiah 1:15 (MSG)*

*If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. Psalm 66:18 (NLT)*

But God does hear the prayers of the righteous:

*The Lord is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous. Proverbs 15:59 (NKJV)*

*Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. John 9:31 (NKJV)*

*So my prayer is that you would hold **communion with God as first priority** in your life, ridding yourself from the compulsion to sin!*

## **The Perception of Sin**

As we have seen previously, anything short of the mark is sin: be it by *thought, word, or deed*. The Sermon on the Mount that Jesus preached in Matthew chapters 5 to 7 was aimed at changing our perception of sin.

While the Pharisees were stringent in following the commandments of God, they missed out on their need for a saviour. They were fine as such, or so they thought!

To execute their positional power and authority over their weaker brothers and sisters, the Pharisees lived such exemplary lives that were just near perfection, at least outwardly. They followed every commandment focussing only on the external behaviour and not on heart's attitude, turning them cold, arrogant, unsympathetic toward the people. They were worse and useless in advancing the Kingdom, driving people away from God on the contrary. However, in Matthew 23, Jesus admonishes the people to follow the doctrines that the Pharisees preach, but not to follow what they do – a strict warning against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

Jesus says that in judging our behaviour, God would not overlook even the smallest detail of the Law and that even our thoughts would be held against us – such that, anger equates murder; and lust, adultery.

It is not the external fulfilment of rules and regulations that matter but the heart's disposition. What are the motives and intents behind our every action, good or bad, is what counts. You can do a wonderful act of charity yet with a motive for personal honour, rendering that work of charity as sin against you.

*“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs— beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people’s bones and all sorts of impurity. Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness. Matthew 23:27–28 (NLT)*

*“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. Matthew 23:23 (NLT)*

*“But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven! Matthew 5:20 (NLT)*

And our righteousness needs to exceed theirs? For, in all of their behaviour, they had achieved perfection.

*And then he added, "It is what comes from inside that defiles you. For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you." Mark 7:20-23(NLT)*

*"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9 (NKJV)*

While anger, jealousy, envy, lust, resentment, frustration, and self-pity are some of the more obvious ones, admiration, pride, self-satisfaction, self-righteousness, and a long list of others that give glory to someone or something else other than God are considered greater sins. Our hearts being incurably wicked, there are two things that make us sinners: firstly, we harbour these thoughts, and secondly, we think that because we don't act on them, we have not sinned.

But whether acted upon or not, these and many more are all sins punishable by death. No one sees them, and they're so natural to us that often we ourselves are barely aware of them. We look fine outside but inside we are rotten, just like the Pharisees! That is why David prays, "*who can understand his errors. Cleanse me from my secret sins and keep me back from presumptuous sins*" (Psalm 19:12-13)

***"We aren't sinners because we sin,  
we sin because we're sinners."***

We are aware of the truth that we were dead in our trespasses when we came to God for the very first time. We no longer live the way we should. Today, there is hardly any difference at all between the worldly neighbour and a believer! Even Christians measure success in the same way as the secular world does.

What's surprising is that most Christians don't live their lives in a manner pleasing to God. But they expect punishment to fall on others and a greater judgment to be pronounced for the same sins as theirs, not holding themselves accountable for their own acts.

In the sight of God, there is no small sin or major sin, absolutely no hierarchy. All sins have the same consequence – death. We are irrational when we expect God to punish others for their anger, envy, bitterness, or jealousy while overlooking our case. When we declare that certain forms of sin disqualify a person for his/her salvation, we put ourselves in God's place in judging them and risk ourselves being judged by God using the same measure that we use against others (Matthew 7:2).

### **The Origin of Sin**

Let us now look at the *first ever sin in the universe!*

Isaiah 14:12–15 (NKJV):

*“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!*

*How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!*

*For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven,*

*Be holy as I am Holy*

***I will** exalt my throne above the stars of God; **I will** also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;*

***I will** ascend above the heights of the clouds,*

***I will** be like the Most High.'*

*Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.*

From the above passage you can see how many times “I will” appears? Five times! See how rebellion enters your heart when you put your will before God’s.



Satan rebelled against God because of “*pride*.” Hence, he, along with the one third of angels that followed his course were cast out. Thus, the first sin is *pride*!



*Paradise Lost*, a fictional work done by John Milton, portrays the character of Satan as unwilling to worship God in heaven, and wanting to take His place, he begins a rebellion. Cast out of heaven, he is unrepentant, but still cries out, “*Better to rule in hell than serve in heaven.*” It was pride that was at the root of Satan’s rebellion. He wanted to rule; He wanted to sit in the place of the Most High; He wanted to be the centre of attention. Satan’s rebellion, and the fall of the one third of the angels from heaven, and all of the evil and destruction that has come from it, sprung forth from the sin of pride. “Pride is the root of all evil.”

*What is the first sin of the World?* Adam’s disobedience to God’s word! Or, you can call it identity crisis, for Adam believed the lie about his identity. When Adam sinned, he was cast out of the Garden of Eden, whereas when Cain – his son – sinned killing Abel – his other son, God cursed him. *Why?*

For Adam’s sin affected only him, whereas Cain’s sin (Genesis 4:11) affected another person. So when you sin against someone else, God takes it pretty seriously. The sin here is jealousy or envy! Pride and envy are the root cause of most of the sins. As wonderfully put in James 3:16 (NLT):

***For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition,  
there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.***

Take time to think about those sins that you commit that affect you only, I’m sure there are many! These come under the category of *Adam’s sin*. Now, think of all those sins that you commit that harm others as well, I’m sure there are many here too! These fall under the category of *Cain’s sin*.

To see an illustration of the point I'm making, let's draw a parallel out of my own life: I have two boys. Say, for instance, one beats up the other helpless boy, do you think I can keep quiet and do nothing about it? So is the case with God!

It is unfortunate that the church has not distinguished these two types of sins clearly. We see this problem in whole of our Christian community! Among the believers, we are quick to rebuke someone who is drunk than chastise someone gossiping about another; we consider smoking to be a more serious sin than losing one's temper. If you steal someone's money, it is called theft. If you speak ill of someone, it is called gossip, not realising that it is the theft of someone else's reputation. As I have depicted in the paragraph above, God takes serious offence when we slander someone.

For, just as how we are the apple of God's eye, he or she who is being defamed by us is also dear to God's heart. Let's keep this in perspective and resist every temptation to let our tongue loose, for in case of theft, you could repent and return the money, but will you be able to return someone's lost reputation? Do you understand the graveness of this sin?

We shall study *Envy* in detail as a separate lesson later. Whereas envy at all times is deadly, jealousy, on the other hand, is not always wrong. I would like to differentiate between the two, as it is envy that I would like to focus on. Our God is a Jealous God! That is, He is jealous for us and He cannot tolerate seeing us being led astray by the Devil. Jealousy is about guarding what belongs to you even to the point of developing a sort of uneasiness or getting angry, whereas envy is about being resentful at or eyeing others' possessions. To help differentiate, I am perfectly permitted to be jealous about my wife for she belongs to me, but I sin when I envy someone on account of his, say, beautiful wife!

Now, take time to make a list of the sins that you have committed that have hurt/harmed others (in your notebook); realize that those sins are the worst of all. Hereafter, when you look at smokers, drunkards, and drug-addicts, you will humbly acknowledge that all of them are far better people than you are. Besides, I am not stressing that you should be lenient about the visible sins either. You've got to forcibly hate sin from within and without!

Jesus detested sin and loved righteousness:

*"You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You. With the oil of gladness above Your companions." Hebrews 1:9 (NASB)*

We as His disciples ought to follow Him by hating every sin in our own life – not in someone else's life. Unless you hate sin and call sin as a sin, you will not get delivered at all.

With spiritual maturity, we understand that righteousness of God and sin are both inward aspects not just external. In the Old Covenant, it was the Ten Commandments, but in the New Covenant, it is the *life* of Jesus. Law was given by Moses, but *grace* and *truth* came by Jesus Christ.

*It is your evil that has separated you from your God. Your sins cause him to turn away from you, so he does not hear you. Isaiah 59:2 (NCV)*

*Don't put out the Spirit's fire. Don't despise what God has revealed. Instead, test everything. Hold on to what is good. Keep away from every kind of evil. 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 (GW)*

### **Concept of Sin in the *Old* and *New* Covenants**

In the Old Covenant, sin was primarily external. A glance at the Ten Commandments makes it obvious that the focus of all but one was on external purity, except for “thou shall not covet.” God deliberately gave them thus so that they would get to grips with the fact that they cannot save themselves on their own but rather need the help of a saviour. To God’s dismay, His people completely lost the plot. As a result, God abolished the Old Covenant and HE instituted the New Covenant, Jesus thereby fulfilling the law and the prophets (Romans 10:4).

Also, according to the 6th Commandment in the Ten Commandments that “you shall not commit adultery,” as long as I do NOT commit adultery, I am fine and I have kept the law, irrespective of whether or not I love my own wife. But in the New Covenant, not only am I supposed to not look at a woman lustfully, let alone committing adultery, but also love my wife just as how Christ loved the Church! Thus, under the New Covenant, not only our external actions but also our inward thoughts pronounce judgement.

Along the lines of Jesus, inward purity signifies outward purity as well, thereby raising the bar to the zenith!

As He puts it in Matthew 12:35 (NKJV), *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.*

*Be holy as I am Holy*

*And also in Mark 7:21–23 (NKJV), For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.*

Isn't it obvious then that Jesus is keen on what's happening inside our heart?

*What are the sins that Jesus dealt with very harshly while He was on the earth?* You will be surprised to see that the sins that Jesus hated the most are not even mentioned in the Ten Commandments!

Let's see the three most triggering factors of sin as per the New Testament:

*For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows. 1 Timothy 6:10 (NLT)*

As per the above verse, money is not the problem, but the *love of money* is. Believers and even ministries are being led astray because of this. We will, however, study money in depth as *Prosperity* later in the course.

Following suit are *envy* and *selfishness*, as emphasised below.

*For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. James 3:16 (NASB)*

To concisely put it, the root causes of all evil are,

- Love of money,
- Envy, and
- Selfishness

Let us look at these in detail at a later part of the course.

## **The Five Major Sins**

As the heading suggests, in the below section, we will deal with five major sins that we need to be particularly aware of. Although there are myriad sins that arouse the anger of God, these ones could easily slip our attention while we focus on the more obvious ones!

### **1) *Pride***



The first sin in the universe is still rampant in our midst, especially among those who pursue to live a holy life. This is the main door in which Satan enters to take foothold in all Christians who serve the Lord. Although Jesus rebuked hypocrisy more in Matthew chapter 23, but the root cause of this hypocrisy was pride. Hence, I would say that spiritual pride is the main sin that Jesus rebuked most (read Matthew 23:4–7).

*“Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him.” - Habakkuk 2:4(a)*

We can see from this verse that the proud person's soul is not right, hence not right with God either.

### **Titanic!**

Pride is much more difficult to discern than any other sin because, by nature, it implies *having too high a thought of oneself*. Should it surprise then that such a person who has too high a thought of himself is unaware of it? He thinks the opinion he has of himself has justifiable grounds and therefore not too high.

*For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Galatians 6:3 (NKJV)*

Pride lets you deceive yourself! If you have allowed yourself to be deceived, then it is very difficult to rectify unless you realize the deception in you. Just as an exercise, say you examine your talk, do you see yourself talking about the following:

- About others' sin
- About the hypocrisy
- Bitterness
- Contempt
- Demanding respect and attention seeking
- Pride over talents, gifts and abilities
- Pride over system, organization, spiritual leadership and theology

Hope the above task helped you to see if you harbour any pride in you!



For,

*... he gives us even more grace to stand against such evil desires. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but favors the humble." James 4:6 (NLT)*

*Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you. 1 Peter 5:6 (ESV)*

Here is a typical example in Luke 18:9–14 of a person with spiritual pride talking high about himself while despising the sinner. You see that the proud one takes glory in exalting himself! In the end, the sinner is forgiven, whereas the proud one goes away empty handed and condemned by Jesus.

A great theologian of the modern era, C.S. Lewis claims "pride" to be the greatest sin of all and he puts it in his book *Christian Behaviour* as thus:

*The Christians are right: it is Pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began. Other vices may sometimes bring people together: you may find good fellowship and jokes and friendliness among drunken people or unchaste people. But Pride always means enmity - it is enmity. And not only enmity between man and man, but enmity to God.*

So how are *the proud* fooled into believing that they are *not proud*? – just simply by creating an imaginary God in themselves and trying to do things pleasing their imagination and satisfied with whatever service they do in the name of God, mistakenly assuming that God Himself is

satisfied with theirs. They go out from God's presence thinking they are great!

### **How to overcome spiritual pride?**

#### ***i) Prayer***

Ask God to help you and pray with others. You should be able to give the freedom to your close circle so that they can express about you freely. Irrespective of who they are, what position they hold, they should be able to speak into your life honestly.

#### ***ii) Acknowledge that you are a sinner***

The truth is that I'm a sinner. I was not only one, but I am ***the*** one.

*But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, ***the sinner!***' Luke 18:13 (NASB)*

"He who says he has no sin is deceived" – 1 John 1:8 (NKJV). Every day of your life, you should see the grace of God that brings you to the awe of who God is in your life. We should come to a place where we need to understand that there is nothing except the *grace* of God.

#### ***iii) Always boast in God***

Apostle Paul understood this grace of God very well in his life, following which he made these two most astounding statements about his achievement in the proclamation of the Gospel that clearly demonstrate that it is not by him or his strength but by the grace of God:

*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 1 Corinthians 15:10 (NKJV)*

*Yet I dare not boast about anything except what Christ has done through me, bringing the Gentiles to God by my message and by the way I worked among them. They were convinced by the power of miraculous signs and wonders and by the power of God's Spirit. In this way, I have fully presented the Good News of Christ from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum. Romans 15:18-19(NLT)*

## **2) Hypocrisy**

The meaning of the term “hypocrite” as per Strong’s Concordance is as follows: an actor, stage player, a dissembler, pretender. The word “hypocrisy” has not been translated into English, just like “baptism”!!



To be a hypocrite is to give others the impression that you are holier than you actually are, same as being false or telling a lie. Jesus cursed the Pharisees seven times in Matthew chapter 23 (read Matthew 23:13-29).

Most actors or the modern-day celebrities lead a pretentious life these days! They thrive seeking only their self-image or their wants. Here in Matthew, these religious leaders fasted, prayed, and tithed, and prayed

well in public corners, and even prayed out loud for long hours. But their internal life was awful.

The word “Pharisee” means “to separate.” Scribes were teachers of the law. Take a moment now to read the first 2 chapters of the book of Malachi. We find here God rebuking the priests of how they have profaned the offering and that all they did was to impress the people and that it was not a sincere worship offering before God.

To draw a parallel, a husband complaining over his wife’s procrastination, watching telly not doing her household chores; children abandoning their school work and playing on the games console. The husband then declares, “gonna disconnect the satellite TV connection once the football season is over!” Hypocrisy or not?

*They say they know God, but their actions speak louder than their words. They’re real creeps, disobedient good-for-nothings. Titus 1:16 (MSG)*

It is important that we avoid hypocrisy in the following matters:

- Giving (Matthew 6:1–4)
- Prayer (Matthew 6:5–6)
- Fasting (Matthew 6:16–18)
- Judgment (Matthew 7:1–5; Luke 6:39–42)
- Doctrine (Matthew 15:7–9; Mark 7:6–8; 1 Timothy 4:1–3)
- Influence (Luke 12:1–3)
- Discernment (Luke 12:54–57)

Hence, I request you to kindly check your life today. Who are you trying to please? Are you seeking to please yourself while showing others that you are holy and living for God?

However, I'm very sure that *you can think of someone else who does this, but I want you to judge yourself!!*

### **3) Unbelief**

Unbelief works against the faith in God and hinders the work of God in our lives.

*And because of their unbelief, he couldn't do any miracles among them except to place his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their unbelief. Mark 6:5-6 (NLT)*

Many Christians presume that unbelief is a weakness since they have not fully grown in the Lord, hence *do not* consider this on a serious note. Do you know how many times Jesus rebuked HIS disciples for unbelief? A staggering *eight* times!!!

1. Matthew 6:30
2. Matthew 8:26
3. Matthew 14:31
4. Matthew 16:8
5. Matthew 17:17-20
6. Mark 16:14
7. Luke 24:25

*Be holy as I am Holy*

8. John 20:27

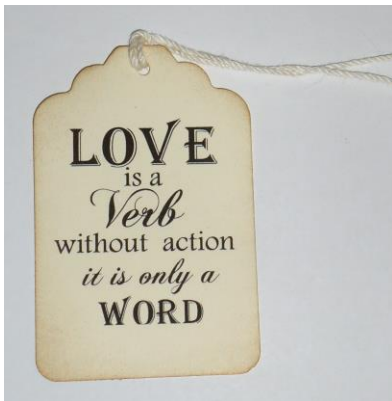
*Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God - Hebrews 3:12 (NKJV)*

Unbelief is an insult to God as it implies that God does not care or provide for His children even as much as evil fathers on earth care and provide for their children. There is also a counterfeit faith that is being preached these days, that you can get anything from God. But that is not the faith that Jesus preached. He wanted us to have faith to live by, in our daily life.

Also, Jesus not only marvelled at their unbelief (Mark 6:1–6) but also marvelled at peoples' faith towards Him. On one occasion, He applauds a centurion's faith, and on a couple of occasions, He was surprised, appreciating a leper who got cleansed and the Syrophenician women who got her daughter healed. For a detailed account:

- Jesus heals the centurion's servant: Matthew 8:5–13
- Jesus cleanses lepers: Luke 17:11–19
- The Syrophenician women: Mark 7:24–30

#### **4) *Mere words and no action***



On his return, Jesus will judge everyone, as he has stated in Matthew 25:31–46. He will separate those who belong to Him from those who don't belong to Him by their actions **not** by their words of confession.

*“The king will answer them, ‘I can guarantee this truth: Whatever you did for one of my brothers or sisters, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did for me.’ (Matthew 25:40, GW)*

As above, if you have taken care of the needs of your fellow brothers and sisters, then you have also done it to Him. On the contrary, if you overlook such needs around you, then you have failed to do it to Him:

*“Then the King will answer, ‘I tell you the truth, anything you refused to do for even the least of my people here, you refused to do for me.’ (Matthew 25:45, NCV)*

God always gives us an opportunity to help others, but when we fail to do so, we are disobeying Him.

The end result,

*“These people will go away into eternal punishment, but those with God’s approval will go into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:46, GW)*

Thus, it is mandatory that your words are accompanied by actions. We are commanded to do good to *all* men. Galatians 6:10 (NLT) – *Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.*

As we see in the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25–37, Christian love, that Jesus talks about here, is treating others with kindness and respect and helping them when they are in need – it is not about how we talk or feel, it is the action that matters. We see that both the priests and Levites were preaching about how to love God, but they failed to display this in action when given an opportunity. While when a



Samaritan, a non-Jew, passer-by showed compassion, took care of him, and paid for his expenses, it was *love in action*. Following the parable, in verse 37, Jesus says, “*go and do likewise.*”

Likewise, from the Parable of the Rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19–31, one can extract two astonishing truths:

1. Wealth not used for those in need as love in action is great wickedness
2. Knowing the truth and not acting accordingly will lead to eternal punishment on the Day of Judgment.

*Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, “Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well”—but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?*

*So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. James 2:15–17 (NLT)*

*We know and, to some extent realise, the love of God for us because Christ expressed it in laying down his life for us. We must in turn express our love by laying down our lives for those who are our brothers. But as for the well-to-do man who sees his brothers in want but shuts his eyes—and his heart—how could anyone believe that the love of God lives in him? My children, let us not love merely in theory or in words—let us love in sincerity and in practice! 1 John 3:16–18 (PHILLIPS)*

### **5) *Murmuring/complaining***

You might even wonder if murmuring/complaining is a sin. Sadly, it is – like a deadly virus escaping the naked eye but eventually causing lethal damage! What starts as a casual expression or comment might one day end up as a full-blown sin. Let's see what the definition of murmuring is: to be obstinate, to complain, or to grumble in a low voice.

Well, what is the difference between complaining and murmuring? There is a thin line dividing the two: complaining as such is not always wrong, provided it is a constructive criticism, whereas when it manifests as nit-picking or fault-finding crushing someone, rather than building one up, it becomes a sin. When you constantly keep complaining of the mundane in your workplace, at home, in your church, and so on, it leads to murmuring. Also, when you see someone overlooking your suggestions, as valid as they may seem however, you start to complain against that person and give into murmuring. It may be legitimate from your point of view, but always remember that God is fully aware of the heart's attitude behind it.

Let us now look at the course, the consequences, and the cure for this according to the scriptures.

Deuteronomy chapter 1 verses 26–38 highlight the following attributes of murmuring / complaining:

- It's done in secret (v26)
- It's against God (vv26–27; also in Exodus 16:18)
- Misunderstanding the purposes of God (v27)
- Brings rebellion (v26)
- Discouraging you and others (v28)

- Making you forget God's goodness in the past (vv29–33)
- Finally ends up in unbelief (v32)

Also, take time to read the incidents stated in the scriptures below:

- Numbers 16
- Matthew 20:1–16
- Luke 5:29–32

The plight of those who triumphantly crossed the Red Sea was beyond worse when God heard them complaining, as exemplified in 1 Corinthians chapter 10:

*nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 1 Corinthians 10:9–11 (NKJV)*

The above verses illustrate that when the Israelites murmured and complained, God crushed them sending a destroyer. Isn't it obvious that God viewed murmuring as a great sin, and we as New Covenant believers are not immune to it unless we mend our ways, thinking, and our heart's attitude?

We also need to be mindful as Jesus points out in Matthew 12:43–45, for complaining/murmuring may act as a pitfall attracting other sins and complicating all the more.

*When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, ... and finds none ... he says, "I will return to my house from which I came." And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order ... he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and ... dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first ...."*

Thus, realising that we carry the light and the Spirit of God in us, we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit constantly to avoid ending up in a rather bigger pitfall, as we see below:

*And when people escape from the wickedness of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and then get tangled up and enslaved by sin again, they are worse off than before. It would be better if they had never known the way to righteousness than to know it and then reject the command they were given to live a holy life. They prove the truth of this proverb:*

*"A dog returns to its vomit." And another says, "A washed pig returns to the mud." 2 Peter 2:20–22 (NLT)*

See the danger here – the Scripture says it is better for people to not know the truth rather than knowing it and not abiding by it!

To avoid losing it all over again, how do we overcome this?

*Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. Philippians 2:14–15 (NLT)*

As the scriptures point out, do everything without complaining, so that you may shed light on this dark world.

*Be thankful in **all** circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NLT)*

God knows the best for you and whatever He bestows upon you is for your good. So be thankful, grateful, and cheerful, and always acknowledge His goodness in your life.

The five major sins that we've discussed in this section are rather a short glimpse of the bigger picture. However, you may have now come to the realization that it is the heart that God is more concerned about. There is more than what meets the eye, but if we keep pondering on each and every sin, there may not be enough time for remission. Always remember that in the sight of God, breaking one command and keeping the rest is as good as breaking them all! Thus, we come to the throne of God with the hope of Christ, as we will see in the concluding section.

## **Application**

Now, as you go through the list and as we go further in our lessons, we will see more layers of onion being peeled off. If not, then we will also become like one of the Pharisees! Watch out!!

Jesus became sin for us! As we see below in 2 Corinthians 5:21:

*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (NKJV)*

*How? you ask. In Christ. God put the wrong on him who never did anything wrong, so we could be put right with God. (MSG)*

These verses make it crystal clear for us that Jesus took our place on the cross. This is forgiveness. But at the same time, we were made righteous (imputing Christ's righteousness to us) and this is *justification* – a free gift of God for those who come to HIM humbly and accept that they can never become righteous enough to meet God's holiness on their own. Thus, you are justified by *grace* alone!!

Nothing more, nothing less – Christ alone. Anything plus or minus Christ is demonic, that's what the book of Galatians teaches us.

*And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. Romans 11:6 (NKJV)*

*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23 (NKJV)*

*Be holy as I am Holy*

*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23 (NKJV)*

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. Ephesians 2:8–9(NKJV)*

*who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. 2 Timothy 1:9 (NKJV)*

The more you hide in Jesus, the better is your immunity to fight sin. When the light dawns, darkness vanishes – darkness *never* prevails against the light!

Jesus Christ is the answer!

*You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. 1 John 3:5 (NASB)*

*the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8 (NASB)*

Thus, let Jesus manifest in your life more and more so that His blood may wash away all the filth and dirt in your life and that through His power you may thwart all the plans of the wicked one, living *Son* (Jesus)-conscious rather than *sin*-conscious.

## **Final words**

Let us live our lives *free from sin*, as Paul puts it in Romans,

***For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*** *Romans 6:14 (NKJV)*

As in the previous week we looked at *Repentance*, which entails:

- i) Acknowledging your sins
- ii) Feeling sorry
- iii) Giving up self-will
- iv) Confession

Are you now ready to do it all over again in the light of having come to know what *sin is* and how it may have manifested within you?

## **Further Reading**

1. Matthew 6:1–6, 7:1–5, 15:1–9.



*Be holy as I am Holy*

## **Notes**

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

## FAITH

***Faith goes up the stairs that love has built and looks  
out the window which hope has opened  
— Charles Spurgeon***

*True faith involves repentance towards God and true repentance involves faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! And that's repentance from your sins and faith towards Lord Jesus!!!*

Faith is not only the most explained and widely discussed Biblical topic in our modern-day Christian life but also the most misquoted and misunderstood theme in the Bible. Most people in the world today recognize Jesus as one of the great moral teachers, some consider Him a respectable religious leader or pastor, others agree that He is one of the Prophets of God, and a few acknowledge Him as one among the plethora of gods. For a Christian however NONE of these are true. Jesus is God and He is the saviour of the humankind. Anything less would invalidate the complete representation of the Gospel.

*“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that*

*God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both **Lord**  
**and Christ.**” Acts 2:36*

The above verse makes it so clear that Jesus is *both* our Lord – Yahweh (God) and Saviour – Messiah (Christ)!

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. - Acts 4:12 (NKJV)*

*For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NKJV)*

Only Jesus can save us from sins.

*To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me. Acts 26:18 (NKJV)*

Thus, you receive forgiveness of your sins and stay connected with God in Jesus. In the last lesson, we saw how sin disconnects us from God. This connection can be reinstated only through Jesus and no other way! Thus, it is the only way to God and not one of the many ways.

*Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. John 14:6 (NKJV)<sup>1</sup>*

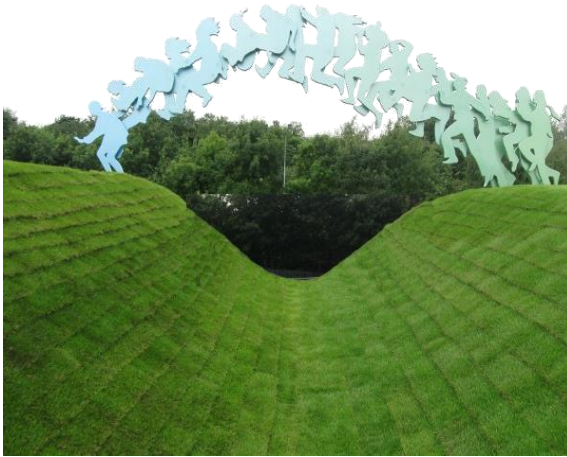
<sup>1</sup> Further reading: John 10:9, 1:4, 1:14; Romans 5:2; Ephesians 2:18; Hebrews 10:20; 1 John 5:20.

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

## **Faith Defined**

So what is faith?

*Faith* is the complete leaning of our entire human personality on God in absolute confidence and trust in His perfect wisdom, love and power.



*So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start again with the fundamental importance of **repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God**. You don't need further instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. Hebrews 6:1-2 (NLT)*

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

The very basis of our Christian life is established on **repentance and faith** that is in Christ, having the forgiveness of sins through accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. We have the forgiveness of our sins only by the blood of Jesus Christ. It is a gift (Ephesians 2:8,9).

### **The Biblical Definition of Faith**

Hebrews 11:1 (NIV),

*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*

What this means in layman terms is that faith is essentially a confident assurance of what we hope for. Now obviously when hope is involved, you don't look for immediate physical evidence. No one hopes for what one can see, experience or feel. The hope has to be based on something beyond the immediate tangible experience. That something is the promises that God makes through His Word. Faith, therefore, is a confident hope of whatever God says; He will do it no matter what the circumstances seem to indicate. As an example, if you were promised by your earthly father or your spouse or even a friend to give you a specific gift in six months' time, you wait expectantly for that promise to come to pass. You hope to get what has been promised and that is faith in simple terms.

In scriptural terms, what is being spoken of here (in the context of Christian basics as outlined in Hebrews 6:1) is putting our faith in Lord Jesus Christ as our saviour. Acts 20:21 (NKJV) – *testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*. In the previous lessons, we looked at what it means to repent and

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have learnt in detail on sin. So now, the next obvious step is keeping our faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ. We have learned previously that nothing but the power of God can deliver us from sins. It is obvious that we can only be forgiven by the shed blood of Jesus.

So if God says you repent from your sins and turn towards God, you will be saved, and then we take Him at His promise and believe in what He says. There may be absolutely no external evidence of having been saved, no physical, emotional feelings or changes, yet you believe that God has saved you through Jesus Christ. This faith is called as the saving faith – the faith that saves you from the penalty of all your past sins and creates a stepping stone for life in the Spirit, which again is to be lived by daily faith. This daily faith is called as the living faith (Romans 5:10). Saving faith leads you to justification and living faith leads you to sanctification (refer to the table below, as explained in the *Repentance lesson*).

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<b><i>Stage</i></b>	<b><i>Action</i></b>	<b><i>Result</i></b>	<b><i>Delivered from</i></b>
<i>1</i>	<i>Initial repentance</i>	<i>Justification</i>	<i>Penalty of sin</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>Ongoing repentance</i>	<i>Sanctification</i>	<i>Power of sin</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>Home call or rapture</i>	<i>Glorification</i>	<i>Presence of sin</i>

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### **Faith – Old and New Covenant Contrast**

From the creation of the world, God expected the relationship between Him and humankind to be based on faith -love relationship. This life

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called the faith life is also called as life of dependence on God. In the Garden of Eden this meant living by the tree of life. At the same time, God also provided choice for human being to live independent of God, and this meant a choice to live by the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This life is lived by making own moral choices and not in obedience to the moral laws set by God. That is, being the master of your own life, deciding what is good or bad by one’s own reckoning.

You all know what the first man chose. From that fall, God has been working to bring man back into the faith-love relationship, and we see few people like Enoch, Noah and Abraham walk that kind of life. That is why God justified Abraham as righteous even though we know that he committed sins. When we come to saving faith in Christ Jesus, we do exactly what Abraham did. He believed God to be able to do what He promised, and therefore, God declared him righteous. So, when we believe God that He will save us when we repent towards God and put our faith in Jesus, God declares us righteous irrespective of all our past sins and we can enter into the faith-love relationship once again.

In order to make this point, God introduced the covenant of Law to the chosen race of Israel. The Law was given in the Old Covenant so that people would realize that they cannot be set right with God on their own but by the grace of our Lord; little did they understand! And over 1500 years later, God sent His Son to die for our sins. Law was given so that people will understand that they can’t save themselves but they need a saviour to save themselves. The Law was also given so that it will take us to Jesus Christ.

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

*Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. Galatians 3:24 (NASB)*

You are saved by Grace through Faith.

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8 (NKJV)*

Primarily, it is a gift. When someone offers you a gift, you need to accept it. Metaphorically, God extends His hands towards man from heaven and it is our responsibility to reach out to His hand with faith! Thus, faith is stretching our hands out to reach God to receive His divine help and blessings upon our lives.

*Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. 1 Corinthians 15:1–4 (NIV)*

You must first believe that God sent His son Jesus to die for your sins. Indeed, He died for your sins and was buried and He rose again from the dead on the third day according to the scriptures. Jesus is seated at the



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right hand of God in heaven today. If you believe this, then you will lift your hands towards God in faith to receive His divine help. God gave up His Son out of His love towards you and me! Hence, only His love should be the motivating factor to have faith in Lord Jesus.

*Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. Romans 5:7–8 (NLT)*

Yes, no one will die for you – but there is one who, out of His great love for you, has already sacrificed His one and only Son for you!

Here is the summary of what God has done for you, whoever you are and whatever you have done:

*Romans 5:6 → While we were still without strength, God died for us*

*Romans 5:8 → While we were still sinners, Christ died for us*

*Romans 5:10 → While we were enemies of God, Christ died for us*

So you may be without strength or a sinner or an enemy of God, still Christ died for you!

*Even before he made the world, **God loved us** and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. Ephesians 1:4 (NLT)*

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From the above verse, which was also a promise verse for WCF for this year, can you see how God loved you even before HE created anything in this universe? I wonder how many of us can comprehend such love. I can see that God knew me even before the world was ever created. Therefore, the Holy God who could not have fellowship with me because of my sin made the provision for me to come to him through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ. Thus, we begin the faith-love relationship with God. The above verse might make you think that it is an automatic choice by God. No, God chose you before the foundation of the world based on the foreknowledge that one day you would respond to the Gospel message (Romans 8:29). That is, salvation is both a sovereign *choice of God* and a wilful *decision by you*.

### **Faith in the Old and New Covenants**

In Exodus 12, we read about the Passover. God asked the Israelites to smear the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintel so that the angel of death could pass over their dwelling. Just think for a moment – did God not know who lived inside the house? Did the angel of death check each and every house? Were they saved because of their good work, or of their holy life? I don’t think so! It is a matter of putting your faith in the word of God and acting upon it. Whomsoever put their trust in God and smeared the blood of the lamb on the doorpost with hyssop was saved!

Well, the Passover in Exodus 12 took place on the 14th day of the first month of their new Jewish calendar. This resulted in their salvation! For us New Testament believers, to be forgiven from our sins, we need to, by faith, put the blood of Jesus upon ourselves. Over 1500 years later on the

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14th day of the first month of the same calendar, Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross! Thus, when you put your faith in the finished work of Lord Jesus, you are saved. It does not matter what kind of life you had led in the past – good or bad – that has in no way contributed to your salvation. It is only by grace through faith in Lord Jesus Christ that you are saved.

I would also like to draw another parallel between the old and the new. When the Israelites left Egypt, they came to the Red sea, and to cross it, they did not have to do anything but just have their faith in God; in so doing, they marched triumphantly on dry ground – as 1 Corinthians 10 puts it – this is the water baptism for the New Covenant believer. But when they were about to come to the promised land, the Lord promised Joshua saying, “I will be with you as I was Moses” and also promised saying, “I will give all the land you set your foot and you got to possess them” (Joshua 1:1-5).

As New Covenant believers, we have also received a promise that sin will not have dominion over us (Romans 6:14). But here again we need to fight every battle in our lives, which is possible only through faith. Having received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of God indwelling us, we have a better promise with the better covenant. Leaving Egypt and crossing the Red Sea is the picture now of the saving faith and leaving the wilderness and entering in and settling down in Canaan is the living faith mentioned earlier.

Out of the 600,000 men of Israel, only 2 set foot in the Promised Land because of their faith. I personally feel this is the same today in our

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world as well. Very few of us have the faith that we will overcome if God has said so!

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Jesus mentioned about saving faith in looking unto Him.

*And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. John 3:14–15 (NLT)*

When the people rebelled against God and Moses in the wilderness at Mount Hor, Lord sent fiery serpents and it bit people and many people died. But when Moses prayed to the Lord God, God commanded him to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole. Whoever got bitten by a snake had to look up to the bronze serpent on the pole to be healed. Our natural reaction would be to seek medical help, but God asked them to just look at the serpent. In the same way, the sinners are commanded to look to Jesus for their eternal life! For in this context we read John 3:16 (NKJV),

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

Faith as a Choice

Yes, there is a sovereign will of God and the free will of Man – we should never forget the balance between the two. God will never ever force you to accept Him. It is the choice you’ve got to make.



It is just like a commitment a bride makes; she chooses

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to leave behind everything she has been attached to in her life, follow her husband and change her name, home, and everything she ever had in the past, choosing to be a new person with a new name, new home, new destination etc. The Bible calls us the bride of Christ. Some men may however find difficulty in accepting themselves as “bride” due to the term’s gender attribute, but we need to understand that we are engaged to HIM and Christ is coming back to take us, His bride, with Him.

*For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.  
2 Corinthians 11:2 (ESV)*

As the above verse emphasizes, originally written to the Christians in Corinth, Apostle Paul has betrothed us to Christ and would like us to present ourselves as a *chaste virgin* for the coming of our King. Just imagine for a moment that someone you know is betrothed to marry a person, say, for example, who has gone to serve in the army for a few years. You do not know when he is going to come back; in the meantime, if the bride-to-be goes around with other men and sleeps around with them, what would you call her? Isn’t she unfaithful to the engagement? The same is right now happening in Christendom. People call themselves Christians having put their faith in God yet live as if Christ is not going to come at all, getting themselves corrupted in the worldly system. This is nothing but spiritual adultery.

Why would any bride want to come to be with her man to spend the rest of her life? Firstly, because of love and secondly because of her faith in him that he will neither leave her nor fail to look after her and care for

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her enough to bring the best in both their lives. So, when we come to God, we should know how much HE loves us and we should commit our lives to Him and live a holy life waiting for the Groom.

### **What are the modern-day problems with faith?**

Given below is the complete structure of our Christian faith – without one, there is none. Problems come when we leave one and focus on the other. And the ultimate sacrifice will make no sense without embracing all three:

#### *a) Jesus is the forgiver of my sins*

We all believe that Jesus has come and died for our sins so that we are free from the penalty of sin and forgiven. Yes, it is 100% true. But that's not the full Gospel. We always imagine Jesus on the cross for we have grown up seeing many pictures, sculptures and various other artefacts that always have crucifixes with Jesus still hanging on the cross. In addition, every year we follow the Lent season and also celebrate Good Friday. However, let's not forget that Jesus not only died for our sins but He also *rose again from the dead!*

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

*b) Jesus delivers me from the sin*

*And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call **His name Jesus**, for He will save His people from their sins.  
Matthew 1:21 (NKJV)*

Jesus did not only die for our sins but He will also *save* us from sins. In our previous lesson, we have seen how wicked and deceitful our heart is and that we need to be saved from all those filthy sins in our lives, by:

Hating sin

Feeling sorry

Confessing

Forsaking sin

Loving righteousness

*c) Jesus clothed me in righteousness*

Many of us do NOT realize that God has clothed us with a garment of righteousness for our life. The blood of Jesus has wiped all our past sins away. In the present age, for us to approach God and live a holy life, God has clothed us with clothes of righteousness. God has sent us the Holy Spirit into our hearts by which we can live a Godly life and a divine nature can be developed in our being by the same power that worked in Christ Jesus.



*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

*But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when—he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he declares sinners to be right in his sight when they believe in Jesus. Romans 3:21–26 (NLT)*

*For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT)*

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

Keeping this in mind, that Jesus has paid the price for our past sins and that God has clothed us with the robe of righteousness, we will be able to live righteously for our Lord. Right believing produces the right fruits in your life. You are clothed with the righteousness of God and, in that position, you produce the fruits of righteousness in your life every day.

*Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith let it be to you.” Matthew 9:29 (NKJV)*

### **How Does Faith Come?**

Faith comes by *hearing* and *hearing by the word* of God. Many people think that they know this verse but seldom do they understand its true meaning. Your faith comes from what you hear. If you hear evil things about you,



then your faith will be on the evil things, not on God. Let me give you a simple example. When you switch on a light bulb at home, you know for sure that it would light up immediately. That's a faith you've developed over time. Whereas if you've not experienced this scenario before in your life, or say you've always have had uncertain power supply, like that in the developing countries, you may not be very sure or have the faith the bulb will light up as soon as you switch it on.

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17 (NKJV)*

Read the above verse slowly one more time and see the connection. Thus, if you *hear* the word of God, you will develop faith!

*As it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations” in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did. Romans 4:17 (NKJV)*

From the above verse, we can clearly see that God calls those things that are not even in existence as though they are since HE is the creator of all things.

*Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.*

*And God saw the light that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. Genesis 1:3–4 (NKJV)*

*For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6 (NKJV)*

Thus, we will have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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### **The Measure of Faith**

People always say, “if only I have faith like you, I would have done more” – but you don’t realize that God has given each of us a measure of faith (Romans 12:3). You need to grow in faith and develop further in your relationship with God.



Jesus said,

*Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. Matthew 17:20 (NKJV)*

All you need is a mustard seed-size faith, just a tiny bit. But when the seed is planted, it grows root and shoots up, growing into a vigorous plant bearing fruits. For a moment, just look at the mustard, as small as it may be yet producing amazing life from inside of it. We, as Christians, need to grow the seed of faith in us by watering it with Holy Spirit and nurturing it.

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23 (GNT)*

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

For with faith, God can do the impossible for us.

### **The Object of Faith**

Faith is not something that is dependent on you. This statement might make you topsy-turvy, yet it is true. When you travel by plane or any means of transport you believe that you will reach your destination by faith. But what is your faith on? Is it in anyway connected with you, your ability or your power? No! It is entirely dependent on the fact that the plane is in a perfect flying condition, and that it can hold you and your excess baggage and the 300+ passengers along with theirs up in the sky at an altitude of more than 10,000 feet by what is known as aerodynamic power and the fact that the pilot is qualified and experienced enough to fly the plane. Whether you will remain airborne and reach your destination safely has absolutely nothing to do with you. But you have to submit yourself by sitting in your seat with absolute confidence (exercising your faith) that you will reach your destination. But during the journey, if you decide that the plane is not capable of doing what it is supposed to do and open the door and step out, you will plunge to the abyss as you step out of the law of aerodynamics to the law of gravity. So your faith is dependent on the plane and the pilot and not on you. Here, the object of your faith is not you but the plane.

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

Just as in the light bulb example where your faith is based on the bulb and the electricity that flows through it and has nothing to do with you, and switching on is your exercise of faith, when you sit on a chair you exercise your faith by the action of sitting down. You put complete faith in the chair that it is capable of holding your weight and that it is in good condition. Without that faith, you cannot sit on the chair unless you examine the chair and see if it can hold your weight and that all its legs are intact, etc. If you sit on the chair without testing it, then you put your faith *in* the chair. But if you examine the chair for its functionality, then there is no faith required to sit as faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence things not seen. Here, the object of your faith is not you but the chair.



So, when we talk about faith we must always remember our faith object is God and Jesus His Son. Don't look for faith inside but outside. Look up to heaven where God sits and at His right hand, Jesus Christ. They are the object of your faith. That's why it is said faith comes by hearing what God says. When you hear what God says, faith develops as you believe that God is capable of doing whatever He says in His word. Whatever you believe for is entirely dependent on His capability, His power, His grace, His love and has nothing to do with you. I hope that makes you exited.

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

## **Faith Is Not a Loner!**

Faith, love and hope are the three pillars of Christianity! We need to have all these three pillars in equal measures and in a proper dimension in our life, as underscored by the following scriptures.

*And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13:13 (NKJV)*

*Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father 1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NKJV)*

*But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 1 Thessalonians 5:8 (NKJV)*

Hope means “a desire accompanied by *confident* expectation” as per the American Heritage Dictionary. Hope is the first step in our expectations towards God – a start of the walk of faith. Once we have hope, then faith is built on it, manifesting in our lives. Like the thermostat control to the air conditioner, so is hope to faith; the thermostat activates the power to run the air conditioner, while hope activates the power to generate faith. The result of the justification by faith is that we rejoice in the midst of trials and tribulations and that we can rejoice about eternal life and being in Heaven with God, when we believe that God loves us because of our faith in Him and not because of our performance for Him. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul states clearly that the gifts are temporal in nature,

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

whereas love, faith and hope are eternal. So, we are to have God’s kind of love, which never fails, never ceases. We will be walking with God’s kind of love for eternity.

In summary,

*Hope* is the first step towards faith

*Faith* activates the power to trust God

*Love* is the essence, the very being of ourselves

### **The Proof of Faith**

Good fruits must accompany true faith; otherwise, it is not an active faith, according to the word of God.

*What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? James 2:14 (NLT)*

*Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works. James 2:26 (NLT)*

Read from James 2:14–26

You will now understand that it is not possible to show your faith without fruits in your life.



*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

*For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love. Galatians 5:5–6 (NKJV)*

Faith working through love is the evidence of your Christian life. Only your good works or good fruits in your life are the proof you have faith. The Spirit of God helps us to produce these good fruits in our spirit.

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Galatians 5:22–23 (NKJV)*

The only proof that you have faith in British Airways is to buy a ticket, board the plane and travel without fear and anxiety. The only way you can prove that you have faith in a chair is to sit on it without doubting. The only way you prove your faith in a electric bulb is by switching it on and expect it to glow. We easily put our faith in all these objects in spite of knowing very well that planes can crash, chairs can break and bulbs can fuse. If we can so easily put our faith on these objects, why can't we put our faith in God who will never fail, never leave or forsake you? Just as above scriptures indicate, you have to show that you have true faith in your actions in response to the scriptural commandments.

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

## **God-Pleasing Faith**

*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)*

Faith is the only way to please God. Just a tiny bit would suffice. Remember the mustard-size mountain-moving faith!!

Finally,

Do you believe that God loves you more than anyone else does in the world?

Do you believe that God will provide for all your needs, that HE is capable of it?

Do you believe that God has more wisdom than anyone else? Do you believe that God knows your future?

If your answer is ‘yes’ to all of the above, then what is stopping you from believing in His commandments and trusting in HIM?

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

## **Prayer**

*“Father, I know that I have broken your laws and my sins have separated me from you. I confess I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for all that I have done in my life, and now I want to turn away from my past sinful life toward you. Please forgive me, and help me overcome sin in my life. I believe that your son, Jesus Christ, died for my sins, was resurrected from the dead, is alive, and hears my prayer. I invite Jesus to become the Lord of my life, to rule and reign in my heart from this day forward. Please give me your Holy Spirit to help me obey You, and to do Your will for the rest of my life. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.”*

***Now you are truly born again!  
Congratulations!!***

***You have understood about sin, true  
repentance and faith in God!***

***Having confessed with the true repentance,  
we welcome you to the Family of God!***

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

### **Further Reading**

*Faith without fruits is dead:* James 2:14,20,26; Matthew 7:21,23; Titus 1:16; Luke 6:46; 1 Corinthians 13:2; John 2:23,25; 8:30,31; 12:42,43

*Fruit without faith is deceptive:* James 2:18; 2 Timothy 3:5; 1 Corinthians 13:3; Matthew 5:20; 23:23,28; Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16, 3:10,11; Titus 3:4,5; Ephesians 2:8,10

*“Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23*

## **Notes**

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

## PURPOSE – FAMILY

You are here because God wants to add more children to His family!  
Exciting!!

Hebrews 2:10

*God is the One who made all things, and all things are for his glory. He wanted to have many children share his glory, so he made the One who leads people to salvation perfect through suffering. (NCV)*

What's more, you are called to be part of His family as *sons* and *daughters*, not as servants to serve HIM. We always think that Adam and Eve were created by God to tend and take care of the Garden – and that's complete delusion. Don't you know if God were in need of a gardener, He would have made one! He instead created Adam and Eve so that they would enjoy His fellowship in the garden. Recollect that even before Adam was asked to tend and take care of the garden, it was both fruitful and in order. God created Adam and Eve so that He can have a lasting relationship with them, showering upon them His abounding love.

For clarity, here are few scriptures:

John 1:12 (YLT)

*but as many as did receive him to them he gave authority to become sons of God—to those believing in his name*

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

1 John 3:1 (PHILLIPS)

*Consider the incredible love that the Father has shown us in allowing us to be called “children of God”—and that is not just what we are called, **but what we are.***

Romans 8:14–17 (NLT)

*For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “Abba, Father.”*

*For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children. And since we are his children, **we are his heirs**. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God’s glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.*

We are sons and hence we do not have a spirit that makes us fearful slaves – this is important to understand the difference between a son and a slave! My son has enormous privilege being a son in my family, that which a servant does not have! Let’s look at the below scenario:

Say you have bought a brand new car, and your son takes it for a drive. There is an accident. What would be your first reaction? “How is my son?” Change the scenario and put your driver on the wheel. The same accident.

But what would be your first reaction here? “How is my car?” Note the difference?

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

Jesus said in John 15:15 (NKJV), *No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

You have been adopted into the family of God!

Ephesians 1:5 (NLT)

*God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.*

What do we derive from the above?

- That you have been adopted into the family of God – may be you did not like your earthly father or even have one, but God has chosen to adopt you into HIS heavenly family
- That you are not a servant but a son of God, for you are given the authority to become His children
- That you have the inheritance from God and you are coheirs with Christ not only in Christ's sufferings but also in God's glory
- That this promise is a present-day reality, it is not something that may happen in the future – you are downright living it now!!!



*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

You have heard from me before and I will stress it all over again that Christianity is NOT a religion – it is a relationship with God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. No longer a foreigner or a stranger, you belong to the family of God. Ephesians 2:19 (NLT)

*So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners.*

*You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family.*

*Whether you are Poor or rich, Black or white or brown Tall or short or fat or thin*

*Asian or European or American or African or anything*

*You all belong to the family of God! You are not a servant*

*You are not a slave You are not an orphan*

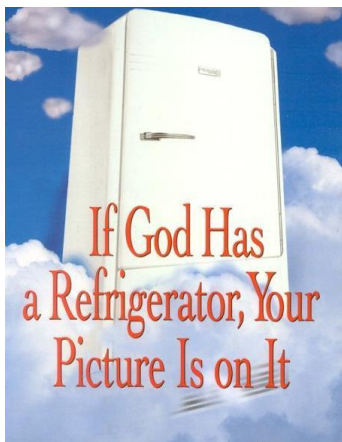
*But You are a child of God! Welcome to the family!!*

*In Mathew 6:9, Jesus taught us – "In this manner, therefore, pray:*

*Our Father in heaven,*

*Hallowed be Your name."*

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*



The Israelites could never call God their Father. Calling God as Father was first introduced by Jesus. In His own communication with God, Jesus always addressed Him as Father. It is indeed a privilege to call God “our Father.” Back during the Old Testament days, God taught the Jews His unapproachable holiness by putting a veil in the temple, behind which was the most holy place, where He dwelt. None can approach God except the High Priest once a year, and

there was a clear separation between people and God. If you had ever told someone of the Old Testament days that God will tear open the veil one day and allow us to call HIM “Abba Father,” surely we would have been taken for a blasphemer. Yet God, in His own wisdom and love, has offered these privileges to us in the New Testament today! God tore the veil in two from top to bottom when Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27:51 – *Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split*). Thus, it has provided us the freedom to access God anytime and call HIM as our Father! If ever we knew what it was like to be under the Old Covenant, we would be eternally thankful and grateful to our Father for this our privilege of sonship!

While Jesus was on the earth, He spoke about many things through parables. Luke 15 on the *prodigal son* is yet another clear example of what an awesome Father we have! The son in the parable wanted the father to die because he wanted all his share of the property, but when

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

he returns home pathetic after wasting all, his father is more than happy to have him back. As soon as he sees him still far off, the father runs to embrace his son and welcome him back home, hugging and kissing him all the way. Can you picture God as the father here running to hug and welcome you the sinner – the only instance in the Bible where God is seen running towards a repentant sinner!

Let us now look at the first instance where Jesus openly talks about our sonship. When Jesus rose from the dead, He encounters Mary Magdalene outside the tomb and says to her, in John 20:17 (NKJV), the following:

*... "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"*

This is great news! That God is not only Jesus' Father, but ours as well!

The Father–Son relationship did not exist for anyone before except for Jesus Christ! Thanks to His redemption that we now can have this same relationship with God, with the Spirit of His Son in us, we can call God "Abba Father"! This means the relationship is far better than any human mind can possibly imagine: we can walk with Him, talk with Him, laugh with Him, sit on His lap, share our worries, and have a marvellous relationship with Him overall. But not all agree as some of us are still clinging on to the Old Covenant ways, for whom God is still residing far off, picking on us when we fall back and punishing us when we don't listen.

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

For them God is strict, angry, and very mean. Many preachers are emphatic about the *wrath* of God. My heart's cry is that you will see and know God as your Father, a close and personal one!

Also, there's a thought lingering among many that only pastors and preachers can hear from God and speak to God. Yet another rampant lie. In my opinion, our God is like a father who is more patient and all ears to his 5-year-old child than to his 20-year-old. He is more attentive and sensitive to those who cannot express themselves in a way that others can understand. The essence is, He understands no matter how weak and feeble your expressions may be! For He is your Father!

Hebrews 8:11 (YLT)

*and they shall not teach each his neighbour, and each his brother, saying, Know thou the Lord, because they shall all know Me from the small one of them unto the great one of them*

Whether you have been a Christian for donkey years or you have come to know the Lord only yesterday, it doesn't matter – you still can call Him as your Father boldly.

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

### **What is this family of God made of?**

John 1:13 (NKJV)

*who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh,  
nor of the will of man, but of God.*

It does not matter how and where you were born but when you accept the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, you are born of God. None of us had the opportunity to choose our parents but we can choose to become the members of God's family.

Galatians 3:26 (NKJV)

*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

Where is this family now?

1 Timothy 3:14–15 (NKJV)

*These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

Today, our church – the holy house of God – where God is our Father and Jesus our Elder Brother and we, as brothers and sisters in Christ, love and care and share each other's burdens is where the family is. You have been called by God to belong to the family of God!

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

Romans 1:6 (NKJV)

*among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ*

The Church is called the *Bread, Body, Vineyard, and Flock* in the scriptures. We who are God's children have been called to become like His son!

Romans 8:28–29 (NLT)

*We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are **called** according to his **purpose for them**. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them **to become like His son**, so that his Son would be the firstborn, with many brothers and sisters.*

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT)

*All of us have had that veil removed so that we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, **we become** more and more like him and reflect his glory even more.*

So if you are son or a child of God, then you have a Father! What kind of a Father do we have?

Once you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, you are no more a stranger to God, which we have already seen in our lessons in Phase I. You are not an orphan, even though you may sometimes feel lonely. The heavenly Father loves you and sees you as one of his children – His prized possession:

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

2 Corinthians 6:17–18 (NIV)

*'I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,' says the Lord Almighty.*

1 John 3:1 (NIV)

*How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*

No matter how old you are, it is comforting to know that you are a child of God. You belong to a loving protective Father. The omnipresent God, who is everywhere, keeps watch over you and is always ready to listen when you want to talk with him. But the privileges just don't end there. Since you have been adopted into the family, you have the same rights as Jesus:

Romans 8:17 (NIV)

*Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

If you want to be a child of God, then it is your faith in Christ that would lead you to become one. As Galatians 3:26–27 (NLT) put it, *For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes.* This verse also tells us how our faith leads us to be children of God. It says,

*“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” The word for as used in this scripture is a preposition, which means for the purpose of or in order to be. Therefore, we are baptized for the purpose of or in order to be God’s children.*

1 Peter 5:10 (NCV)

*After you suffer for a short time, God, who gives all grace, will make everything right. He will make you strong and support you and keep you from falling. **He called you** to share in his glory in Christ, a glory that will continue forever.*

John 3:2 (NLT)

*Dear friends, we are already God’s children, and we can’t even imagine what we will be like when Christ returns. But we do know that when he comes we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is!*



*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

**A letter from your Father! God!!**

*My Child,*

*You may not know Me, but I know everything about you  
(Psalm 139:1)*

*I know when you sit down and when you rise up (Psalm  
139:2)*

*I am familiar with all your ways (Psalm 139:3)*

*Even the very hairs on your head are numbered (Matthew  
10:29–31)*

*For you were made in My image (Genesis 1:27)*

*In Me you live and move and have your being (Acts 17:28)*

*For you are My offspring (Acts 17:28)*

*I knew you even before you were conceived (Jeremiah  
1:4–5)*

*I chose you when I planned creation (Ephesians 1:11–12)*

*You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in My  
book (Psalm 139:15–16)*

*I determined the exact time of your birth and where you*

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

*would live (Acts 17:26)*

*You are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14)*

*I knit you together in your mother's womb (Psalm 139:13)*

*And brought you forth on the day you were born (Psalm  
71:6)*

*I have been misrepresented by those who don't know Me  
(John 8:41-44)*

*I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression  
of love (1 John 4:16)*

*And it is My desire to lavish My love on you (1 John 3:1)*

*Simply because you are My child and I am your Father (1  
John 3:1)*

*I offer you more than your earthly father ever could  
(Matthew 7:11)*

*For I am the perfect Father (Matthew 5:48)*

*Every good gift that you receive comes from My hand (James 1:17)*

*For I am your provider and I meet all your need (Matthew  
6:31-33)*

*My plan for your future has always been filled with hope*

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

*(Jeremiah 29:11)*

*Because I love you with an everlasting love (Jeremiah  
31:3)*

*My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the  
seashore (Psalm 139:17 -18)*

*And I rejoice over you with singing (Zephaniah 3:17)*

*I will never stop doing good to you (Jeremiah 32:40)*

*For you are My treasured possession (Exodus 19:5)*

*I desire to establish you with all My heart and all My soul  
(Jeremiah 32:41)*

*And I want to show you great and marvellous things  
(Jeremiah 33:3)*

*If you seek Me with all your heart, you will find Me  
(Deuteronomy 4:29)*

*Delight in Me and I will give you the desires of your heart  
(Psalm 37:4)*

*For it is I who gave you those desires (Philippians 2:13)*

*I am able to do more for you than you could possibly  
imagine (Ephesians 3:20)*

*For I am your greatest Encourager (2*

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

*Thessalonians 2:16–17)*

*I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles  
(2 Corinthians 1:3–4)*

*When you are broken-hearted, I am close to you (Psalm  
34:18)*

*As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to My  
heart (Isaiah 40:11)*

*One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes  
(Revelation 21:3–4)*

*And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this  
earth (Revelation 21:3–4)*

*I am your Father, and I love you even as I love My Son, Jesus  
(John 17:23)*

*For in Jesus, My love for you is revealed (John 17:26) He is  
the exact representation of My being (Hebrews 1:3)*

*He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you  
(Romans 8:31) And to tell you that I am not counting your  
sins (2 Corinthians 5:18–19)*

*Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled (2  
Corinthians 5:18–19)*

*His death was the ultimate expression of My love for you (1*

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

*John 4:10)*

*I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love  
(Romans 8:31–32)*

*If you receive the gift of My Son Jesus, you receive Me (1  
John 2:23)*

*And nothing will ever separate you from My love again  
(Romans 8:38–39)*

*Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has  
ever seen (Luke 15:7)*

*I have always been Father, and will always be Father  
(Ephesians 3:14–15)*

*My question is, "Will you be My child?" (John 1:12–13)*

***I am waiting for you. (Luke 15:11–32)***

*Love,*

*Your Dad,*

*Almighty God.*

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child(ren)!*

***Welcome to this wonderful Family of God!!***

*God is your Father! You are His beloved child!*

## **Notes**

*HE loves me not because of who I am but in spite of who I am*

## PURPOSE – LOVE

*What is so amazing about God's love?*

*HE loves me not because of who I am but in spite of  
who I am! – Abraham D. John*

We have seen in our previous lesson that the primary reason we are here on this planet is that God wanted to have a family. HE loves you and wants to show His unfailing love for you in spite of all your failings and miserable deeds.

1 John 4:16 (NKJV)

*And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. **God is love**, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.*

God's character is Love! It's not that God has love but God *is* Love.

1 John 4:8 (NKJV)

*He who does not love does not know God, for **God is love**.*

People often don't get what an awesome and amazing God we have who loves us unconditionally. In the creation account, God did not create the Garden of Eden and go about looking for a gardener to maintain it. Instead, He created the Garden of Eden and put man right in the middle of it so that mankind can enjoy and dwell in His love. Somehow, people have missed out on this very purpose. If He were looking for someone to tend His garden, I'm sure His word could have taken care of it.

*HE loves me not because of who I am but in spite of who I am*

Ephesians 2:4 (AMP)

*But God—so rich is He in His mercy! Because of and in order to satisfy the great and wonderful and intense love with which He loved us*

So when did this all-powerful God fall in love with me? Let's look into the Scripture for answers. In my opinion, if I were ever asked, Genesis Chapter 1 verse 1 should have been preceded by two other scriptures foundational to our belief, in this order:

John 1:1 (NKJV)

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

Followed by Ephesians 1:4–5 (NLT)

*Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. His **unchanging plan** has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure.*

Then follows Genesis 1:1 (NKJV)

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*



*HE loves me not because of who I am but in spite of who I am*

Just imagine, before He could even start creating the world, **you** were on HIS mind – HE has seen you already. Such is the Love of God towards you! Ephesians 1:4 – also our 2013 promise verse – underscores the fact that God chose us (you) even before the foundation of the world to be adopted into His own family.

- When did that happen? Before anything ever existed!
- Will it come through? His plans are unchanging!!
- Why? Because it gives HIM pleasure!!!

You are a wonderful and an amazing creation of God fashioned by His very hands!

People don't realise this love of God and are wasting away leading miserable lives. Just as we see in the Lost Son Parable in Luke 15, there are many so-called 'elder brothers' in the churches today sincerely serving God for all the wrong reasons.

**God loves you as much as HE loved Jesus**

*God loves you and God bless you* – is a common greeting and sign-off. But do we realise that GOD IS LOVE, rather than that 'God has love'? Saying it has become so common that we have lost the in-depth meaning of it, just as we Londoners don't find Westminster Abbey or Buckingham Palace as amusing as someone new to the city or just in for a few days finds it.

John 3:16 – that "God so loved the world He gave His only begotten son that whoever believes in Him will have everlasting life" – is a quote that most people are aware of. What is significant and hard to fathom is that His love for each and every one is so different. The love of God for every individual is

*HE loves me not because of who I am but in spite of who I am*

unique! God does not create duplicates; He is not in the cloning business. You are a unique wonder created by God.

As Psalms 139:13–16 (NLT) explain:

*You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.*

*Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.*

*You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.*

*You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.*

Your physical body is an awesome wonder! Even after thousands of years of research on the intricacy of the human body, scientists and scholars are baffled at how little they know about its complexity.

The fingerprint on your fingertips, formed while you were in your mother's womb, may hold no other significance than that it aids in gripping things. Each finger may have around 70 to 100 lines with different shapes and in different formats. Did

you know that your fingerprint does not match with any other person –

**You are a wonder!!**



*HE loves me not because of who I am but in spite of who I am*

living or dead – on the planet earth of over 6 billion people? If God has put in so much effort to even making your fingerprint as unique as it is, how much more will He not care for you and love you. Remember you are God’s workmanship – not a mistake.

Ephesians 2:10

*For we are **God’s masterpiece**. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (NLT)*

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

The original Greek word “ποίημα” (*poiēma*) – from which we get the English word “poem” – is translated as “*masterpiece*” in the Living Translation and as “*workmanship*” in the New King James Version. Before penning a poem, one needs to fall in love firstly with the person, place or thing the poem is all about. Just imagine how head-over-heels in love God must be with you to create such a wonderful and marvellous masterpiece – a love poem from His heart!!

***YOU are Unique!***

***There is no ONE like you on this planet!!***

***There is no ONE at all who is as good, as beautiful,  
and as talented as you are!!!***

*HE loves me not because of who I am but in spite of who I am*

**God loves you the same way HE loved Jesus!**

John 17:23

*I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and **have loved them as You have loved Me.***

*God loves me the same way He loved Jesus!*

*God loves you the same way He loved Jesus!!*

*Secure yourself in this  
TRUTH.*

Jesus had the security that God loved HIM, so there was no insecurity in Him at all. When we secure ourselves that God loves us the same way as He had loved Jesus, we will not have any insecurity because we will always be secured in His love. As a child of God, do NOT have any insecurity whatsoever.

People may forsake you, leave you, ridicule you, throw stones at you, but God loves you and God is with you – always. The love of God will secure you in His plans, so your focus in life will be about the will of God. No crisis or adversity can shake you.



*HE loves me not because of who I am but in spite of who I am*

Look at Jesus at the time of crisis.

John 16:32

*Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone.*

*And yet I am not alone, **because the Father is with Me.***

Jesus made the above statement just before going to the cross. He had spent little over 3 years in His public ministry performing healing and miracles among the multitudes, who followed HIM. But He is now left with only 11 disciples. Soon, they too will desert Him. Just ponder on the verse above for a minute. Despite all this, Jesus astonishingly says that He is not alone. Have that kind of a secured love of God in you. When you are secured in God's love, there is absolutely no fear.

Many people think or are taught to believe that faith is the opposite of fear but the scripture says otherwise.

1 John 4:18 states that *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."*

Thus, having the love of God will cast out the fear in you, not just having faith. The love of God will do a perfect work in your life so you will be able to cast out every fear. For we have God's assurance with us – "I will never leave you ... will be with you always!"

*HE loves me not because of who I am but in spite of who I am*

Hebrews 13:5

*For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you"*

Look at the life of Jesus: Right from His birth to His death, all has been prophesied in the scriptures. And over 300 prophecies have been fulfilled.

To name a few, His birthplace, His departure to Egypt, His death on the cross, even His cloth cast into lot, were all spot on!

Every time the prophecy was fulfilled, the scripture says that it happened so that the scripture might be fulfilled (as in Matthew 26:54,56; Mark 14:49, 15:28; Luke 4:21, 24:44; John 13:18, 17:12, 19:24 & 19:28).

Thus, it is beyond a doubt that every event of Jesus' life was very well planned, including His birth, ministry, arrest, crucifixion, resurrection and His coming. God has planned this for Jesus because HE loved HIM.

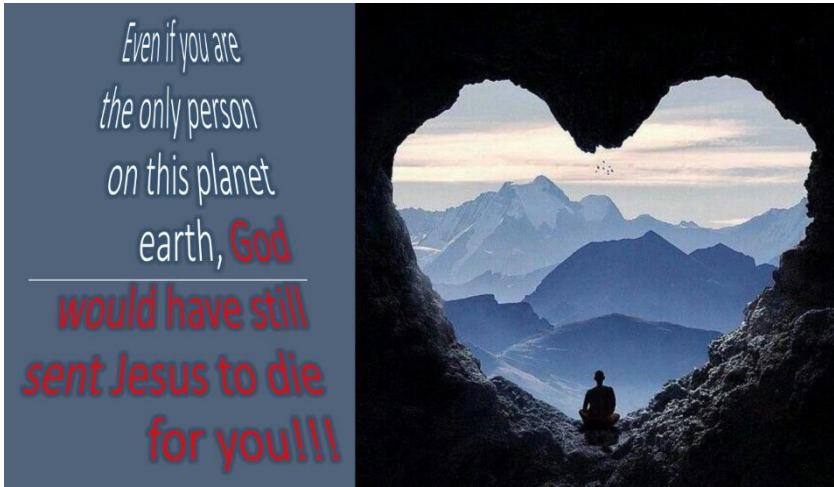
Revelation 13:8

*"All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**"*

This verse clearly states that Jesus was slain even before the foundation of the world. For God had pre-planned every detail of His life, and **yours** too because HE loves you! If God has done that to Jesus and if HE loves us the same way He loved Jesus, then should you and I have any worry or insecurity in our life?

*HE loves me not because of who I am but in spite of who I am*

Can you experience this truth in your life?



Even if you were the only person on the planet earth, God would have still sent Jesus to die for you!!! This truth should set you free. This has set me free and brought me to liberty, and I pray that you will also be free!

For **we** are called to live in His love.

Jude 1:1 (NLT)

*This letter is from Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. I am writing to all who are called to live in the love of God the Father and in the care of Jesus Christ.*

*HE loves me not because of who I am but in spite of who I am*

It is not about a one-off experience with God. HE wants us to cherish His love all throughout our life – 365 days a year and 24/7! When you realise how much God loves you, it becomes easy for you to live in His love daily!

Romans 1:7 (NLT)

*I am writing to all of you in Rome who are loved by God and are called to be his own holy people. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.*

The love of God is greater than the mighty ocean and anything you could ever imagine. You are called to live in this love.

Ephesians 3:17–19 (NLT)

*Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.*

### **Jesus loves you the same way God loves you!**

Jesus says that He loves us the same way the Father loved Him: John 15:9 (NKJV) – “*As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.*” We have seen in the beginning of the lesson that God loves us the same way HE loved Jesus (John 17:23), and we here now see that Jesus loves us the same way God loved HIM.



*HE loves me not because of who I am but in spite of who I am*

We see in John 17:26 (NKJV) the following: *And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.*

Thus, when we abide in Christ, His love and God's love will abide in us continually! For His love is the *only* reason you and I are in this world.

1 John 3:1 (MSG)

*What marvellous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it—we're called children of God! That's who we really are.*

Enjoy this marvellous love of God in your life!

Jesus told His disciples, "The Father Himself loves you" (John 16:27). He also told them that if their heavenly Father fed the birds and clothed the flowers, He would certainly take care of them. There was no need for them to be anxious then, for their heavenly Father knew all their needs (Matthew 6:26–34). He also told them that if earthly fathers knew how to give good gifts to their children, their heavenly Father would certainly give good things to His children too (Matthew 7:11). You might find all these very elementary. Yet, many a time when we come to God in prayer we don't really believe that God is going to grant us our request because we are not sure of His tender, loving, fatherly care for us. Thus, we limit God by our unbelief. Do you really believe that when you pray, you are speaking to a loving Father who delights to hear you and who cares for you?

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## **Nothing can separate you from the love of God!**

Romans 8:37–39 (NLV)

*But we have power over all these things through Jesus who loves us so much. For I know that nothing can keep us from the love of God. Death cannot! Life cannot! Angels cannot! Leaders cannot! Any other power cannot! Hard things now or in the future cannot! The world above or the world below cannot! Any other living thing cannot keep us away from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.*

There is absolutely nothing that can separate you from the love of God because HE is LOVE!

Deuteronomy 7:9 (NLT)

*Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands.*

Lamentations 3:22 (NLT)

*The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease.*

The fact that you cannot be separated from the love of God has nothing to do with you – it is His character! His love knows no end!!

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As we have seen in a previous lesson, Christ died for each and every one of us while we were

- without strength (Romans 5:6)
- still sinners (Romans 5:8)
- enemies of God (Romans 5:10)

That He did because He loves us so much! Before concluding, I remember the question Murugan – one of our brothers in Christ – had posted during our home group meeting, asking if a young child be able to comprehend the love of the father, reflecting back to his own relationship with his father and mother and their love for him while he was young. Answering that, it is impossible for a one-year-old (or even older) to understand how much his/her parents love him/her and that their entire life is dedicated to him/her. If we – being evil, as the Bible calls us – could love our children so much irrespective of whether or not they can understand it, is it even possible to describe the love that our God, the heavenly Father, bestows upon us?

How do we receive this love of God into our hearts?

Romans 5:5

*And hope will never let us down. God has poured his love into our hearts. He did it through the Holy Spirit, whom he has given to us. (NIRV)*

*And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love. (NLT)*

*HE loves me not because of who I am but in spite of who I am*

The Holy Spirit we receive from God pours out His love into our hearts.  
Can you experience this love in your heart today?

It's time you look to God for Love – and not to anyone else – so that you  
will be able to love one another as He has commanded.

2 Thessalonians 2:16–17 (NKJV)

*Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and  
Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting  
consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts  
and establish you in every good word and work.*

Are you ready to take time to experience the love of God in your heart today  
so that you can be strengthened and comforted?

## **Prayer**

This is my prayer for you today – Ephesians 3:19:

*May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too  
great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete  
with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.  
(NLT)*

*to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that  
you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (NKJV)*

*HE loves me not because of who I am but in spite of who I am*

## **Notes**

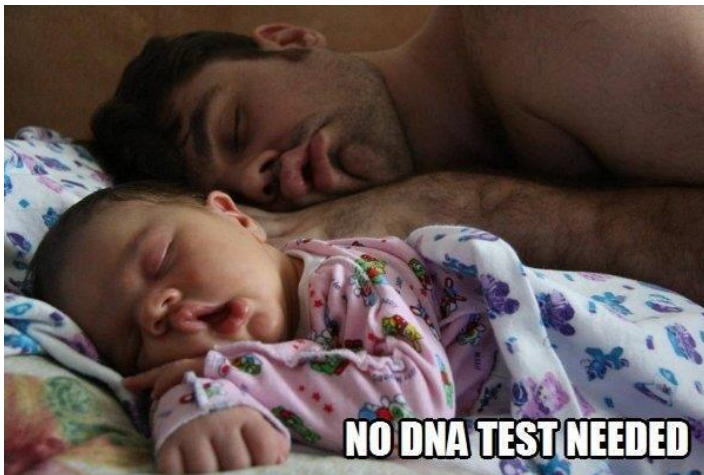
*Like Father Like Son*

PURPOSE – BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

*Like Father Like Son*

God's purpose for us can be summed up in the following 3 statements in that order:

1. *To be the part of the Family of God as HIS beloved children*
2. *To receive the Love of God to be His children*
3. *To Become like Jesus Christ!*



You don't have to imitate your dad to be like him; for you already have his imprints – his genes that have passed on to you – in you that make you more like him. Along the same lines, once you have God in you, when

## *Like Father Like Son*

you accept him and have received him, you don't have to pretend to be like someone else, for the Spirit of God – God's imprint – will make you to be more like Him to be HIS child!!

Romans 8:28–30 (NLT):

*And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.*

The above passage is not only one of the most misunderstood in the Bible but also the most misapplied and abused one. It does NOT imply that all (everything) that happens to you and to me is from God and is used by God to accomplish His purpose. Beware, the Bible nowhere teaches us that. Let me bring it to your attention that 1 Timothy 2:4 and 2 Peter 3:9 say that it is God's will that none should perish but everyone should be saved, but we see thousands upon thousands reject God and heading in a different direction. Jesus came and died for every human, but many reject this salvation wilfully. So let's just say that not everything that happens, happens according to the will of God.

Good things and bad things happen to all people. If you are a Christian, then you are not promised of safe passage in your life. In fact, the Bible advocates that you will have more troubles if you are Christian. What the

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Bible promises is that God will be with you and He will see you through the troubles. He will supply you with His mercy and grace anew every morning.

So how should a Christian look at trouble then? As an opportunity for God to do something in your life.

Let's now look at the above passage in this different light.

Verse 28 starts with an “and,” meaning that the “everything-works-together-for-our-good” statement was made after the work of Holy Spirit who intercedes for us. If we do not cooperate with the Holy Spirit so that He can intercede for us, then nothing will work together for our good.

Romans 8:27 (NKJV):

*Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

So when we pray in the spirit, we know all things work for good. The preceding two verses, 25 and 26, say that we do not know what we should pray for!

Don't you know what you should pray for?

Yes, we know with our limited ability – there are things that we see and foresee, but there are other things that we don't see or foresee. Thus, only with the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit's intercession can we know exactly what to pray for.



## *Like Father Like Son*

Please take time to read the entire portion of this section to have a better understanding on this.

Romans 8:29 (NKJV):

*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

The word "foreknowledge" refers to God knowing who would accept His offer of salvation in advance of them actually doing it. The Scripture teaches us that we, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). That's how infinite God's ability is to know our choices in advance.

Here is the shocker for you! The Scripture also reveals that there are some things that God does not know!!

Twice in the book of Jeremiah, as we see in Chapters 19:5 and 32:35,

*They have built pagan shrines to Baal, and there they burn their sons as sacrifices to Baal. I have never commanded such a horrible deed; it never even crossed my mind to command such a thing! (NLT)*

*They have built pagan shrines to Baal in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, and there they sacrifice their sons and daughters to Molech. I have never commanded such a horrible deed; it never even crossed my mind to command such a thing. What an incredible evil, causing Judah to sin so greatly! (NLT)*

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God mentions that the fact that people would offer their children as sacrifices to demon gods never had entered His mind. There are some things that God Himself said He had never foreseen. May be that the Lord has the ability to know everything in advance, but He simply chooses not to exercise that ability in every situation of our life.

God wanted to know whether the actions of the people who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah were as bad as it had been reported to God, so HE sent His angels to check on them (Genesis 18:20 – 19:29). Even in the case where the Lord tested Abraham (Genesis 22:1–10), after the test, *He [God] said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me"* (Genesis 22:12). The Lord repented for choosing Saul to be king when He saw the way he had turned out to be (1 Samuel 15:11). There are so many other examples in the Scripture that insist the very point.

God's ability to know all things in advance is limitless, but by His choice, God does not know every detail. Understanding foreknowledge provides the foundation for understanding predestination, calling, and election.

The word "predestinate" means to predetermine. "Predestinate" and "predestinated" are only used four times in the New Testament (Romans 8:29–30; Ephesians 1:5, and 11). People have interpreted this doctrine as saying that God predetermines everything in people's lives, including whether they will be saved or lost. This interpretation is not in line with other doctrines or examples in Scripture. This kind of theology only misleads people to be lazy and it will annihilate the motivation to fight evil and do good. If God predetermines everything that happens in people's lives, then everything that happens to them is God's will – even

### *Like Father Like Son*

sin. That is so not true. Also, it robs the privilege of our free will, making us robots.

Romans 8:29 limits God's predestination to only those whom He foreknew. This means that only those people who God knew would accept His free offer of salvation have been predestined. He does not predestine people to be saved or lost. Those whom He foreknew in Christ have been predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ.

God gave all people free will, and God will not violate that free will except in judgment. Even in judgment, God is only enforcing the choices that people have already made of their own free will.

As Romans 8:28 stresses, God works everything together for good for those who already love Him. And even then He does not take away their free will. Everything that happens to them is not good, and it is not from God. However, God, in His infinite wisdom, can work it together for good. This verse provides great reassurance to believers that God is for them and working with them to bring them to the complete stature of the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

This English word "firstborn" was translated from the Greek word "PROTOTOKOS." According to Strong's Concordance, this is a compound Greek word comprising "PROTOS," which means "foremost (in time, place, order or importance)," and "TIKTO," which means "to produce (from seed etc.)." Therefore, this word "firstborn" could refer to either first in order or importance. Both of these applications are true of Jesus.

*Like Father Like Son*

The extent that we will be conformed to the image of Jesus so there are other children who will become just like Jesus, and it is in this sense that "firstborn" is used here.

## *Like Father Like Son*

To sum up, your destiny is – becoming like God’s first Son Jesus Christ! So you can become brothers and sisters to Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!!

First things first, to become like Jesus, you need to know who Jesus is. If you want to become like Christ, you need the revelation from God about the true person of Christ.

Colossians 3: 9–11 (NLT)

*Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.*

So where does this revelation come from then? It comes from God’s very word – the Scripture – which enables us to know Christ and His life so that we can become like Him.

If you study law books, then you will become a lawyer; medical books, then doctor; and so on, in the same way, if you study the Bible, then you will become a scholar but our purpose is NOT to gain Biblical knowledge but to know Jesus as our Lord and Saviour and become LIKE HIM!!

In the beginning was Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God (John 1:1). That Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). Jesus is the exact representation of God himself (Hebrews 1:3).

## *Like Father Like Son*

So while we can study Christ and try to be like Him, studying God and His Word also teaches us about being like Christ.

*When you study the entire Bible, you are learning about both God and Christ. When you study and obey the entire Scripture, you are being conformed to the image of Christ.*

### **We have been called to be like the image of Christ.**

1 Peter 2:20–21 (NKJV)

*For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.*

Jesus is our example for us to follow. In the coming lessons, we will look at in detail the main attributes of Jesus' earthly life. But what is that one example that we can learn from Jesus for all of our life?

### **This question brings us to Jesus' mission!**

*John 6:38 (NKJV): "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."*

*John 4:34 (NKJV): "Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.'"*

## *Like Father Like Son*

Significantly, Jesus' very first recorded words expressed the same. At the age of twelve, He reminded His earthly parents, "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). That is to say, "I am here to serve my heavenly Father, and nothing will ever interfere with that."

Even in the garden of Gethsemane before going to the cross, Jesus prayed that not His but His Father's will be done.

*Matthew 26:39 (NKJV): "He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.'"*

Jesus was very clear in that He had a purpose when HE came down to earth from Heaven and HE fulfilled them all. This was clear in His last words before death: "*I have finished the work which You gave me to do*" (John 17:4 NKJV)

Overall, throughout His earthly life, Jesus did everything that was according to the will of Father who had sent Him.

## *Like Father Like Son*

### **What did Jesus do on earth that pleased God?**

Everything that Jesus did on the earth pleased God the Father – all the time!

*John 8:29 (NIV): "The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."*

It was not just one day that Jesus did what pleased God; look at where the stress lies in the verse – *always!*

*John 5:30 (NKJV): "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me."*

Hebrews 10: 7–10

*Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.'"*  
*Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

When Jesus went into the temple and cleansed it twice – one early on in His ministry, and the other towards the end – can you imagine that Jesus simply sat and made a whip out of cords to chase the money changers from the temple?



## *Like Father Like Son*

John 2:13–17 (NKJV):

*Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."*

Nothing but the zeal for God's house! He had such passion and affection for the glory of the Lord that using the house of God for personal gain angered Him immensely.

Second time in Matthew 21:12–13:

*Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"*

## *Like Father Like Son*

Father's glory and doing His will was Jesus' consuming passion all through His life. This was His whole purpose in life.

*Philippians 2:8: "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."*

To top it all, Jesus' dying on the cross was His ultimate submission to God's will. If I may stress again, it was not only at the cross that Jesus obeyed His Father but up until His death and all through His life, He chose to obey His Father and God. Not that He was at fault or He deserved such a death, but because of obedience to the word of God for no one could find any fault in Christ.

- The religious leaders could not
- Pilate could not
- Pilate's wife could not
- The thief could not
- None could!

Jesus had no sin in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says that Jesus who knew no sin became sin for us! But to die the death of a sinner was for us to become the children of God!

## **How Jesus submitted?**

Philippians 2:13–16 (NKJV):

*for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or laboured in vain.*

As the above verses stress, we need to hold on to Him for Him to work in our lives. God works in us as we let Him do what He intends to do with/in our life. Salvation is His work in our life; we can never earn it! But holding on to Him until He completes that work in our life is our bit to do.

Our focus here in this lesson is – what does the work of our Father God accomplish in our lives. Let us look at what our responsibilities are for us to be conformed to the image of His Son in the forthcoming lessons.

**Jesus commanded us to Follow Him!**



This picture is of a very rare breed of hunting dogs. These dogs are used as pointers in hunting, and while hunting, each pointer follows the exact footsteps of the pointer in the lead and takes guard, at each last point left by the leading pointer. It is so amazing to see how they protect the points with such mutual understanding with so less obvious communication! It comes quite natural to them, for the young ones to follow the lead of their parents. Then, should it be

difficult for us to do the same. To follow the lead of Jesus?

For, it is not a suggestion from Jesus but a commandment: "Follow me."

*Matthew 4:19: "Then He said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.'"*

*Matthew 16:24: "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'"*

*Mark 1:17: "Then Jesus said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.'"*

## *Like Father Like Son*

*Mark 10:21: "Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, 'One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.'"*

*Luke 5:27: "After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, 'Follow Me.'"*

*Luke 18: 22: "So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, 'You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.'"*

*John 1: 43: "The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow Me.'"*

*John 21:19: "This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, 'Follow Me.'"*

Jesus would not have commanded us to follow HIM if we could not. Jesus did NOT come and live as God on this earth in His first coming. He set aside His divinity (Philippians 2:5-9) and lived as a human being anointed by the Holy Spirit and in right relationship with God. Right now, here on this earth we are carrying the same presence of God, with Jesus Christ living in us as the Spirit of God. That's why we are called Christians, for it is no longer us but Christ who lives in us (Galatians 2:20)!

## *Like Father Like Son*

### **God works in you!**

Here is the wonderful comforting news!

As long as you are in Christ and are led by the power of the Holy Spirit, God will be able to work in your life and bring you *holy* and *blameless* before His eyes.

You've got to do what the Spirit of God directs you to do.

*Philippians 3:12 (NKJV): "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me."*



His hand stretches out from heaven to hold on to yours! This simple gesture of reaching your hand out to His in faith is the first step. Now no looking back, just tighten your grip of your hands with Him; He would never leave you and your bit to do is to hang on.

As Christ holds you, hold on to Him, and that's God fulfilling His call upon your life, and that's why He holds you.

## *Like Father Like Son*

Hebrews 13:20–21:

*Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

God will work in you through Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd who shed His blood to redeem you, so that you will become complete in every good work for His glory.

- Christ will work in you for every good work
- Christ will make you complete in every good work
- Christ will work in you that it might be pleasing in the sight of God
- In the end of all, God gets the glory through your life!

What a wonderful life we can lead then!!

Ephesians 5:26–27 (NKJV)

*that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

### *Like Father Like Son*

- Christ will sanctify you with His word!
- Christ will present you to Himself!
- Christ will cleanse you so that you are spotless or blemish-free!
- Christ will make you Holy!

As we have seen in our previous lesson how much God loves us that He sent His one and only Son to die on the cross to redeem us so that we can be holy and without blemish. This brings enormous pleasure to God so that He will have many sons and daughters who will love Him and live in His holiness!

Jude sums it up very well in the following:

*Jude 1: V24–25( NKJV), Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,*

*And to present you faultless*

*Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Saviour,*

*Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.*

So, who can keep you from stumbling in your life? God!

There are many situations and circumstances in our life that threaten our right standing with God, but always remember that it is God who is holding you. That you many not stumble!



## *Like Father Like Son*

This He does so He can present us faultless in the presence of His glory with exceeding joy! Just rely on Him for Him to complete the good work He began in you!

### **Conclusion**

My prayer is that you will have great comfort and confidence in the work of God in your life from the above four scriptures which shows so clearly that God works in your life to make you like His son Jesus Christ!

*Like Father Like Son*

**Notes**

*God's heart is not moved by the music, nor by the traditions and rituals –  
but by your desire and passion towards Him*

## PURPOSE – WORSHIP

***“Human beings by their very nature are worshipers.***

***Worship is not something we do; it defines who we  
are. You cannot divide human beings into those who  
worship and those who don't.***

***Everybody worships; it's just a matter of what, or  
whom, we serve.”***

***—Paul David Tripp***

God created humans to worship Him – the right response to God by the Spirit through Jesus Christ. When does this worship begin? With the revelation of God – when the holy and glorious God shows up, His people worship Him.

To jog your memory, God brought you to this earth because He wanted a family! This is our first purpose. Secondly, He loved us so much that we are taken into His family as His beloved children. Thirdly, God wants us to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, so that each of us will become like Jesus Christ on this earth. And here on this week's study, the fourth purpose for which God created us is that we *worship* HIM all of our life!

**What does 'worship' mean?**

*God's heart is not moved by the music, nor by the traditions and rituals –  
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Let's first look at what the word 'worship' actually means. In Hebrew, 'shachah' pronounced as "shä·khä" appears 172 times in the Old Testament and in Greek 'proskyneō' pronounced as "pros-kü-ne'-ō" appears 60 times in the New Testament. Both these words mean to bow down or prostrate before God in the floor. These are not the only words translated 'worship' and even these words are not always translated 'worship'.



The two other most commonly used words for worship are 'aboda' (Hebrew; also - *abad* or *asab*) and 'latreia' (Greek; also - *latreuo*).

When translated as worship in the Old Testament, these words typically mean service associated with the work done in the temple.

## **Presumptions about Worship**

### ***a) A Purpose Misunderstood!***

Presumably, there's an air of misconception about the term 'worship'.

Do you think God is an egoistic maniac to expect his children to keep singing Him praise so He can feel good about it? Every living creature

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declares the Glory of God (Romans 1:20) . So when you fulfil your purpose in your life, God gets the glory, the result of which is worship! When you look at a beautiful picture, and after you 've appreciated enough for what it is, your natural tendency would be to seek the one behind it and laud him/her with praise. This is pretty much what we are talking about. Every handiwork of God would lead us to adore Him with praise – one that comes without compulsion and effortlessly.

***b) It is NOT about Music!***



Because of our various different backgrounds, denominations and traditions, we tend to have in our mind varying ideas and principles about worship. But let me tell you, worship was never about the music. In fact, the word 'music' first appears in the Bible at Genesis 4:21, yet

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Adam worshiped God! For many of us, worship is synonymous with music or singing – a big misunderstanding! Not just singing with music, every part of our service – all our life – should be an act of worship to God.

Often, in churches today, there more than 2 groups of people biased with the choice of music for worship. One preferring the old school ways of singing hymns, and on the other side we have the rock and contemporary genres, to name a few. Generally, on a Sunday, we hear a couple of fast-paced songs, followed by some praise and worship. But let me tell you, God is not interested in any particular genre, mood, or song choice. It is the people's liking, it has nothing to do with God's taste – He is quite happy with a joyful noise!

One Sunday, in a congregation, a believer comes up to the pastor applauding the worship service that day, calling it 'moving' – he also calls it a contrast to the previous week's, which, to him, was very slow. Well, the pastor said, "you've completely missed the point – it's about who you worship and not about you, nor for your benefit but for the benefit of God! And does not have to appeal to your liking. We are worshiping God, not performing for Him!" I hope you've got my point now!

***God's heart is not moved by the music, nor by the  
traditions and rituals – but by your desire and  
passion towards Him.***

***- Abraham D. John***

*God's heart is not moved by the music, nor by the traditions and rituals –  
but by your desire and passion towards Him*

Isaiah 29:13 (MSG)

*The Master said: These people make a big show of saying  
the right thing, but their hearts aren't in it. Because they  
act like they're worshiping me but don't mean it, I'm  
going to step in and shock them awake, astonish them,  
stand them on their ears.*

### ***c) Worship Styles That God Isn't Pleased With***

#### ***1) Worship Styles - Vain Worship***

Matthew 15:7–9 (NKJV):

*Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:*

*'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor*

*Me with their lips, But their heart  
is far from Me. And in vain they  
worship Me, teaching as doctrines  
the commandments of men.'*



We, just like the Israelites, build idols all around us. When the Israelites came out of Egypt, following the amazing miracles that God did all along the way – right from the death of all Egypt's first-

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born sons to the parting of the Red Sea – they instead chose to worship a golden calf when Moses did not return from Mount Sinai. When our focus is on anything but God, it is idolatry!

We Christians don't tell lies – we just go to church on Sunday and sing them! We sing, "I surrender all ..." and take them all back at the end of the service! We should watch what we sing/say, for if we don't mean it, then why say it in the first place!!

## **2) Worship Styles - Ignorant Worship**

Acts 17:22–23 (NKJV):

*Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you.*



I have personally witnessed people putting their bodies into immense pain and strife for an unknown god! When I was working for a soft



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drink company in the early 1980s, I have seen people walking for almost a month in the hot sun towards the 5 temple town. They would end up having bruises, boils, and burns yet continue walking barefoot. They would tend the wound but not quit. They wouldn't quit at all.

What was behind such ignorance – a plan to please/appease a god? Whatever it could be and however sincere it may appear, it is sincerely wrong. It does not make a wrong right just because it's sincere.

### **3) Worship Styles - Self-imposed Worship**

Colossians 2:21–23 (KJV):

*Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using; after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body: not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.*

There are people in this world who are either self-obsessed or obsessed about other people – sports personalities, movie stars, politicians and so on – inadvertently spending huge sums of money and devoting a large portion of their life to such worryingly worthless deeds.

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These are but a few of those so-called worship styles that God isn't definitely pleased with – when our focus is anything but God, be it ourselves, others or anything else.

Worship is not what we do every Sunday morning or evening before the sermon.

**So, what is worship then?**

*God's heart is not moved by the music, nor by the traditions and rituals –  
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### **Worship is a lifestyle!**

Worship is NOT just part of your life – yes it is a *lifestyle*. From sunrise to sunset – each day that you are awake calls for worship; each day that ends should draw praise from your mouth.

Psalm 113:3 (NIV):

*From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the  
name of the Lord is to be praised.*

At all times and always!

Psalm 34:1 (NCV):

*I will praise the Lord at all times; his praise is always on  
my lips.*

The Bible commands us to do everything for the Glory of God.

Colossians 3:17 (NKJV):

*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name  
of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through  
Him.*

Having said that, what we do on a Sunday or Friday is not worship.

That's just gathering of God's people to fellowship and encourage one another and to grow in HIM.

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Colossians 3:23 (NIV):

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as  
working for the Lord, not for human masters.*

1 Corinthians 10:31 (NKJV):

*Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,  
do all to the glory of God.*

Summarizing here,

- Worship should be your lifestyle!
- All the days of your life!!
- In all activities of your life!!!
- With all possessions of your life!!!

### **Expressions of Worship in the Old & New Testaments**

Even though we are living under the New Covenant, we unwittingly end up worshipping God like those who lived under the Old Covenant. The primary reason behind this is that those who lived under the Old Covenant had the need to go to the Tabernacle in the wilderness where the presence of God dwelt. Later, they moved into the temple built by Solomon. What we need to realize now is that God does NOT reside in a manmade building – for HE dwells inside of us.

*God's heart is not moved by the music, nor by the traditions and rituals –  
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Under the Law, everything that was to be done in worship is given with utmost detail, and no variation was tolerated. Blood was to be sprinkled seven times – not six or eight – on the lid of the Ark of the Covenant on the Day of Atonement. The blood must be from a bull the first time, thereafter from a goat. Even the kind of underwear that is to be worn in worship is explicitly commanded (Leviticus 16:4). The whole structure of the Tabernacle, and later the Temple worship, was to impress people with the enormous barrier between them and God.

Going back further in time, Satan – the anointed cherub – was the worship leader for the army of angels rendering God praise 24/7. Contrary to what was expected of him, he was longing for that worship – a desire to be worshiped by others and to draw people to himself rather than to Christ (Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14). We, therefore, can say that sin wriggles its way in when worship is centred on oneself rather than on God. Even today, as Satan controls the entire world system, he expects people to worship him rather than God. That he does by removing God from the centre of our focus. Activities centred around the church, even music, sports, become 'god' for many believers, rather than God Himself. Satan is still after our worship; he even tried to entice Jesus with the following words while HE was on the earth.

Matthew 4:9 (NKJV):

*And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."*

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Jesus' reply below should *always* echo in our heart and mind!

Matthew 4: 10 (NKJV):

*Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*

Moving on, worship in the Old Testament was confined to the physical body and soul alone, people did not worship God in their Spirit. For it was not possible for them to do so.

John 4:23–24 (NKJV):

*But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*

'Tabernacle' means dwelling place. In the Old Testament, 'Tabernacle', the outer court, which is visible to everyone, corresponds to our physical body. The Holy Place or the inner court is comparable with the soul or mind we have. The Most Holy Place or the Holy of the Holies, where the presence of God dwelt, corresponds to our spirit where the Spirit of God indwells us. Our bodies have now become the dwelling place of God. Now that your body is the temple of God, where does His presence dwell? In your Spirit – which you can't see with your physical eyes, making it possible for us to worship God in *truth* and *Spirit*.

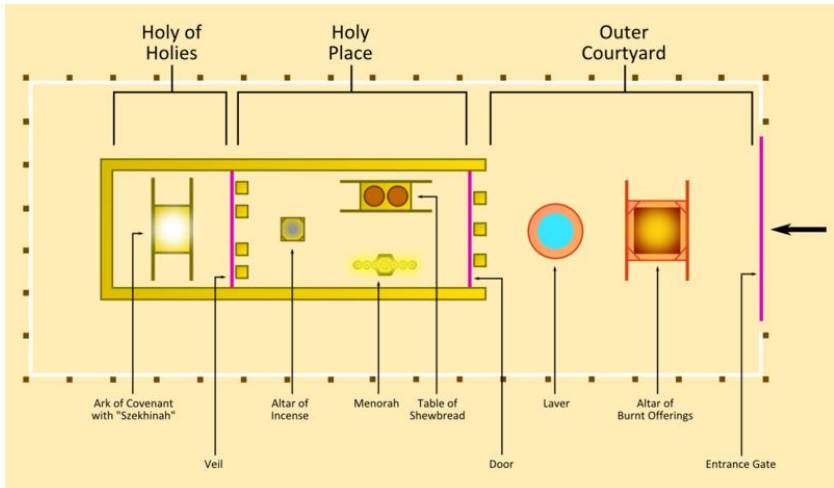
*God's heart is not moved by the music, nor by the traditions and rituals –  
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**The Tabernacle – (built by Moses in the Wilderness)**

Look at the below elements mentioned in Hebrews 9:1–10, that so contrasts with worshiping God in truth and Spirit:

- a) A physical structure (Tabernacle)
- b) Special clothing for priests
- c) Lampstands
- d) Burning of incense
- e) Instruments of music
- f) Animal sacrifices

For all of the above appeal to the PHYSICAL senses.



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Whereas in the New Testament, not only the physical body and the soul are involved, but primarily the Spirit – together the body, soul and spirit.

*a) God's temple is spiritual, made up of Christians*

- *1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:19-22*

*b) All Christians are priests, offering up spiritual sacrifices*

- *1 Peter 2:5,9; Romans 12:1; Hebrews 13:15*

*c) Our prayers are as sweet incense*

- *Revelation 5:8*

*d) Music is making melody with our HEART*

- *Ephesians 5:19*

This we understand by 1 Corinthians 3:16 & 6:19-20 that our physical body represents the tabernacle. We need to understand the heart of God. Even in the Old Covenant, God wanted to dwell with His people but their hearts were unwilling to cooperate.



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### **Moses' and David's Tabernacle – A Contrast in Worship**

Moses' Tabernacle had all these elaborate and accurate measurements and the customs to enter the tabernacle whereas David's tabernacle was very simple; it had only one thing – the Ark of the Covenant.

#### ***Tabernacle of David***



<b><i>Description</i></b>	<b><i>Moses' Tabernacle</i></b>	<b><i>David's Tabernacle</i></b>
Place	Complete instruction about the size and all the measurement was given by God	Just a small tent over the Ark of the covenant as per David
Objects	Every object was described by God. The order of objects was	Only one object: The Ark of the Covenant

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<b>Description</b>	<b>Moses' Tabernacle</b>	<b>David's Tabernacle</b>
	given by God	
Priest	The priest can go only up to the Holy Place. No ordinary person can enter	The priest can enter anytime. (NT – we are all Priests, Rev 1:6)
High Priest	Only the high priest can enter into the Most Holy or Holy of the Holies once a year!	Every priest can enter and minister to God every day!! (NT – Jesus is our High Priest)
Offerings	They made every offering according to the instructions	No sacrificial offering offered at all. (NT – Jesus paid the price)
Praise & Worship	NO music or singing	Spiritual praise of <i>thanksgiving, joy &amp; praise</i>

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We need to understand that even though David lived under the Old Covenant, he alone lived like us, the New Covenant believers. Hence, God promised in the scriptures that He will restore the tabernacle of David, but not the one built by Moses.

Amos 9: 11 (NKJV):

*“On that day I will raise up the Tabernacle of David,  
which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will  
raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old.*

Quite interestingly, when the Jerusalem council met around the issue of the non-Jews coming to know the Lord and becoming believers in Lord Jesus Christ, following the incident at Cornelius' house in Acts 10, the Holy Spirit spoke through James in Acts 15:15–17 reiterating what was spoken through Amos:

*And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is  
written: ‘After this I will return And will rebuild the  
tabernacle of David , which has fallen down; I will rebuild  
its ruins, And I will set it up; So that the rest of mankind  
may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by  
My name.*

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## **The Elements of Worship**

We are commanded to worship God with our *body, soul and spirit*.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV):

*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole **spirit, soul, and body** be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

### **Body**

Romans 12:1 (NLT):

*And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice —the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.*

Our bodies are to be offered as a living sacrifice to God – a true way to worshipping Him.

1 Corinthians 3:16 (ESV):

*Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?*

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## **Soul**

Romans 12:2 (MSG):

*Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.*

NASB:

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

You ought to renew your mind by the word of God so that you will be able to worship God with your mind (*soul*).

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV):

*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

The word of God will help you discern whether you are worshiping God in soul or in Spirit!

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### **Spirit**

Let us look at where this worshipping God is first stated in the Bible. 'Worship' is first mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 22, where God tested Abraham, when he was around 125 years old, to see if God was indeed the centre of Abraham's life – the central theme behind this incident. *Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am" (v1, NKJV).* God tested Abraham after almost 50 years following Abraham's first encounter with God. He asked Abraham to come and offer his only son as a sacrifice to God.

Mount Moriah, where Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac, was a 3 days' journey from his hometown. The test started here – for if the place were close by, Abraham could have acted on impulse. During those 3 days, both Abraham and Isaac walked together or saddled on a donkey with many an emotion running across Abraham's mind. God wanted to make sure that Abraham's sole focus was still God.

Therefore, whatever you do in your life, do it for the Glory of God. *And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you" (v5, NKJV).*

Notice what Abraham was referring in here – "we are going to *worship* God!" Abraham was going up to sacrifice his son – meaning, he was going up to worship God with his son. He was ready and willing to go up and sacrifice the child that God had promised him in his old age. After reaching the mountaintop, even when Isaac found that there was nothing for the sacrifice, he never fought his father! He too was willing to **worship** God! He was willing to be sacrificed by his own father to THE FATHER.

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### **No Sacrifice → No Worship**

Definition of Sacrifice: the surrender or destruction of something prized or desirable for the sake of something considered as having a higher or more pressing claim.

- the thing so surrendered or devoted.

This could be any one of the following:

- Your job
- Business
- Spouse
- Parents
- Children
- Hobby
- Sex

It could be anything that takes your time, mind, your energy, your resource, and not just money, for money pops in our mind first when we hear the word “sacrifice.”

Even in the Book of Job, the first book to be written, Job worships God falling facedown even after losing all – from one bad news to another:

*Job 1:20 (NKJV), Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped.*

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### **How can you worship God with your Body, Soul and Spirit?**

What can you give God the maker and the creator of everything? Some time or the other we all have been in an awkward situation failing to gift something appropriate for our loved ones! Think for a moment keeping this in mind! What can you give/gift God?

Matthew 22:37–38 (NKJV):

*Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with  
all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”  
This is the first and great commandment.”*

Mark 12:30 (NKJV):

*‘And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your  
strength.’ This is the first commandment.*

Between Matthew and Mark, in the above parallels, ‘all of your strength’ has been added, emphasizing the importance of serving God with all of our strength. Today, we do worship and serve God – but is it wholehearted? God is looking for people who are wholly committed to Him.

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (NKJV):

*Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the  
Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and  
you are not your own? <sup>20</sup> For you were bought at a price;  
therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit,  
which are God’s.*



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Revelation 4:10–11 (NKJV):

*the twenty -four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honour and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”*

### **Worship as Our Response to God**

We, as a Christian, should be able to respond to who God is in our life. At no point should we lose the ‘awe’ of who God is. He is our Heavenly Father, yet HE is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

Isaiah sees the vision of the Lord and is terrified; literally, anyone who has had the vision of God or has met with God, both in the Old and New Testaments, have always understood His Holiness and His Majesty.

Let us look at the example of Apostle John, who, more than any other disciple, understood the love of God. In his gospel, he describes himself as “the one who was leaning on the bosom of Jesus,” before Jesus’ death and resurrection. But after almost 50 years following the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, in the Island of Patmos, when John encounters Jesus, he is not seen here leaning on Jesus’ bosom, rather terrified of His Majesty. He describes the incident as thus:

Revelation 1: 17 (NKJV):

*And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.*

*God's heart is not moved by the music, nor by the traditions and rituals –  
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***God deserves all of our worship! Never lose that awe of who HE  
is!***

## **God - The Focus of Our Worship**

Your focus should always be on God. When you come to worship the Lord, be it at church, home, workplace, or anywhere else, it doesn't matter what music is playing, how the lighting is set, who is there and who is not there, all these should not distract you from your sole focus. Always remember, when you are ready, He is always there. Let your eyes, mind, and heart stay fixed on Him and Him alone.

Psalms 139:1–3 (CEV):

*You have looked deep into my heart, Lord, and you know all about me. You know when I am resting or when I am working, and from heaven you discover my thoughts. You notice everything I do and everywhere I go.*

Romans 8:7 (MSG)

*“Focusing on yourself is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, and ends up thinking more about self than God.”*

Romans 12:2a (MSG):

*“Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God.”*

*God's heart is not moved by the music, nor by the traditions and rituals –  
but by your desire and passion towards Him*

Matthew 6:6 (MSG):

*“Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to  
role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly  
as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God,  
and you will begin to sense His grace.”*

Psalms 105:4 (TEV):

*“Worship Him continually.”*

Isaiah 26:3 (NLT):

*“You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in You,  
whose thoughts are fixed on You!”*

God is looking for those people whose focus would always be on Him, as we have seen previously in John 4:23–24, that He is seeking such people to worship Him. This is the only ministry where God comes looking for you! For every other ministry draws us to God, say prayer, thanksgiving, healing, deliverance, etc. But worship is the only place where God comes seeking us. When God comes to receive your praise and worship, HE comes in HIS majesty and in glory so that you will enjoy His presence, where miracles and deliverance happen and mighty signs and wonders are seen.

2 Corinthians 3:17 (NLT):

*For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the  
Lord is, there is freedom.*

*God's heart is not moved by the music, nor by the traditions and rituals –  
but by your desire and passion towards Him*

### **Worshipping HIM Passionately**

Look at the field of sports, living in London closer to the Wembley Stadium, I am nothing but amazed at the passion people have towards football here. On a game day, the fans come to cheer their favourite teams dressed in T-shirts, jerseys, scarves, caps etc. sporting the respective team each support. Recently, we witnessed a record high on the finals of the Champions League 2013, played between two teams from Germany. Over 50,000 people travelled from Germany just to watch their favourite teams compete!

Are you even able to understand the great deal of effort that has gone into just being there in person to witness the finale, rather than watch it live on TV? The money, time, energy, joy, disappointment, personal sacrifice, etc.?

Why do they do this and what makes them do this? *Passion* is the precise word here.

Why can't we as Christians have such a passion when it comes to our God – the One who sent His Son Jesus to take our place so as to save us from eternal death, the One who lives inside of us, the One who has given us eternal life?

Don't you see there is something wrong the way in which we handle our passion as Christians? Are we not thankful at all? Have we lost the awe of what the Lord has done for us?

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1 John 4:19 (KJV):

*“We love Him, because He first loved us.”*

Hosea 6:6 (LB):

*“I don't want your sacrifices – I want your love! I don't  
want your offerings – I want you to know Me!”*

Exodus 34:14b (NLT):

*“He is a God who is passionate about His relationship  
with you.”*

Romans 6:13 (NLT):

*“Give yourselves completely to God since you have been  
given new life.”*

### **Worshiping HIM, is Our Goal**

Setting yourself a high goal of becoming a sports star, a talented singer, musician, doctor, engineer, lawyer etc., is not a problem at all, provided you understand that your desires are instigated to accomplish something in Christ. Desire means the idea or thought comes from the Father. But those desires and goals should not take you away from glorifying God.

Many people start with the right intentions but once they see success coming their way, they get diverted from their initial goal slowly and steadily, shipwrecking their faith in the end. The wrong goal!

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Colossians 3:23 (TEV):

*“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people.”*

Romans 12:1a (MSG):

*“Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering.”*

2 Corinthians 5:9 (NIV):

*“So we make it our goal to please Him ...”*

### **Worship: Bringing Pleasure to the One Who Created You!**

Ephesians 1:5 (NLT):

*God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.*

You heard it right – it gave Him great pleasure!

Revelation 4:11 (NLT):

*“You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased.”*

In simple terms, ‘worship’ gives God immense pleasure!

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Psalm 147:11 (CEV):

*The Lord is pleased only with those who worship him and  
trust his love.*

Romans 12:1 (NLT):

*And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give  
your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let  
them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find  
acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.*

## **Conclusion**

Do you worship God in Truth and in Spirit?

Here is the self-test:

- a) When you wake up in the morning, what's your first thought?
- b) Whom do you fear?
- c) Are you being honest before God?
- d) What you do in open and also in secret will Glorify God?

Judge for yourself!

Now is the time to worship the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords!!

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## **Notes**



*We are ordinary people doing extraordinary things and making a difference together through the power of the Holy Spirit wherever we are!*

## MY MISSION

***“We are ordinary people doing extraordinary things and making a difference together through the power of the Holy Spirit wherever we are!”***

**—Abraham David John**

*God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. Ephesians 1:5*

Now that you are part of the family, your mission becomes the same as your family’s; your Father’s mandate becomes your mandate too! So if you don’t take your mission seriously, then who will?

*“Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being SENT?”*

*That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News!’” - Romans 10:13–15 NLT*

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Thus, God has given each of us a job to carry forward!

*“Through Christ, God made peace between us and himself.  
Then God gave us the work of bringing others into peace with him.” 2 Corinthians 5:18 (ICB)*

‘Necessity is the mother of invention’, thus the purpose always comes before the product; not the other way round. Nobody invents a cell phone and then comes up with a purpose for that. Every invention till date has had an undeniable purpose for which it was created. Thus, it’s a complete no-brainer that God had a purpose for each of us even before creating us.

Your purpose is as unique as you are. Imagine a jigsaw puzzle with one missing piece! It isn’t intact without every piece in its place. Similarly, each of us has a small but significant part to play in the bigger picture, which will never be complete without you.

Jesus, following His resurrection, clearly stated that we are here with the same mandate as His.

*“Jesus said, ‘PEACE be with you! As the Father has SENT me, I am SENDING you ...’” John 20:21 (NIV)*

So, what was His job, is now our job too! This is the primary reason why we are doing this Discipleship course that we will have a better understanding of what Jesus did. And what He expects us to do.

*“You did not choose me, but I chose you and APPOINTED YOU TO GO and bear fruit – fruit that will last.” John 15:16 (NIV)*

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We've got work to do! But let's not forget the other side of the coin – bearing fruit. Staying focused about our mission and bearing good fruit should go hand in hand. But the sad truth is, many have failed to grasp this. It is not about how good you can preach, teach, worship or play music, but about whether or not you bear fruit that will last.

This balance in Christian life is very essential for it is important to not only do the mission work but also live our life as a good testimony bearing good fruit. What is more important to God is not how well you behave inside the church but when no one is watching you. This becomes your testimony!

About the mission work, you don't have to panic, He is not going to send you empty-handed, but with the **power** to carry out the mission!

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matthew 28:19–20 (NKJV)*

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The two most important verbs used by Jesus – much needed for every disciple – are ‘come’ and ‘go’. If you have ‘come’ to know Christ, then obviously you need to ‘go’ as well. But when you go, you are not going alone but with HIM – with *power* and *authority*!

One of the biggest issues that Christendom has to fight with is the fact that we are only making believers, and not disciples.

Jesus’ command was to make disciples, not just believers!

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We all now know that a disciple is one who not only listens to the word of God but also obeys it. As mentioned in verse 20 previously, it is clear that we are to observe *all* things that He has commanded us!

And God has bestowed upon us the power to be His witnesses through the gift of His Holy Spirit!

*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (NKJV)*

The two most important words from the above two verses are

- Power
- Authority

*Power* is the ability to do things with the strength you have. The definition goes like this: the ability of a person or a group to influence the beliefs and actions of other people. It is the ability to influence events. Power can be personal power. A person gets his personal power from his personality or from his expert knowledge. Doctors, lawyers, engineers, programmers, etc., get their power from their expertise and professional knowledge. Power can also be legitimate or official power. This power comes from a higher authority.

*Authority* is the right you have over the one who has the power. Its definition goes as thus: the right given to a manager to achieve the objectives of the organisation. It is a right to get the things done through others. It is a right to take decisions. It is a right to give orders to the

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subordinates and to get obedience from them. A manager cannot do his work without authority.

Thus, Jesus has not only empowered you with the Holy Spirit but has also defeated death by dying on the cross, thereby giving you authority over every demonic power.

### **Our Threefold Mission**

- **Personal** – my personal mission to the people in my life. (Jerusalem)
- **Local** – my small group’s mission to others in our area. (Judea & Samaria)
- **Global** – our church’s mission to the entire world! (Ends of the Earth)



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Jerusalem is where you live. Say, Harrow, London, United Kingdom, then London becomes your Jerusalem. But your responsibility does not end there, it just starts here and then spreads to the ends of the Earth.

We each play different but vital roles in the kingdom of God; the crux is understanding this. The world is our common mission field. And the question is, am I doing my part right in the greater plan of God? Only when you understand this, will you be able to associate with other believers and churches for the expansion of the kingdom. But when we fail to see the bigger plan of God, we start building our own small kingdom in which we place either ourselves or others as the king. This is why we have so many petty unworthy theological arguments dividing the church of Jesus Christ today.

My personal plea for everyone who is doing this Discipleship course is that you will play your part in the bigger plan of God and work with others in building HIS Kingdom, not anybody else's.

As God puts it,

*"It will all happen as I have planned. It will come about according to my purposes ... I have a plan for the whole earth, for my mighty power reaches throughout the world." Isaiah 14:24 &26 (NLT)*



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## **How can I achieve this Mission?**

### ***1. Pray and Send***

I can't emphasize enough the importance of prayer before doing anything. For through prayer we understand His plan. It is a two-way communication where you make your requests known to God and hear from Him on them. Prayer is like breathing, without which you will die spiritually.

*"Jesus said, 'There are so many people to harvest but only a few workers to help harvest them. PRAY to the Lord, who owns the harvest, that he will SEND OUT more workers to gather his harvest.'" Matthew 9:37- 38 (NCV)*

Also, look at Luke 10:1-2.

Your prayer can save someone from heading towards hell. Is there a burden in your heart for those lost souls. Despite the price being paid in full by Jesus, their eyes are still blinded. It is all about the burden for those people who have not come to know the truth. But if this is missing, you should ask yourself whether you have truly tasted the love of God in your life. God loved you and sent His only Son to die so that He can redeem you! What are you going to do?

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## **2. Partnership in Mission**

*“We must support believers who go on trips like this so that we can work together with them in spreading the truth.” 3 John 1:8 (GW)*

*“Freely you have received, freely give.” Matthew 10:8 (NIV)*

There are places you cannot go personally to reach out. In such cases, extend your prayer to those who go about doing the mission. You don't have to stop here with just prayer, you can even partner with such missionary organizations and extend your support.

But what about the places that you can personally go? Say your neighbourhood in Harrow. There are myriad ways in which you can evangelise these people around you. You can reach out to someone in your supermarket, GP office, parks and play areas, etc. Carrying tracts or small Bibles and sharing the Gospel would help. You could also offer to pray for their personal requests. Speaking of prayer, we have recently started 'Cornelius challenge' in our Church so that we can pray for our

near and dear ones.



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Therefore, bear witness in your area, for sending others is only applicable where you cannot go!

### **3. You Are the person**

*“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’” Isaiah 6:8 (NIV)*

*“Send us around the world with the news of your saving power and your eternal plan for all mankind!” Psalm 67:2 (LB)*

*“and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Revelation 1:5–6 (NKJV)*

Each of us is a minister of God, says the New Covenant. And though there are specific offices for ministering to the body of Christ, the overall work needs to be done by every single believer. However, people still live in the Old Covenant thinking that the pastors will do the work since they are paying for him.

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But the biggest mistake here is our lethargy and thinking that we have people employed to carry out the mission of God. It's not true and it was never meant to be like that. Yes, there are some who are called specifically for certain ministry, but we are never to forget that each of us is called to be a minister of God.

Having said that, World Christian Fellowship will never employ anyone to carry out the work of God. The reason being that many well-meaning committed Christians who started well by the ability and anointing they had received from God weren't able to continue in their course due to deviation once money became involved.

*And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:18–21*

Thus, the moment you reconcile with God, your ministry starts – bringing to Him those who haven't reconciled yet. He asks us to plead with others to be reconciled to Him.

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#### **4. Your Personal Testimony**

*“Jesus said ‘Go back home and tell people how much God has done for you.’ So the man went all over town telling how much Jesus had done for him.” Luke 8:39 (NCV)*

Countless arguments crop up when you start preaching to someone about Christ. But NONE can refute your personal testimony that you share with others because it's your life – you have experienced it. So always be prepared with a 5-minute snippet of your life's testimony that you can share on the go anywhere you go.

In the above passage from Luke, a demon-possessed man living in a cemetery who was cutting himself and running around naked gets healed by Jesus. After deliverance, he clothes himself and sits in the midst of people in right mind.

What does Jesus ask him to do? “Go and tell all the people what the Lord has done.” Imagine just for a moment what his message would be? How many verses will he be able to quote from the Scripture? How many theological points will he be able to answer? How will he carry out his mission?

However, you will be surprised to hear that history records he went out preaching the gospel and converting many unto Christ, and he even planted a church, which was unearthed recently. How did he do that? He became **the message** and life his **testimony** of what the Lord had done.

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Let me reiterate here, "You are the witness of Christ."

And so my dear brothers and sisters as 2 Timothy 2:10 says, let us

***"Work at bringing others to Christ."***