

# Discipleship Handbook



*by Peter Hammond*

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## *Dedication*

This book is dedicated to my eldest daughter, **Andrea Hammond**. May you continually love, honour, trust, obey and serve our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ — with your whole heart, soul, mind and strength. And may you, like the disciple Andrew you are named after, continually bring people to Christ.

# Discipleship Handbook

by Dr. Peter Hammond

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# FOREWORDS



"Handbooks are handy because they help us to actually do (or be) certain things. Peter Hammond's *Discipleship Handbook* is one you will want to keep close at hand. It is a treasure trove of practical truth for anyone interested in following Jesus Christ. It is simple enough to bless and encourage a new Christian and profound enough to inspire a seasoned saint. One time through will not be enough. You will be motivated to read it again and again. It is indeed a classic, in league with *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis.

"If you love the Word of God, this is a book you will highly esteem. Unless you want to argue with Scripture, you won't be able to refute the logic of its premise. The *Discipleship Handbook* establishes a Biblical standard to which we can all aspire. It is highly practical, very positive, loaded with appropriate quotations from the Bible and answers concisely in twelve specific categories the question, 'What is a Christian?'

"Oswald Chambers observed, 'The secret of a disciple's life is devotion to Jesus Christ, and the characteristic of the life is its unobtrusiveness.' The *Discipleship Handbook* will help you achieve that goal.

"Of all the books I've read by Peter Hammond, this is my favorite. Peter is serious about our Lord's command to '... go and make disciples ... teaching them to obey.' Matthew 28:19,20. In a day when Christians have lost the shock of sin, and the Church seems to have abandoned the awe of God's holiness, this book will rekindle the smoldering fires of devotion that have burned low for too long.

"It was Carlyle who said, 'He is wise who can instruct us and assist us in the business of daily virtuous living.' The *Discipleship Handbook* will do just that. It is beautifully organised and easy to study. Your investment of time and treasure to buy and read this book will be well worth the effort and expenditure."

**Rev. Bill Bathman**, Chairman of the Board, Frontline Fellowship, Tempe, Arizona.

**"Our Job, our Calling, our Mandate.** God has called you and me; He has commissioned us to go into the world and to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19). That is our job, that is our mandate, that is our calling. But friends if we are going to do it, we are to do it on our knees, we are to do it in prayer. We have to be Biblical; we have to use His Word. There is power in His Word. Give God's invitation. Call men and women to repentance and to put their faith in Christ Jesus.

"I promise you, you will see service in this book into the Ministry, because it is not going to be by your power; it is going to be through His power. It's going to be His power through



you. If you stand up and try to have a ministry based on your own power, your strength; you're going to fail. You're going to fall on your face. You have to do it in His power, in His strength. According to His Word, the Bible. AMEN"

**Bishop Bwanali Greyson Phiri**, World Baptist Evangelistic Association, Lusaka, Zambia.

"Throughout my long life I found this state of discipleship under the Master the most satisfactory arrangement. No worry, no anxiety or fear about the future but rather a curiosity of waiting to find out what surprises God has up his sleeves, when the next assignment comes along which was usually just around the corner; for God likes to keep His servants busy and useful in His Kingdom. Our wildest dreams, ambitions and programmes become insignificant in the light of the Master's orders for our life in His Service.

"When, as a young boy of fourteen, I thought and prayed about the years ahead, I had noble ideas of what I could and would do for Jesus and His Church. Looking back, seventy years later, God my Creator, as a master craftsman, was all the time putting something good together, in spite of World War II, Hitler, Stalin, Communism, the awakening of the Third World and 'Black Consciousness', none which could not have been foretold or humanly devised. The wisdom and ways of our Heavenly Father in assigning our work and witness are superior to our human engineering.

"Of course, this is an incredible privilege, full of undeserved grace; but it is the Scriptural pattern. The greatest favour our Saviour granted us was the Call into His Vineyard, the Great Commission to preach and teach and to **enjoy Him and His Father forever**.

**"Soli Deo Gloria."**

**Dr. Fritz Haus**, Stellenbosch, South Africa

"Jesus said to go and make disciples. Too often we seem to have changed that to go and make converts. If every Christian took the time to read this comprehensive guide to discipleship, we would indeed have more disciples and less baby Christians who seem to remain as perpetual infants in the Lord."

**Jerry Newcombe**, Senior Producer of *The Coral Ridge Hour* and author, Fort Lauderdale, USA.

"Dealing comprehensively with the key issues of discipleship the *Discipleship Handbook* is an excellent resource tool. It can be confidently given into the hands of young Christians, read on its own or worked through as a group. I pray that God will use it to produce a generation of mature believers, able and willing to contend for the Faith."

**Rev. Stephen Smyth**, St. Andrews Church of England in South Africa



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It is with deep and abiding gratitude that I praise God for those who disciplined me and therefore had an important role in inspiring many of the studies covered in this Discipleship Handbook

I am eternally indebted to my first pastor, Rev. 'Doc' Watson, under whom I was converted, disciplined and commissioned as a missionary. 'Doc' Watson was also the Chairman of the Board of Frontline Fellowship for 16 years.

Francis Grim, Founder and President of Healthcare Christian Fellowship International, ensured that I received a thoroughly demanding missionary apprenticeship and taught me the power of prayer in daily prayer meetings and regular days and nights of prayer.

Rev. Erlo Stegen, the Founder and Director of KwaSizabantu Mission, has been wonderfully used by the Lord to inspire me to a deeper devotional life, a lifestyle of repentance and a hunger for holiness.

My pastor for the last 7 years, Rev. Stephen Smyth, has been an exemplary pastor – a faithful expositor of the Word of God, teaching, correcting and rebuking with all authority; steadfast and true in counseling during days of grief, joy, failure and success; and diligent in caring for the spiritual needs of our family.

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# INTRODUCTION



## FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

There is one appointment none of us will miss. In fact none of us will even be able to be late for this appointment.

*“It is appointed unto man once to die and after this to face judgement.”*

Hebrews 9:27

We do not know when, or under what circumstances, our lives will come to an end. But we do know that when we die we will stand before Almighty God, our Creator and eternal Judge, and we will have to give an account of our lives to Him. *“For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”* 2 Corinthians 5:10

At death we leave behind everything we **have** and we take with us everything we **are**. The character with which we die is the character with which we will appear at the Judgement.

In the Bible we are told that it is better to go to a funeral than to a party — because the living should always be reminded that death waits for us all (Ecclesiastes 7:2).

*“Only one life, it will soon be passed — only what's done for Christ will last.”*

C.T. Studd

**We need to work out our priorities in the light of eternity.** We need to invest our time, talents and treasure into those things that are going to last for eternity: the people of God, the Word of God and the Kingdom of God. These are what are ultimately important.

In the light of eternity, knowing that you are going to stand before the Creator and eternal Judge, you need to review your life's work, your family relationships, habits and activities. Imagine: on that great day when we will stand before the judgement seat of Christ and give an account of our lives, do you really believe that any of us will be thinking: I should have watched more TV! I was too generous! I should have held onto that grudge for longer! I was too spiritual! I spent too much time studying the Bible and praying! I was too evangelistic! I sacrificed too much for God's Kingdom!



Seriously, in eternity: Will any of us regret praying too much? Studying the Bible too intently? Being too forgiving? Being too generous? Sacrificing too much for God's Kingdom?

If you knew that you would die next year — what would you do differently this year? We need to work out our priorities in the light of eternity.

If I were to ask you: What is the greatest sin that anyone could commit? What would you answer? Would you say: Murder? Idolatry? Adultery? Perversion? Hatred or blasphemy?

If I were to ask: What is the greatest need and priority of your life? What would you think: Academic achievement? Promotion? Marriage? Political advancement? Success in business? Money? Prayer? Or evangelism?

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was He replied: *“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... you shall love your neighbour as yourself.”* Mark 12:30-31

It follows then that **the greatest sin would be to fail to love God with all our heart**. Failure to love God is the root sin that leads to all others. You cannot truly love your neighbour unless you first love God. The Scripture makes clear that even more serious than the bad we have done, evil though that is, is the good that we could have done but did not do (Matthew 25:41-46).

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

Our Lord Jesus demands wholehearted love — not with some of, or most of our heart, but love God with **all**...nothing less than everything we have is sufficient enough for God. Nothing other than the best we have is worthy of our Sovereign Lord, Who is the Creator and Redeemer. **Our greatest priority is to love God above all else and more than anyone else**. The root source of all spiritual growth, fruit and success is our personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We need men and women who love God with all they have and all they are. Such people can turn the world upside down and back to God (Acts 17:6).

We need to fill our minds with God's cleansing and life-giving Word. We need to study the Holy Scriptures to bring our minds into reverent submission to God's revealed will. **What comes into our mind when we think of God is the most important thing about us**. No person is greater than his religion and no religion is greater than its concept of God. The essence of idolatry is the entertaining of unworthy thoughts about God. We must purify and elevate our concept of our Almighty God for He is gloriously infinite and majestically eternal. He is the Righteous One, the God of Justice, the God of Wrath and Judgement. He is the Most Holy God, the God of Glory and Grace, of Love and Mercy, the



God of Creation and of Salvation. **We need to get to know the Word of God and the God of the Word.** We must deepen our relationship with God through spending more time seeking Him in prayer and worship, on our own and together with other dedicated believers.

**A blacksmith keeps his iron in the fire long enough for the fire to be in the iron.** We too must be so immersed in God's Word and spend so much time in His presence that His fire burns in our hearts. Love is much like fire: It grows if fed and dies if starved. Our love for God feeds by faith on His Word, in worship, in prayer, in praise and adoration.

May Anselm's prayer be our prayer:

*“Let me seek You in longing,  
let me long for You in seeking,  
let me find You in love  
and love You in finding.”*

In the words of another ancient prayer:

*“Teach us, good Lord, to serve You as You deserve:  
To give and not to count the cost,  
to fight and not to heed the wounds,  
to toil and not to ask for rest,  
to labour and not to ask for any reward  
save that of knowing that we do Your will.”*

Jesus showed us by His great example that **true love is measured by sacrifice** and some of the most revealing indicators of our love are the sacrifices which we make for Him. Love gives and does not count the cost. Love rejoices in giving and wants to give — not out of duty, but out of a glad and willing heart.

*“O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land...”*  
Psalm 63:1

This is what really matters: **To know God and to make Him known.** To love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. To go and make disciples of all nations, teaching obedience to all things that the Lord has commanded.

May this *Discipleship Handbook* be a manual to deepen your devotional life, to increase your faith, to widen your vision, strengthen your prayer life and focus your energies on seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Dr Peter Hammond

Cape Town

## CHAPTER 1



# TESTIMONIES OF TRANSFORMATION

### God Among the Zulus

Nestled amongst the rolling hills of KwaZulu/Natal, is a most remarkable mission station and an on-going testimony of revival. Since 1966, this mission has been blessed with an extraordinary outpouring of God's grace. Tens of thousands of people, including gangsters, witchdoctors and satanists have come to Christ through the remarkable ministries of KwaSizabantu.

While KwaSizabantu Mission has never held a healing service, many hundreds of people have been healed. While the Mission does not hold deliverance services, many thousands of people have been freed from occultic bondages and found freedom in Christ there. God has sovereignly intervened and transformed many lives in miraculous ways.

The emphasis of KwaSizabantu Mission is the preaching and teaching of the Bible, prayer, repentance and faith, as well as service *"as unto the Lord"*. This Biblical simplicity and faithfulness has been mightily blessed by the Lord.

### Cleaning Out the Cowshed

The ministries of KwaSizabantu grew out of the itinerant tent evangelism ministry of Rev. Erlo Stegen. Although there had been many converts, he was dissatisfied. Where were the transformed lives? After 12 years of itinerant evangelism, in 1966, he felt led to engage in extraordinary prayer before the Lord for revival. A cowshed was made available for their prayer meeting. Rev. Stegen testifies that first they had to clean the dung out of the cowshed, and then God began to clean the filth out of their own hearts.

After a season of deep repentance, restitution and extended intercession of their prayer fellowship, God poured out a mighty blessing.

**Revivals  
are not  
churches  
filled with  
people, but  
people filled  
with God.**

A mighty wind, like compressed air when released, swept straight through the building and everyone praying. Each person was aware that God was in their midst. Erlo Stegen buried his face in his hands, deeply aware of his own unworthiness and fell to his knees.

From that point onwards, everything was different. A witch came to Erlo Stegen and said: *"I'm looking for Jesus. Can He set me free? I'm bound with the chains of hell. Can He break these chains?"*

### **Set Free to Serve Christ**

Erlo Stegen, with five other co-workers, formed a circle around her and began to sing and pray. Suddenly the woman's eyes lit up with an evil glare, she writhed around like a wild animal that wants to attack and tear apart its prey. Then this woman began to make noises, first like many dogs barking, then it sounded as if a herd of pigs were screaming within her.

*"Oh that You would rend the heavens and come down."*

There was no doubt that they were dealing with demon possession. Erlo Stegen commanded these evil spirits to leave her in the Name of Jesus Christ. Then the voice of a man speaking in English, came from within her, refusing to leave. Erlo and his team continued to wrestle in prayer, struggling against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Then the evil spirits began to leave the woman with screams that sliced the air.

The next moment her face was transformed, it shone like one who had already lived in the presence of the Lord for a long time. While joy shone from her eyes, she called out: *"How wonderful! Jesus has set me free! He has broken the chains of hell!"* Everyone was awestruck. The Spirit of God had come into their midst in power. After months of searching the Scriptures, persevering in prayer, searching their hearts and confessing their sins, the moment had arrived when the fire of the Holy Spirit, for which they had desperately longed, was set ablaze in them.

*"Oh that You would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before You! As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make Your Name known to Your enemies and cause the nations to quake before You."* Isaiah 64:1-2

From that time on, many people came to put their lives right with the Lord. In the mornings, Erlo would come out to find over a hundred people in the front garden: witches, witchdoctors, demon possessed people, the desperate and the unsaved - people seeking help. Nobody had sent them - they just had the inner compulsion that they must go to Mapumulo to make their peace with God. Many came with tears, most left with great joy.

### **Changed Lives**

The changes in lives were incredible. Thieves returned all that they had stolen, people made restitution. There were fire services, where witchcraft charms and fetishes and occultic books and symbols were brought by the new converts and consigned to the flames.

The Mission station at Mapumulo became too small. In 1970, the Mission was moved to a farm called KwaSizabantu, situated between Kranskop and Mapumulo.

### **Ministries Multiplied**

Now, 34 years later, the Mission continues to grow. The auditorium can seat up to 10 000 people. On Sundays thousands gather for morning worship. Youth conferences attract up to 6000 young people at a time. Over 1000 delegates gather for each Ministers Conference. The Domino Servite School at KwaSizabantu Mission has regularly hit the headlines with the best matriculation results in the country, and with some of the highest distinctions in the nation. The Cedar College of Education trains teachers. Christians for Truth mobilises tens of thousands of Christians countrywide to stand for the right to life of preborn babies, and to oppose pornography, prostitution and other social evils. Khanya Press prints world class quality publications, including books, for international distribution. The KwaSizabantu Choir conducts ministry outreaches throughout Africa and Europe. Radio Khwezi is the largest independent Christian radio station in the country, reaching almost all of KwaZulu. Doctors For Life, True Love Waits and a host of other ministries have also sprung up from this vibrant Christian community.

Since that time when the Holy Spirit's fire and wind blew through that little cleaned out stable in Mapumulo God's blessings have continued to flow, even to other parts of the world, and many thousands of people have found real freedom and lasting peace in Christ.

By God's grace, there are many thousands of testimonies of transformed lives at KwaSizabantu.

### **Transformed Tobacco Farmer**

I remember a farmer from Mpumalanga, who related his testimony to me over breakfast there. This farmer had heard that if your farm workers go to KwaSizabantu Mission, they will come back honest, work harder and no longer steal. He thought this was a great idea, and so loaded his truck up with farm workers and drove through to KwaSizabantu Mission. God's plan was greater, and the farmer himself got converted there!

Many came  
with tears,  
most left with  
great joy.

As he drove back to his tobacco farm, this man grappled in his heart with what he should do. How could he glorify the Lord by producing tobacco, which was going to ruin the health of so many people? He determined to plough up and destroy his entire crop. The neighbouring farmers were astounded. "*This will bankrupt you!*" they exclaimed.

Nevertheless, the farmer persevered, and for the next several years he struggled to make a living out of his new vegetable crops. Then a crop disease hit the entire area and wiped out all the tobacco crops. Now only his vegetables were left standing! His farm has continued to flourish and so has the worship amongst his workers.

### **Business Blessed**

Another man told me how he had run a supermarket and after his conversion at KwaSizabantu, he'd felt convicted to get rid of the immoral magazines, cigarettes and beer. As these were all high volume items, his shop suffered initially. Many customers complained. But after three years of testing, his business picked up – God's blessings were poured out and he has never had to look back.

### **Diamonds and the Pearl of Great Price**

Another brother related his testimony to me. He had worked in the diamond mines, and over the years had succeeded in stealing a large number of these valuable gems. He had a great house and a very comfortable lifestyle. Then he was converted and learnt about the importance of restitution from KwaSizabantu Mission.

Although he had not been caught and no longer worked for the mines, he went and confessed his crimes, and began the painful process of repaying everything he had stolen. This involved a lot of sacrifice - he lost his comfortable standard of living and ended up in a very small rented house. Nevertheless, this brother has continued to rejoice in the Lord and be a dynamic witness of the transforming grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev. Erlo Stegen says that revival is the special presence of God among His people. No man can force revival to happen, as it is an Act of God, and not a human arrangement. But this does not exclude the fact that obedience to God's Word results in God's blessings and presence.

Geographic revival (where a whole area is affected) is an Act of God that takes place only according to God's sovereign will. Yet personal revival should be the normal state of every believer.

Obedience to  
God's Word  
results in  
God's  
blessings and  
presence.

## CHAPTER 2



# WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

*"The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch."* Acts 11:26

*"These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here."* Acts 17:6

From the beginning there were false accusations against Christians in the Roman Empire: they were accused of cannibalism (because the Lord's Supper symbolically referred to eating the flesh and drinking the blood of our Lord), disruption of business (e.g. the idol making industry), incest, immorality (marrying their "brothers" and "sisters" in Christ), anti-family (for causing family splits by bringing some family members to Christ), poverty, atheism (rejecting the gods of Rome), novelty (anti-tradition), lack of patriotism (refusal to worship the emperor), anti-social behaviour (preaching against sin), cause of disasters, a threat to the Empire.

A true Christian  
loves God,  
loves the Bible,  
loves prayer  
and hates sin.

By way of contrast the Bible teaches us what a Christian truly is (What we are called to be and what we must do: attitudes and actions):

1. A Christian is a **Saint** (1 Cor 1:2; 1 Pet 1:15; Heb 13:12)

We are called to be Holy – set apart for the exclusive use of God.

A true Christian loves God, loves the Bible, loves prayer and hates sin.

*"... without holiness no one will see the Lord."* Hebrews 12: 14

2. A Christian is a **Free Man** (1 Jn 3:8; Eph 1:7; Gal 1:4; Heb 2:14, 15)

The Word of God is the truth (John 17:17) that sets us free (John 8:32), and a Christian is one who has surrendered to the Word of God (James 1:21-25) and received the freedom that God gives (John 8:36). We are freed from the chains of sin and set free to serve Christ.

*"Freedom is what we have – Christ has set us free: Stand then as free people, and do not allow yourselves to become slaves again."*

Galatians 5:1 (see also Ezekiel 34:27)



3. A Christian is a **Servant** (Matt 20:26-28; Mark 9:35; John 13:15; Luke 17:10) Jesus came to serve – to serve God and to serve others. We are to follow His example and be concerned above all else with meeting the needs of others (See also: Matt 25:34-40; Luke 12:47, 48; 1 Corinthians 15:58).

*“Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.”*

1 John 3:18

4. A Christian is an **Athlete**

Keep yourself in training for a godly life. Do spiritual exercise (1 Tim 4:7, 8). Rid yourself of all unnecessary weight, free yourself of all known sin, throw aside every encumbrance and run with determination and endurance (Heb 12:1). Obey the rules (2 Tim 2:5). Run to win, submit to strict discipline, run straight, harden your body, control your movements (1 Cor 9:24-27). Run your best, run the full distance (2 Tim 4:7).

*“Run in such a way as to get the prize ... a crown that will last forever.”*

1 Corinthians 9:24 - 25

5. A Christian is a **Soldier** (2 Timothy 2:3,4)

We have a spiritual enemy to fight (Ephesians 6:12,13). We have a spiritual war to win (Romans 13:12,14). We have spiritual weapons that are powerful to the destroying of strongholds, to the destroying of false arguments, and to the pulling down of every proud obstacle raised against the knowledge of God (2 Cor 10:35). Therefore: Be disciplined (2 Tim 2:3); Be motivated (Acts 20:24); Be obedient (1 Tim 6:14); Be prepared (Eph 6:10-12); Be alert (1 Pet 5:8,9); and Use the Sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17), the Word of God (Heb 4:12), to spread the truth that sets people free (John 8:32); Fight evil (Romans 12:21); Resist the devil (James 4:7); Bind the powers of evil (Matt 1:29; 18:18); Enforce the victory of the Cross (Col 2:15); Attack the strongholds of the enemy (2 Cor 10:4); Storm the gates of hell (Matt 16:18-19); Set prisoners free (Isaiah 61:1); Win the victory in Jesus’ Name (1 Cor 15:57).

*“We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”* Romans 8:37

6. A Christian is a **Worker** (Matthew 20:1-16)

As workers for the Lord (Col 3:23) we are to always do our best (2 Tim 2:15), wholeheartedly (Luke 9:62) and everything we do is to be done in love (1 Cor 16:14). (see also Heb 6:10,11 and Matt 6:33).

*“Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord’s service is ever useless.”*

1 Corinthians 15:58

7. A Christian is a **Vessel** (2 Corinthians 4:7)

Don’t be polluted with wrong thoughts and wrong desires (Col 3:8). You

Any definition of a Christian must include: action, devotion, dedication, persistence, sacrifice and service.

wouldn't want even one drop of poison, infection or sewerage in your water supply or water bottle! So don't tolerate sin in your life. Sin is as dangerous as poison and an unexploded bomb. Sin is a cancer that rots away our faith and morals. Don't be polluted by sin and don't be empty. Be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18). (Galatians 5:22 and Matthew 5:8).

*"So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that ... you may be filled to the measure of all the fulness of God."*

Ephesians 3:17-19

#### 8. A Christian is a **Disciple**

A disciple is one who gives up everything (Luke 14:33); denies himself (Matt 16:24); takes up his cross (Mark 8:34) and follows the example of Jesus (1 Pet 2:21). It is a life characterised by dedication to the Word of God (John 8:31) and love for the people of God (John 8:34).

*"Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple."*

Luke 14:27

#### 9. A Christian is a **Pilgrim**

People with a call, people of persistence, travellers – seeking after the best that God has for them, people with a vision who proclaim their faith (Hebrews 11: 8-16). Strangers to this world, (1 Peter 2:11) refugees (1 Peter 1:1), foreigners. We don't belong to the world (John 15:18,19) we are just passing through. We belong to a heavenly country and as pilgrims we must press on towards it, forsaking the world. Don't look back. Never turn back (Hebrews 11:13-16). We are looking towards something far better.

*"You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart."*

Jeremiah 29:13

#### 10. A Christian is a **Farmer** (Matthew 21:28-32)

As a Christian you are like a farmer in God's vineyard (Matt 20:1). You must sow (John 4:37) the seed of the Gospel (Mark 4:14) which will accomplish (Is 55:11) the task of salvation (Romans 1:16). We must plough up the hard ground and water the soil with much prayer (1 Cor 3:8) and reap the harvest (John 4:38). Remember that the person who sows few seeds will have a small crop; the one who sows many seeds will have a large crop (2 Cor 9:6). (See also Prov 10:5)

*"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field."*

Matt 9:37-38

**The person who sows few seeds will have a small crop.**

**We should  
make people  
thirst for the  
Living Water.**

11. A Christian is **the Salt of the Earth** (Matt 5:13; Luke 14:34,35)

- Salt preserves – we should preserve that which is holy, good and right.  
Salt heals – we should heal the broken-hearted with encouragement, comfort, love in action and prayer.  
Salt melts – we should melt the cold hearts of sinners with the warmth of our love and the enthusiasm of our faith.  
Salt creates thirst – we should make people thirst for the spiritual life in Jesus – the Living Water (John 7:37-38).

*“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.”*  
Matthew 5:13

12. A Christian is a **Light for the World**

Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12)

Jesus is in the believer (Colossians 1:27)

*“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl ... In the same way let your light shine before men that they might see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*  
Matthew 5:14-16

From all these Scriptural pictures of what a Christian should be we should see the inadequacy of the shallow, one dimensional, superficial concepts of “just believe”, “just pray this prayer”, “just open the door of your heart” brand of half-hearted, lukewarm, namby-pamby, wishy-washy, wimpish, weak and weedy churchianity! Any definition of a Christian must include: action, devotion, dedication, persistence, sacrifice and service.

*“But you, man of God, flee from all this and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. **Fight the good fight of faith.**”*  
1 Timothy 6:11-12

## CHAPTER 3



# REVIVE YOUR DEVOTIONAL LIFE

*“Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?”* Psalm 85:6

1. **Schedule time with God in your diary.** If you fail to plan then you plan to fail. If something (or someone) is important then you need to schedule time in your diary. And just as you would not miss an appointment with anyone else, be sure to honour your appointments with God.

*“For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.”* 2 Chronicles 16:9

2. **Switch off your cell phone in Church,** during your devotions, and in prayer meetings. No-one is more important than God and nothing is more important than our relationship with Him.

*“What does the Lord your God ask of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”* Deuteronomy 10:12

3. **Build the Bible into your daily routine.** Until something is a daily habit it does not really control our lives.

*“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”* Deuteronomy 6:6-7

4. So make it a principle that **the Bible** comes **before breakfast**. Start your day with wisdom – read a chapter of Proverbs every morning. There are 31 chapters of Proverbs, so that would work out to one for every day of the month. Proverbs are an inexhaustible treasury of common sense, insights and solutions for our daily problems and challenges.

*“Oh, how I love Your Law! I meditate on it all day long.”* Psalm 119:97

No-one is  
more  
important  
than God.

*"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly."*

5. **Read a Psalm before every lunch.** The Psalms are the prayer book of the Bible. If you want to revitalise your prayer life, start praying through the Psalms. There are 150 Psalms so you can go through the whole book of Psalms every 5 months.

*"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with gratitude in your hearts to God."* Colossians 3:16

6. **Scripture before supper.** We tend to be regular about meal times, so to ensure a balanced diet - feeding our minds and souls as well as our bodies - we should incorporate Bible reading into our meal times. Otherwise it could be missed.

*"Man does not live on bread alone but on every Word that comes from the mouth of the Lord."* Deuteronomy 8:3

7. **Read through the whole Bible in one year.** If you read 4 chapters a day, then you will be able to complete the whole Bible in just one year.

*"All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* 2 Timothy 3:16

8. **Tithe your day.** Devote 2 ½ hours of every day to spiritual exercises - reading your Bible, Christian books and magazines and to prayer, worship and outreach.

*"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."* Matthew 5:6

9. **Do a thorough job of repentance and restitution.** Do everything you can to restore relationships with estranged brethren. Forgive those who have sinned against you.

*"Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander of every kind."* 1 Peter 2:1

10. **Invest in renewing your mind.** Buy or borrow Christian biographies, missionary books, devotionals and doctrinal books.

*"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve"*

*what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:2*

11. **Attend the Bible Study and prayer meetings of your Church.** Join or start a Bible Study and prayer meeting at your workplace or school.

*“...Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture.....”*

1 Timothy 4:13

12. **Volunteer some of your time** to help your local church or a local mission.

*“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.”*

Romans 12:11

13. **Make Sundays special.** Honour the Lord's Day by avoiding normal work activities, including shopping, on Sundays. Ensure that Sundays in your home are truly a day of rest, a day of worship and a day for the family – free from commercial activities and worldly distractions.

*“If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath ... if you call the Sabbath a delight ... if you honour it ... Then you will find your joy in the Lord ...”*

Isaiah 58:13-14

14. **Receive evangelistic training** such as Evangelism Explosion or the Great Commission Course and begin the weekly habit of lifestyle evangelism, sharing your faith with those you come into contact with – naturally and effectively.

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be My witnesses....”*

Acts 1:8

15. **Expect opposition and criticism.** Resolve neither to listen to gossip nor to spread it.

*“Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbour's life. I am the Lord.”*

Leviticus 19:15-16

16. **Keep focused on Jesus** – the author and perfecter of our faith.

*“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith.”*

Hebrews 12:2

For those who say that they do not have the time for these Steps to Personal Reformation, I can add another suggestion:

**Resolve to neither listen to gossip nor to spread it.**

**Disconnect  
your TV, that  
will provide  
extra hours  
every day!**

- 17. Disconnect your TV and stop reading the daily newspapers.** That will provide most people with a couple of extra hours every day!

*“Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity – because the days are evil.” Ephesians 5:15-16*

## CHAPTER 4



# THE CENTRALITY OF THE CROSS

*“The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”*

1 Corinthians 1:18

All too often the cross is seen as the “national flag” of the church. But the cross was never meant to be the mere nostalgic symbol of a religious system. Neither is the cross a signpost. The cross was not meant to re-direct our lives, but to end them. The cross is not an ornament, but an instrument of death!

The cross was used by the Romans in the same way as we use the gallows, a gas chamber, an electric chair or a firing squad. The cross in the Bible is an instrument of death, yet out of it has come life. It was meant to be the sign of a curse, but it has become a symbol of God’s blessing. It should have signified defeat, yet through it Christ achieved a triumphant victory. Christ has turned that instrument of destruction into the means of salvation.

**Christ has turned that instrument of destruction into the means of salvation.**

### **The Centrality of the Cross**

When the Apostle Paul summarised the essential basics of the Good News, he put it this way:

*“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”* 1 Corinthians 15:3

The centre of the Christian Gospel is the cross, and the salvation that God wrought on the cross is the greatest act in all the history of mankind. It is no wonder that Paul could say:

*“When I came to you, my brothers . . . I made up my mind to forget everything except Jesus Christ and especially His death on the Cross.”*

1 Corinthians 2:1, 2



God is Holy  
and He  
cannot  
overlook sin

### The Necessity of the Cross

Although God did not have to save anyone, consequent upon the fact that He determined to do so, it was essential that it involved atonement.

- (1) **God is Holy and He cannot overlook sin.** His justice must be maintained.

*"God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood. He did this to demonstrate His justice, because in His forbearance He had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished – He did it to demonstrate His justice at the present time, so as to be the One who justifies the man who has faith in Jesus."*  
Romans 3:25,26

- (2) **God's Law is immutable and His Holy Nature demands punishment of sin.**

*"God's curse on anyone who does not obey all of God's Laws and teachings."*  
Deuteronomy 27:26

- (3) **God had declared that the penalty for sin would be death.**

*"The soul who sins is the one who will die."*  
Ezekiel 18:4

*"For the wages of sin is death."*  
Romans 6:23

- (4) **Christ taught His disciples that the Atonement was necessary.**

*"These are the very things I told you about while I was still with you: everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the writings of the Prophets, and the Psalms had to come true . . . this is what is written: the Messiah must suffer and must rise from death three days later."*  
Luke 24:44-46

### The Major Theories of the Cross

**The Ransom theory.** Origen (185–254 A.D.) maintained that through our sin we were slaves of the devil (1 John 3:8), and that Christ paid His life as a ransom to the devil in order to set us free.

**The Satisfaction theory.** Anselm (1033–1109) developed the idea of Christ voluntarily discharging man's obligation to God in order to satisfy God's honour which had been offended by our sin.

**The Moral Influence theory.** Abelard (1079–1142) argued that Christ's birth, passion and death reveal God's infinite love for mankind and awaken in us a reciprocal love and gratitude which leads us back to God.

**The Example theory.** Socinus (1539–1604) held the view that Christ's death provided us with an example of unselfish martyrdom, and if we followed

His teachings and example then our problems would be over.

**The Governmental theory.** Grotius (1583–1645) saw the Lord’s death on the cross as the manifestation of divine justice. God’s gracious pardon of offenders had to be accompanied by some exhibition of the high estimate that God sets upon His law, and the heinous guilt of violating it.

**The Penal Substitutionary theory.** Calvin (1509–1564) presented the atonement as an act of redeeming love whereby God takes on Himself in Christ the judgement and penalty of our sin, so obtaining for us pardon for all guilt and the free gift of righteousness before God through faith in Christ as our sin-bearer.

*“God was in  
Christ  
reconciling  
the world to  
Himself.”*

All of the above views have elements of the truth, but – with the exception of the last theory – they may be considered to be inadequate in varying degrees. Christ, by His death on the cross, did give His life as a ransom for our sins, but He did not pay it to the devil. Christ did make full satisfaction for our sins, but *“God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.”* God was the initiator; it was because He *“so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”* Christ’s death does reveal His infinite love for mankind and awaken in us a reciprocal love (2 Corinthians 5:14), but that is not the basis of our acceptance before a Holy God. Our Lord did provide us with a perfect example to follow by His obedience even unto His death on the cross (Philippians 2:8; 1 Peter 2:21), but we are saved by His vicarious sacrifice, not by His example. It is also true that Christ, through His death on the cross, overcame the world (John 16:33); disarmed the powers and authorities; making a public spectacle of them; triumphing over them by the cross (Colossians 2:15); that Christ destroyed the work of the devil (1 John 3:8); and set us free (Hebrews 2:14, 15). Yet we were not only victims of Satan needing deliverance and liberation, we are also guilty sinners needing forgiveness.

### **The Work of the Cross**

*“As it is written: ‘there is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one ...’ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

Romans 3:10-12, 23

All men are guilty sinners, abiding under the wrath of God, alienated from God and in bondage to sin and Satan. Yet, all these problems were solved by Christ in His death on the cross.

By Christ’s perfect obedience to the whole moral Law and to all the

commandments He fulfilled the just requirements of a Holy God. In His passive obedience to God's Will, Christ submitted to the penal sanctions of the Law and willingly endured all sufferings for the sake of His people.

There are four New Testament words which express distinct facets of Salvation in Christ: Sacrifice, Propitiation, Reconciliation and Redemption.

### 1. Sacrifice

Throughout the Old Testament redemption is connected with the shedding of blood and with a form of substitution.

All men  
are guilty  
sinners

When **Abel** killed the firstborn of his flock as a sacrifice (Genesis 4:4), he symbolised several important truths:

- (a) sin must be judged;
- (b) a price must be paid for sin;
- (c) the innocent must die for the guilty; and
- (d) without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

When **Abraham** had to kill his only son, God provided a substitute to die in place of Isaac (Genesis 22:8). This foreshadowed the time when God would show His love for us by sending His own beloved Son as a sacrifice to die in our place for our sins.

At the **Passover** God delivered His people from both the bondage of slavery and from the danger of death through the shed blood of the sacrificial lambs (Exodus 12). In this powerful picture of God's redemption of His people, we can see a type of the Lamb of God. For "*Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed*" 1 Corinthians 5:7, in order to deliver us from the bondage of sin and from the sentence of death.

The prophet **Isaiah** described in detail the future sacrifice of Christ:

*"He was pierced for our transgressions,  
He was crushed for our iniquities,  
the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him,  
and by His wounds we are healed . . .  
the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all . . .  
For the transgression of my people He was stricken . . .  
and the Lord makes His life a guilt offering . . .  
My Righteous Servant will justify many, and  
He will bear their iniquities."*

Isaiah 53:5-11

The New Testament era begins with John the Baptist pointing to Jesus and proclaiming:

*"Look, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world!"*

John 1:29

Jesus is our passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:6-8); our sin offering (Romans 8:3); our atonement (Romans 3:25). When Christ, the perfect Son of God, a lamb without spot or blemish (1 Peter 1:19) shed His precious blood on the cross it was a substitutionary death. He died for us, in our place (1 Peter 3:18), the innocent for the guilty, the just in the place of the unjust.

He became like us – that we might become like Him.  
He was rejected – that we might be accepted.  
He was condemned – that we might be forgiven.  
He was punished – that we might be pardoned.  
He suffered – that we might be strengthened.  
He was whipped – that we might be healed.  
He was hated – that we might be loved.  
He was crucified – that we might be justified.  
He was tortured – that we might be comforted.  
He died – that we might live.  
He went to hell – that we might go to heaven.  
He endured what we deserve  
– that we might enjoy what only He deserves.

He was  
crucified –  
that we  
might be  
justified.

## 2. Propitiation

While the “**Sacrifice**” aspect of Christ’s work on the cross deals with our guilt, this aspect of “**Propitiation**” refers to Christ’s covering of our sin in order to remove the divine wrath which our sin evokes. God’s Wrath is that Holy revulsion of the Godhead against all sin and evil. Christ’s propitiation is none other than God Himself taking upon His own holy and eternal heart the implications of His own wrath.

*“He is the propitiation for our sins.”*

1 John 2:2

*“This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”*

1 John 4:10

Through His death on the Cross, Christ removed the wrath of God, which was abiding over us, by covering over our sins. By removing our guilt, Christ saved us from God’s wrath.

## 3. Reconciliation

Reconciliation means the abolition of enmity between two parties who have quarrelled.

*“But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through Him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death*

*of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."*

Romans 5:8-11

Christ  
died to set  
us free.

On the cross, Christ's love dealt sacrificially with the implications of our sin and gave us "peace with God".

Romans 5:1

*"For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things . . . by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross."*

Colossians 1:19, 20

Reconciliation is God's work: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" 2 Corinthians 5:19. Our sin had made us enemies of God and it was necessary that Christ should make peace between us by dealing with the cause of the enmity, our sin, on the cross.

#### 4. Redemption

Redemption is the language of purchase and ransom. Because of our bondage to sin, Christ died to set us free. Christ gave His life "as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). A ransom is the price paid in order to secure a release. The sinner has been bound to the law of sin and death.

*"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."*

Galatians 3:13

Christ has redeemed us from the necessity of keeping the Law as the condition of acceptance before God.

*"For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the One Man the many will be made righteous."*

Romans 5:19

Our redemption from sin embraces several aspects:

† JUSTIFICATION

Colossians 1:14

We were redeemed from the Penalty of our sins. This deals with our guilt. We are fully forgiven for our sins.

† SANCTIFICATION

Titus 2:14

We are being redeemed from the Power of our sin. This deals with our natures. We are progressively delivered from our sins.

† GLORIFICATION

Romans 8:23

We shall be redeemed from the Presence of all sin. This deals with the very

presence of sin. We shall be eternally freed from sin.

*"We wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our Great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness."*  
Titus 2:13

*"God our Saviour . . . wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth . . . Christ Jesus gave Himself as a ransom for all men."*  
1 Timothy 2:4-6

*"He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."*  
1 John 2:2

*"You are worthy . . . because You were slain and with Your blood You purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."*  
Revelation 5:9

*"He is the  
atoning  
sacrifice for  
our sins."*



## CHAPTER 5



# THE FEAR OF GOD

*“And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul.”*

Deuteronomy 10:12

When something is repeated in Scripture it emphasises its importance. Loving God, His Name, His Law, and His Word is mentioned 88 times in the Bible. Trusting God and His Word occurs 91 times. There are 278 references to fearing God in the Bible. The Fear of God is mentioned more times than any other aspect of devotion. The reverential awe, respect and fear of God must be the fundamental attitude of our Faith. Any view of God which doesn't lead us to fear God and obey His Law cannot be a Biblical view.

Any view of God which doesn't lead us to fear God cannot be a Biblical view.

*“Great and marvellous are Your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are Your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear You, O Lord, and bring glory to Your Name? You alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed.”*

Revelation 15:2-4

In the **Psalms**, the prayer and song book of the Bible, the Fear of the Lord is declared to be the highest expression of worship — 62 times!

*“But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear Him, on those whose hope is in His unfailing love.”*

Psalms 33:18

*“The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them ... Fear the Lord, you His saints, for those who fear Him lack nothing.”*

Psalms 34:7-8

*“For as high as the heavens are above the earth so great is His love for those who fear Him ... But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with*



*those who fear Him and His righteousness with their children's children - with those who keep His Covenant and remember to obey His precepts.* " Psalm 103:11,17-18

*"He provides food for those who fear Him,... He remembers His Covenant forever.. **the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom**; all who follow His precepts have good understanding."* Psalm 111:5, 10

*"The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."*

*"Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in His ways. You will eat the fruit of your labour - blessings and prosperity will be yours."* Psalm 128:1-2

*"... if You, O Lord, kept a record of sin , O Lord, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness, therefore You are feared."* Psalm 130: 2-4

In the **Proverbs**, the Fear of the Lord is referred to 15 times as being the source of wisdom, knowledge, discretion, truthfulness and morality.

*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline."* Proverbs 1:7

*"Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord, since they would not accept My advice and spurned My rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways ... for the waywardness of the simple will kill them and the complacency of fools will destroy them".* Proverbs 1:29-32

*"Do not be wise in your own eyes; **fear the Lord and shun evil.**"* Psalm 3:7

*"**To fear the Lord is to hate evil**, I hate pride and arrogance, evil behaviour and perverse speech."* Proverbs 8:13

*"The fear of the Lord adds length to life."* Proverbs 10:27

*"He whose walk is upright fears the Lord, but he whose ways are devious despises Him."* Proverbs 14:2

*"A wise man fears the Lord and shuns evil..."* Proverbs 14:16

*"He who fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for His children it will be a refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death."* Proverbs 14:27-27

*"**Through the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil.**"* Proverbs 16:6

*"The fear of the Lord leads to life."* Proverbs 19:23

*"Always be zealous for the fear of the Lord."*

Proverbs 23:17

The New Covenant provides redeemed men and women with a new heart to fear God - for their own good and for the good of their descendants.

*"The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant... **I will put My Law in their minds and write it on their hearts...** I will be their God, and they will be My people."*

Jeremiah 31:31,33

*"They will be My people and I will be their God. I will give them **singleness of heart and action**, so that they will always fear Me for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them and I will inspire them to fear Me, **so that they will never turn away from Me.**"*

Jeremiah 32:38-40

We should fear God because He is Sovereign. *"The Lord reigns... let those who love the Lord hate evil,"* Psalm 17:1,10. *"The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble; He sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake. Great is the Lord... He is exalted over the nations,"* Psalm 99:1-2. God is great and awesome. **We should fear God because of who He is: our Creator, Sovereign Lord and Eternal Judge.** He is the One who decides whether we live and when we die. He is a Holy and jealous God (Deuteronomy 5:9-10; 6:13-15). He is righteous and just (2 Chronicles 19:6-9).

*"To fear the Lord is to hate evil."*

*"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather be afraid of the One who can destroy both body and soul in hell."*

Matthew 10:28

**We need to teach our children to fear the Lord** (Psalm 34: 1). To fear the Lord will involve keeping *"your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. Turn from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it"* (Psalm 34:13-14). We need to teach respect for the Name of God, for His Church and for His Word – the Bible. *"The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous..."* Psalm 19:9

The Old Testament uses eight different Hebrew words and one Aramaic word to describe the Fear of God: Standing in awe of God (Psalm 22:23; 33:8); Trembling before God (1 Chronicles 16:30; Psalm 96:9; 114:7); Being filled with dread (Psalm 89:7; Isaiah 8:13; Hebrews 12:39); Living in fearful apprehension of judgement (Deuteronomy 28:66; 2 Chronicles 10:29); Frightened (Exodus 15:16; 23:27); The Terror of the Lord (Daniel 6:26); The Fear of God (Exodus 3:6; Psalm 119: 120); Terror and horror (Deuteronomy

9:19); and Worship with trembling (Psalm 2: 11).

**The New Testament** speaks of “*the wrath of the Lamb*”, “*the terror of the Lord*”, “*reverence*” and “*fear*”.

*“And the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, ...hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him Who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?’”* Revelation 6:15-17

*“Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men ...”* 2 Corinthians 5:11

*“His mercy extends to those who fear Him and do what is right.”* Acts 10:35

*“... now realize ... that God does not show favouritism, but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right.”* Acts 10:34-35

*“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgement and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.”* Hebrews 10:26-27

*“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.”* Hebrews 12:28-29

*“Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear”* 1 Peter 1: 17

*“Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honour the king.”* 1 Peter 2:17

If we do not fear the wrath of God, then we will not appreciate the love of God. Only the Fear of God can produce lasting justice and righteousness in individuals, families, churches and nations. Only to the degree that people fear God and obey His commandments can society function for the good and freedom of all its people.

*“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord...”* Psalm 33:12

Only the fear  
of God can  
produce  
lasting justice  
and  
righteousness.

## CHAPTER 6



# THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

*"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being."* Revelation 4:11

We need to know God and to make Him known.

**The Glory of God** - Divine Majesty/Transcendence.  
(Ex. 19-24; Ezekiel 1; Rev. 1:14-16; 2 Cor. 4:6; John 1:14).

1. The **Infinity** of God - without limitation.  
(1 Timothy 6:16; Romans 11:33).
2. The **Self-existence** of God - He depends on nothing else.  
(Genesis 1:1; Acts 17:25; Isaiah 40:13).
3. The **Immutability** of God - He is always consistent.  
(Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; Hebrews 13:8).

*"Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous deeds among all peoples. For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; He is to be feared above all gods."* 1 Chronicles 16:24-25

**The Lordship of God** - Yahweh - Sovereignty.

1. The **Omnipotence** of God - He is all powerful.  
(Gen. 17:1; 18:14; Jer. 32:27; Luke 1:37; Mark 10:27)
2. The **Omnipresence** of God - He is everywhere present, God's eternity in time and omnipresence in space.  
(Psalm 139:7-12; Psalm 90:2; Genesis 3:11; 4:10; Joshua 7:10-26; Acts 5:1-11).
3. The **Omniscience** of God - He is all knowing. He is Truth.  
(Psalm 139:1-6; John 14:6; Col. 2:3; John 16:17; 17:17).

*"For He is the living God and He endures forever; His Kingdom will never be destroyed. His dominion will never end. He rescues and He saves; He performs signs and wonders in the Heavens and on the earth. He rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."*

Daniel 6: 26-27

He is to be  
feared.

### The Holiness of God

1. The **Righteousness** of God - His Holy conformity with Himself.  
(Psalm 145:17; Psalm 31:1; Jer. 11:20; 23:6; Isaiah 45:21; Romans 1:17; 3:21-22; 5:17-21).
2. The **Justice** of God - His Holy Will in operation.  
(Deut. 32:4; 1 John 1:9; Rev. 15:3).
3. The **Wrath** of God - His Holy revulsion against sin.  
(Romans 1:18f; 1 John 3:8; Eph. 2:3; 1 Thes. 1:10; Rev. 6:16).
4. The **Goodness** of God.  
(Ex. 33:19; 1 Kings 8:66; Psalm 34:8).

*“Great and marvellous are Your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are Your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear You, O Lord, and bring glory to Your Name? For You alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed.”*  
Revelation 15:3-4

### The Love of God

1. The **Agape** of God - God is Love. Gracious and merciful.  
(1 John 4:8-10; 1 Cor. 13:4-8).
2. The **Mercy** of God - His loving provision for our salvation. Forgiveness.  
(Eph. 2:4; Titus 3:5).
3. The **Covenant** of God - Steadfast security, loyal love.  
(2 Timothy 2:13)

*“Give thanks to the Lord for He is good; His love endures forever.”*  
1 Chronicles 16:34

**Therefore:** He is to be **loved**.  
He is to be **worshipped**.  
He is to be **feared**.  
He is to be **served**.  
He is to be **proclaimed**.

*“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.”*  
1 Timothy 1:17

## CHAPTER 7



# THE FACTS OF THE FAITH

### The Bible is the Word of God

The Bible itself teaches its divine origin and authority:

- › That “No prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophets' own interpretation.” 2 Peter 1:20
- › That all Scripture was written as “Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” 2 Peter 1:21
- › That “God Spoke . . . through the prophets . . . and by His Son.” Hebrews 1:1-2
- › That “**All Scripture is God-breathed.**” 2 Timothy 3:16
- › The Word of God, once given and written, is exact in all details down to each letter and stroke of the pen. Matthew 5:18
- › That “*The Scripture cannot be broken.*” John 10:35
- › That “*The Word of the Lord stands forever.*” 1 Peter 1:25
- › The Gospel accounts are based on careful research, historical facts and eye-witness testimonies.

*"They were handed down to us by those who from the first were **eye-witnesses** and servants of the Word. Therefore, since I myself have **carefully investigated** everything from the beginning, . . . to write an orderly account . . . so that you may know the **certainty** of the things you have been taught."*

Luke 1:2-4

*"That which was from the beginning, which we have **heard**, which we have **seen** with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have **touch**ed - this we proclaim concerning the Word of Life. The Life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it . . . We proclaim to you **what we have seen and heard.**"*

1 John 1:1-3

The Bible presents itself as God's revealed Word. On almost every page we find “The Lord said . . .”, “God spoke . . .”, “The Word of the Lord came . . .” The Apostles believed that they were speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:4; 15:3; 1 Thess. 2:13; 4:15; 2 Peter 3:2; Gal. 1:6-12; Rev. 22:18, 19). Jesus regarded the Old Testament as the authoritative Word of

*"All Scripture is God-breathed."*

God (Matt. 4:4; Mark 14:27; Matt 19:4; Mark 7:11-13; John 10:34, 35; Luke 24:25-27, 44). Jesus also taught that His Words had a unique power and life (John 6:63; 15:3), that they would not pass away (Mark 13:31) and that they must be heard and obeyed (Matt. 5:17-48; 7:24; John 8:31-38; 14:23).

We cannot accept **the authority of Jesus** without accepting the authority of the Old Testament which He lived, taught, appealed to and fulfilled. We also have to recognise that Jesus deliberately chose and trained certain men to be His apostles (Luke 5:27; 6:12-16; John 17:6) and gave them a special anointing with the Holy Spirit (John 20:21; Acts 1:8), promising them the Holy Spirit to guide their teaching (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13). This compels one to also accept the authority of the New Testament.

*"I am the Way  
and the Truth  
and the Life.  
No one comes  
to the Father  
except  
through Me"*

We can also appeal to **Fulfilled Prophecy, Archaeological Discoveries, Manuscript Evidence** and **Historical Records** to support these internal evidences to the accuracy and uniqueness of the Bible. Most powerfully, however, we can point to **The Unique Impact of the Bible** on millions of lives throughout the centuries and on our own as well. Some sceptics may not believe that the Bible is the Word of God, but they have to ignore a lot of accumulative evidence to do this.

### **Jesus is the Only Way to God**

The Bible teaches that there is only one way of salvation:

*"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all men."*

1 Timothy 2:5, 6

Our Lord Jesus Himself declared that there is only one way to God:

*"Jesus answered, 'I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'."*

John 14:6

This has been the Apostolic Message from the very beginning:

*"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other Name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."*

Acts 4:12

### **Jesus is God in Human Form**

The first disciples of Christ, being Jews, had the highest regard for the Old Testament Scriptures. It was the Word of God. Yet it was definitely incomplete: it spoke of a day when God would judge the earth; of a king from David's line whose kingdom would never end. It spoke of all the families of mankind being blessed by Abraham's seed. It spoke of a prophet like Moses arising from among the people, whose teaching would be unparalleled. It spoke of a Servant of the Lord, whose death would atone for the sins of the people, of One who would make a New Covenant between

God and men; One who would put the Spirit of the Lord into the hearts of men so that they could know God personally and have their sins wiped out. It spoke of a stone, despised by the builders, which would become the keystone. It spoke of One like a Son of Man, who would receive authority, honour and royal power so that people of all nations, races and languages would serve Him. It spoke of a Priest like the legendary Melchizedek, whom the Almighty would call Lord and welcome to His throne. It spoke of a coming Messiah, who would be born of the tribe of Judah, from David's line, in Bethlehem. He would be despised and rejected by the very people He came to rescue. He would die among wicked men and His tomb would be supplied by a rich man. Yet He would live again, forever, and the Lord's purpose would succeed through Him.

*"Our Great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ."*

All of this was fulfilled by Jesus! Not some, or much, of it - all of it! Prophecies made by many prophets over a thousand years and more were all fulfilled by one historical Person. And what mighty prophecies they were too!

1. In the Old Testament, **Yahweh is the only Saviour** there is -

*"I, even I, am the Lord and apart from Me there is no Saviour."*

Isaiah 43:11

*"And there is no God apart from Me, a righteous God and a Saviour; there is none but Me."*

Isaiah 45:21

Yet in the New Testament, Jesus is hailed as -

*"Our Great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ."*

Titus 2:13

His very name, Jesus, means *"Yahweh saves."*

*"You are to give Him the Name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."*

Matthew 1:21

Both God's role and His Name as Saviour are attributed to Jesus in the New Testament. Jesus claimed the power to forgive sins (Mark 2:7-10; Luke 7:48) and He is seen as the Saviour of sinners (John 3:17; Acts 4:12; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 9:26). He raised the dead (Mark 5: 35-43; Luke 7:11-17, 22; John 11) and He gives eternal life to all who now believe in Him (Mark 10:21; John 3:16; 5:24; 1 John 5:11, 12).

2. In the Old Testament **Yahweh alone is The Judge** (Dan. 7:9, 10; Psalm 99; Deut. 32). Yet Jesus claimed this uniquely Divine function in the New Testament (Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:22-30).

*"For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one*



*may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."*  
2 Corinthians 5:10

3. That **Yahweh alone is the Creator of all things** is basic to the Old Testament (Genesis 1; Psalm 33:6-9; Isaiah 42:5). Yet the New Testament reveals that through Jesus all things came into being (John 1:1-3; Heb. 1:2; 1 John 1:1), and that Jesus is the sustainer and upholder of all things (Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 8:6).

4. **Yahweh alone is worthy of worship**, and to worship anyone other than the Lord God would be the worst and most fundamental of all sins (Exodus 20:3-6; Deut. 6:4-15). Yet prayers are addressed to Christ (Acts 7:59; 9:13; 1 Cor. 16:22; Rev. 22:20); Doxologies are addressed to Him (Rom. 9:5; 2 Tim. 4:18; 2 Peter 3:18; Rev. 1:5, 6); Old Testament worship passages are transferred from Yahweh to Christ (e.g. Isaiah 8:13-15 in Rom. 9:33; 1 Peter 2:7-9; 3:15). The disciples worshipped Jesus (Matt. 28:17; Luke 24:52), and when Thomas said to Him: *"My Lord and my God!"* (John 20:28), far from rebuking him, Jesus rather suggested that he should have believed earlier. The book of Revelation also presents the most unambiguous assertion of Deity when it records the great worship of Christ in heaven - *"Worthy is the Lamb, Who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!"* Revelation 5:12

5. Even **the Name of Yahweh is ascribed to Christ**. When the Old Testament was translated into Greek in the 2nd Century B.C. the Sacred Name of God, YHWH, usually rendered Yahweh, or Jehovah, was translated into the Greek word Kyrios (Lord). There are about 7 000 instances of this in the Septuagint. So when this exalted Name is attributed directly to Christ (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11, etc.), it is a clear statement of Christ's deity. The confession *"Jesus is Lord"* tells it all. Certainly the title *"Lord of lords"* (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16) cannot be interpreted any other way than that Jesus Christ is God incarnate.

There are also many occasions where the New Testament applies Old Testament passages concerning Yahweh directly to Jesus - e.g. Psalm 110:1 in Acts 2:34, 35; Rom. 8:38; Heb. 10:12, 13; 1 Peter 3:22; Isaiah 6:10 in John 12:41; Isaiah 45:23 in Phil. 2:9-11; Joel 2:32 in Rom. 10:13 and Psalm 68:18 in Eph. 4:8). A supreme example of this is John the Baptist's ministry to *"Prepare the way for the Lord"* (Yahweh) (Matthew 3:3). This is a direct quote from Isaiah 40:3, which unmistakably refers to God Himself.

Of great significance is Jesus' self-designations as the I Am (John 6:35; 8:12, 24, 58; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5; 18:5). This is a deliberate identification with God's revelation of Himself in Exodus 3:14 as *"I AM"*.

God has  
made Himself  
known.

All this is conclusive and the accumulative proof of all these evidences of the Deity of Christ is overwhelming. Yet even further proof could be sought in **The Resurrection** (Rom. 1:4). Atheists have yet to explain away the hard historical facts of **the Empty Tomb, the Eye-Witness Accounts** of those hundreds who saw Christ alive again (1 Cor. 15:4-8), **the Transformation of the Disciples** and even **the Existence of The Church** (represented by over two million church buildings and 2 billion members).

The very Names of **Jesus** (Yahweh Saves), **Messiah** (God's Anointed One), **Son of Man** (the Lord and Judge of all revealed in Daniel 7:13-14), **Emmanuel** (God with us), and **the Son of God**, point to His Deity. **His uniquely perfect and sinless life**, and **His teaching** - which are unsurpassed in authority, clarity, insight and power - all this can only support the Biblical claims for the Deity of Christ.

The Incarnation reveals the depth of His Love, Holiness, Justice and Mercy.

It is upon this solid foundation of accumulative evidence that the Church of Christ based its great ecumenical creed of Nicea:

*"We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from Heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered, died and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, and His Kingdom will have no end."*

### What Does this Mean for Us?

The glorious truth of the Incarnation is that God has made Himself known personally, specifically and fully by taking our human nature unto Himself, by coming amongst us as a particular man, yet without ceasing to be the infinite, transcendent and eternal God.

God has in Christ taken upon Himself the responsibility and penalty for the sins of the world. God has borne the brunt of suffering and evil by subjecting Himself to its cruelty and horror. The Incarnation reveals the reality and depth and costly nature of His Love, Holiness, Justice and Mercy.

Jesus is the Eternal Son of God, who became incarnate to reveal God to us and to reconcile us to Himself. He is the second Person of the Trinity, God revealed in human form. Jesus is God, and so we have a full and final revelation and redemption in and through Him.

## **Christ Himself**

*Once it was the blessing – now it is Lord;  
Once it was the feeling – now it is His Word.  
Once His gifts I wanted – now the Giver own;  
Once I sought for healing – now Himself alone.*

*Once it was painful trying – now it is perfect trust;  
Once a half salvation – now the uttermost.  
Once it was ceaseless holding – now He holds me fast;  
Once it was constant drifting – now my anchor's cast.*

*Once it was busy planning – now it is trusting prayer;  
Once it was anxious worrying – now He has the care.  
Once it was what I wanted – now what Jesus says,  
Once it was constant asking – now it is ceaseless praise.*

*Once it was my working – His it hence shall be.  
Once I tried to use Him – now He uses me.  
Once the power I wanted – now the Mighty One.  
Once it was for self I laboured – now for Him alone.*

## CHAPTER 8



# GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

God has promised *"I will give water to the thirsty land, I will pour out My power on your children."*  
Isaiah 44:3

*"Here is My servant, whom I uphold, My chosen One in whom I delight; I will put My Spirit on Him and He will bring justice to the nations."*  
Isaiah 42:1

### **The disciple of Christ must learn and experience what it means to:**

1. **Be filled with the Spirit** (*Ephesians 5: 18*)
2. **Be led by the Holy Spirit** (*Romans 8:14*)
3. **Walk in the Spirit** (*Galatians 5:26*)
4. **Pray in the Spirit** (*Jude 20; Romans 8:26*)

### **The Holy Spirit was sent from God by Jesus (John 15:26) to:**

Convict the world of sin (*John 16:8 - "When He comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement."*)

Regenerate God's chosen people into new life (*John 3:8 - "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."*)

Reassure us of our salvation (*Romans 8:16 - "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children."*)

Teach us the truth (*John 14:26 & 16:13 - "But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, will teach you all things and will remind you... But when He, the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all truth..."*)

Lead us (*Romans 8:14 - "...because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."*)

Fill us with supernatural power (*Luke 24:49 - "...clothed with power from on high."*)

Direct our prayer life (*Ephesians 6:18 - "...pray in the Spirit..."*)

Produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives (*Galatians 5:22-23 - "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

*"Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."*

*gentleness and self-control.”)*

Give gifts to each part of the Body (1 Cor 12:11)

Empower us for worship (John 4:24 -"God is Spirit, and His worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth...")

Empower us for evangelism (Acts 1:8 -"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses...")

Call and direct us into ministries (Acts 13:2 -" .. the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'")

Glorify Jesus (John 16:14 -"He will bring glory to Me...")

Jesus came to set the world on fire (Luke 12:49). He wants people "on-fire" for Him, dedicated and fervent disciples conquering the world for Christ (1 John 5:4). To do this He requires fully committed, totally surrendered, Spirit-filled disciples who will walk in His bold footprints. It is not God's will that we have inconsistent "**big dipper**" experiences of being up today and down tomorrow. It is equally not God's will that His disciples follow and rely on their feelings and experiences, because feelings change, but Jesus Christ never changes — He is "*The same yesterday, today and forever*" Hebrews 13:8.

God the Father sent the Holy Spirit to be a helper for His children. He comes to help us follow Jesus and glorify God.

The Holy Spirit comes to show us Jesus (John 15:26), to keep our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews. 12:2), to lead us to follow Jesus (1 Peter 2:21) and to glorify Jesus (John 16:14).

*"...if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ."*  
Romans 8:9

*"Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out 'Abba, Father.'"*  
Galatians 4:6

### **Preparing the Way for the Lord**

*"A Voice cries out, 'Prepare in the Wilderness a road for the Lord! Clear the way in the desert for our God! Fill every valley; level every mountain, The hills will become a plain, and the rough country will be made smooth. Then the Glory of the Lord will be revealed. The Lord Himself has promised this.'"*  
Isaiah 40:3-5

If we have a dry spiritual life, if we have many down times or valley experiences, if our walk seems rough and lacking in power and satisfaction then there is good news — God not only commands — He enables us to obey. And by the power of the Holy Spirit, He enables us to live in the glory of the Lord. Prepare then the way for the Lord to control your life — prepare a way in your life.

**God not only  
c o m m a n d s  
— He enables  
us to obey**

### Sins Against the Holy Spirit:

*"Yet they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit. So He turned and became their enemy and He Himself fought against them."* Isaiah 63:10

The Word of God warns us:

1. **Do not grieve the Holy Spirit** (Ephesians 4:30) *"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with Whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."*
2. **Do not quench the Holy Spirit** (1 Thessalonians 5:19) *"Do not put out the Spirit's fire."*
3. **Do not resist the Holy Spirit** (Acts 7:51) *"You stiff-necked people ... You always resist the Holy Spirit."*
4. **Do not lie to the Holy Spirit** (Acts 5:3) *"You have lied to the Holy Spirit ... You have not lied to men but to God."*

#### 1. Do Not Grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30)

We can only grieve a person who loves us. To grieve means to cause sorrow to or to hurt a friend who loves us.

We can only grieve a person who loves us.

#### How can we grieve the Holy Spirit?

- a. He is the **Spirit of Life** (Romans 8:2) - Spiritual lethargy, apathy and deadness grieve Him.
- b. He is the **Spirit of Truth** (John 15:26), and anything false, hypocritical or deceitful grieves Him.
- c. He is the **Spirit of Faith** (2 Corinthians. 4:13), and so unbelief, distrust and worry grieve Him.
- d. He is the **Spirit of Power, Love and Self-Control** (2 Timothy 1:7), and spiritual barrenness, fruitlessness and disorder grieve Him.
- e. He is the **Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation** (Ephesians 1:17). Ignorance of the Word of God and spiritual foolishness grieve Him.
- f. He is the **Spirit of Holiness** (1 Corinthians. 6:19) and so anything unclean, indecent, or immoral defiles and degrades us and so grieves the Holy Spirit.

*"...the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."* Isaiah 11:2

*"Do not cast me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me."* Psalm 51:11

#### 2. Do Not Quench the Holy Spirit (1Thess 5:19)

To quench the Spirit is to suppress or stifle His leading and working. To quench the Spirit means that we hinder His will in the same way as one

would quench a fire by pouring cold water over it.

- a. The Holy Spirit's fire may be quenched by a **mocking** and frivolous attitude that prevents serious spiritual work being done. (*Luke 3:16*)
- b. Spiritual **coldness** and apathy quench spiritual fervour and dampen enthusiasm. (*Revelation 3:15,16*)
- c. By **neglecting to provide fuel** we can prevent the Holy Spirit from setting us and keeping us "on fire". Our spiritual fuel of the Word of God and the power of prayer are essential if we are to be "on fire" for Jesus. (*Luke 12:49*)
- d. **Divisions** in our fellowship quench the Holy Spirit just as fire breaks halt forest fires. (*Matthew 3:11*)

When He convicts us of sin and we do not repent -that is resisting the Spirit.

### 3. Do Not Resist the Holy Spirit (*Acts 7:51*)

- a. When He convicts us of sin and we do not repent – that is resisting the Spirit. (*John 16:8*)
- b. When He leads us to do something and we refuse to do it – that is resisting the Spirit. (*Ezekiel 36:27*)
- c. When He prepares us for something and we do not put it into action – that is resisting the Spirit. (*Ephesians 3:20*)
- d. When He guides and you do not follow – that is resisting the Spirit. (*John 16:13*)

*"Then the Lord said, 'My Spirit will not contend with man forever '"*

Genesis 6:3

### 4. Do Not Lie to the Holy Spirit

- a. When we pray and pretend that everything is all right while we have unrepented sin in our lives, we lie to the Spirit (*Proverbs 28:13*).
- b. When we commit ourselves to God's service or to His will, but don't really mean it, we lie to the Spirit (*2 Corinthians 11:3*).
- c. When we give a word of testimony or prophecy in Jesus' Name or about some working of the Spirit and it isn't the truth, we lie to the Spirit (*Jeremiah 23:25-28*).

So then we should not quench, resist, grieve or lie to the Holy Spirit. Instead, we should be filled with the Spirit (*Luke 11:9-13*).

*"I am going to send you what My Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on High."* Luke 24:49

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* Acts 1:8

## Be Filled with the Holy Spirit

The Word of God commands us:

*"Be filled with the Holy Spirit"*

Ephesians 5:18

The full meaning of the words "*be filled*" is brought out by studying the grammatical tense of the original Greek, which is in the:

- Imperative tense — it is a command, not an option.
- Plural — all of us must be filled -it is a general command.
- Present tense — it is a command for the present —be filled now.
- Passive mood — that is to say it is something that we cannot do ourselves — but we must let God fill us.
- Present continuous tense — be continuously filled, go on being filled.

**What we  
surrender to  
God —  
He fills and  
He uses.**

In other words, we are all being clearly commanded to let ourselves be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit. The word filled indicates that we must be under the influence of, to the extent of being dominated, or controlled by, the Holy Spirit.

*"The Spirit has given us life; He must also control our lives."*

Galatians 5:25

To be filled with the Spirit means nothing less than being controlled by the Holy Spirit.

### How then are we to be controlled or filled with the Spirit?

What we **surrender** to God; God **accepts** (*Romans 12:1-2*)

What God **accepts** (*John 6:37*); He **cleanses** (*John 15:3*)

What God **cleanses** (*2 Timothy 2:21*); He **fills** (*Matthew 5:6*)

And what God **fills** (*Ephesians 3:19,20*); He **uses** (*Acts 1:8*)

Jesus proclaimed that "*Whoever is thirsty should come to Me and drink ... whoever believes in Me, streams of life-giving water will pour out from his heart.* Jesus said this about the Holy Spirit, which those who believed in Him were going to receive." *John 7: 37 - 39*

To be filled with the Holy Spirit we need to continuously come to Christ in faith. "*If you remain in Me and My Words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given you. This is to My Father's glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples.*" *John 15:7-8*



*"He who  
hungers and  
thirsts after  
righteousness  
shall be  
filled"*

To be filled with the Spirit, we need to:

- THIRST                    *"He who hungers and thirsts after righteousness shall be filled." Matthew 5:6*
- COME TO JESUS       Only Jesus can satisfy our thirst. It is Jesus alone who fills us with His Spirit. (*Matthew 3:11*)
- DRINK                    Receive the Spirit — a step of faith is required.
- BELIEVE                We are filled with the Holy Spirit when our hunger and thirst leads us to Jesus and we **by faith receive the fullness of His Spirit through surrender to our Lord Jesus Christ.**

*"If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"*  
Luke 11:13

## CHAPTER 9



# THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

*"If anyone loves Me, he will obey My teaching..."*

John 14:23

Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21

1. ***I am the Lord your God... You shall have no other gods before Me.***  
Forbids: Polytheism, pantheism and atheism.  
Right implied: Freedom of worship.
2. ***You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything... you shall not bow down to them or worship them.***  
Forbids: Idolatry of statues, icons, pictures, people or false religions.  
Right implied: The right to know God's will to do it.
3. ***You shall not misuse the Name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His Name.***  
Forbids: Profanity, false prophecies and blasphemy.  
Right implied: Freedom of speech.
4. ***Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work.***  
Forbids: Desecration of the Lord's Day.  
Right implied: The right to work and to rest.
5. ***Honour your father and your mother.***  
Forbids: Disrespect, dishonour and disobedience towards our parents and any one in authority over us.  
Right implied: Respect for authority.
6. ***You shall not murder.***  
Forbids: Murder, suicide, abortion and euthanasia.  
Right implied: The right to life.

For fast  
relief – take  
two tablets

7. **You shall not commit adultery.**  
 Forbids: Fornication, adultery, pornography, perversion and homosexuality.  
 Right implied: The sanctity of marriage.
8. **You shall not steal.**  
 Forbids: Theft, fraud, socialism, laziness and vandalism.  
 Right implied: Private ownership of property.
9. **You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.**  
 Forbids: Perjury, gossip and slander.  
 Right implied: The right to have one's name protected from slander.
10. **You shall not covet... anything that belongs to your neighbour.**  
 Forbids: Coveting, envy, greed, selfishness and socialism.  
 Right implied: Freedom of conscience.

Each command deals with a specific **area**.

Each command includes a **prohibition**.

Each command includes an implicit **right**.

Each command includes a call to **action**.

*"The Law of the Lord is perfect."*

<b>Area</b>	<b>Forbids</b>
1. <b>God</b>	Polytheism/Pantheism/Atheism
2. <b>Worship</b>	Idolatry of statues/icons/pictures/films/false religion
3. <b>Speech</b>	Profanity/false prophecies/blasphemy
4. <b>Time</b>	Desecration of Sabbath
5. <b>Authority</b>	Disrespect/dishonour/disobedience
6. <b>Life</b>	Murder/abortion/euthanasia
7. <b>Love</b>	Adultery/pornography/perversion/ homosexuality
8. <b>Property</b>	Theft/socialism/laziness/bad stewardship
9. <b>Truth</b>	Perjury/gossip/slander/media bias
10. <b>Conscience</b>	Coveting/greed/selfishness/socialism

Obedience to the Decalogue would result in:

Respect for **God**

Respect for **People**

Respect for **Property**

The Ten Commandments cover:

I - IV Our responsibility to **God**

V Our responsibility to **Parents**

VI - X Our responsibility to **People**

The Ten Commandments are **the foundation for our rights:**

Freedom of worship, the right to know God's will and to do it, freedom of speech, the right to work and to rest, respect for authority, the right to life, the sanctity of marriage, private ownership of property, the right to be protected from slander and freedom of conscience.

*"...the perfect  
Law of  
liberty."*

*"... sin is lawlessness."* 1 John 3:4

*"The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."* Psalm 19:7

*"Therefore the Law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."* Romans 7:12

*"But he who looks into the perfect Law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer – but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."* James 1:25

*"If you love Me, you will obey what I command."* John 14:15





# THE HEART OF THE MATTER

### What is Wrong With Our World?

Almost on a daily basis each of us is confronted by the reality of a world that is in rebellion to its Creator. The desecration of the Lord's Day, the proliferation of pornography, the escalation of crime and violence, the breakdown of moral standards, the legalisation of abortion, the break up of families and the explosion of child abuse all remind us that we live in a sinful society which has forgotten God.

What is wrong with our world? **Sin.** Mankind is in rebellion against God.

### What is Wrong With the Church?

Almost as often we wonder what is wrong with the church. Why has the church become so ineffective? How can it be that so many Christians in so many churches have such a diminishing effect on the moral climate of society? Can we honestly say that we have been praying and working against evil when we see evil increasing? (Matt 18:18-20; Psalm 94:16). Has the salt of the earth lost its saltiness? Is the light of the world being hidden under a bowl? (Matt 5:13-16).

During the last 22 years of travelling extensively and ministering in 23 countries, I have had the privilege of witnessing several churches operating as God intended them to - in revival. Since experiencing the powerful presence and blessing of God in the revivals of Romania and KwaSizabantu it has been very hard for me, and other missionaries of Frontline Fellowship, to fit back into the shallow and half-hearted state of most churches in South Africa.

From the perspective of the persecuted churches, and in the light of the revivals, it becomes crystal clear what is wrong with the average church in the West. Our churches are devoid of the fear of the Lord. The reverential awe and worship of God is missing. Most congregations lack true spiritual leadership and never practise Biblical standards of church discipline.

*What is wrong  
with our world?*

**Sin.**

Mankind is in  
rebellion to  
God.

Many church-goers feel like Christians, but think like humanists. They believe they have Christian hearts, but it's quite clear that most have humanist minds, reading more of the newspapers than they ever do of the Bible, and watching TV more than they worship Christ.

Like the church of Laodicea it could be said of many church-goers: *"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm -neither hot nor cold - I am about to spit you out of my mouth... you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked, so be earnest and repent."* Rev 3:15-19

The Church is like a rescue boat. The rescue boat must be in the sea rescuing the perishing, but the sea must not be in the boat. In the same way the church must be in the world rescuing the perishing, but the world must not be in the church.

Our churches  
are devoid  
of the fear  
of the Lord

The tragedy of the modern churches is that: by lowering its standards to allow the unconverted easy access, the church has become flooded and swamped by the world. It is now becoming increasingly difficult to discern any substantial differences between the opinions, moral standards and even conduct of "Christians" and the pagans.

The published statistics of church growth and the vast numbers coming forward at mass crusades are impressive. Yet those of us who deal with the individual in the pews and on the streets are deeply disturbed. The church generally seems to be growing only in *quantity*. The *quality* of devotional and spiritual life and moral standards seems to be deteriorating even more rapidly than the church is expanding in numbers. It is as though the churches have become like huge combine harvesters, yet lacking cutting blades: impressive machinery, much noise and activity –but often ineffective in dealing with the harvest.

If the Gospel is the cutting blade of the church, then we need to ask: what could have blunted our Gospel preaching?

### What is Wrong With the Gospel Preached?

Listening to the average "Gospel" message proclaimed from all too many pulpits, and on radio and TV, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that most evangelistic messages today are man-centred, emotion based, weak and shallow. The "Just believe" gospel is cheap. Judas sold Christ for 30 pieces of silver. We just give Him away free. The "Just pray this prayer" message is superficial and it produces superficial converts. The "easy believism" so often proclaimed is synthetic. It's like white bread. All the natural goodness has been refined out and artificial ingredients have been added.

### The Missing Parts of the Gospel Message

Seldom does one hear **the nature of God** taught on, expounded and explained. To assume that our hearers truly understand and appreciate the majesty, the holiness and the glory of our all-powerful, all-knowing, infinite and eternal Creator is presumptuous.

The **fear of the Lord** is the beginning of all wisdom (Prov 9:10). The Lord's mercy extends to those who fear Him (Acts 10:35). The Lord instructs those who fear Him (Psalm 25:12). The foundation for effective service is the fear of the Lord (Joshua 24:14). The Lord's great blessing is upon those who fear Him (Psalm 31:19). Yet, how often do we hear these great truths proclaimed?

*"The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Psalm 19:7) and "...through the Law we become conscious of sin" (Romans 3:20).* Yet how often do we proclaim the Law of God?

Martin Luther declared: *"The first duty of the Gospel preacher is to declare God's Law and show the nature of sin."*

John Bunyan said: *"The man who does not know the nature of the Law cannot know the nature of sin."*

John Wesley suggested that evangelists should preach 90% Law and 10% grace.

Charles Finney wrote: *"Failure to use the Law is almost certain to result in false hope, the introduction of a false standard of Christian experience, and to fill the church with false converts."*

Charles Spurgeon declared: *"They will never accept grace until they tremble before a just and Holy Law."*

As our Lord taught: *"Do not think I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law... Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."* Matthew 5:17-19

Similarly **the wrath of God**, the doctrine of eternal judgement and the reality of Hell receive scant attention in most modern sermons. *"For they would not follow His ways; they did not obey His Law. So He poured out on them*

Most evangelistic messages today are man - centred , emotion based, weak and shallow.



His burning anger... " Isaiah 42:24,25

Repentance involves a change of habits, a change of belief and a change of behaviour.

"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: **Fear Him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell.** Yes, I tell you **fear God.**" Luke 12:5

"Whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." John 3:36

"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness." Romans 1:18

Even the heart of the Gospel message – the redemption achieved by **the blood of Christ's atonement on the cross** receives surprisingly little emphasis from most modern evangelists. "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." Hebrews 9:22

"God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood." Romans 3:25

The Scriptures declare that: "the blood of Jesus, His Son purifies us from all sin." 1 John 1:7

Yet how often do we proclaim that message?

Also conspicuous by its absence is a Biblical emphasis and understanding of repentance. I have heard prominent evangelists say that "repentance is just saying you're sorry"!

By way of contrast the Bible emphasises three aspects of repentance:

- Conviction** – a change of mind
- Contrition** – a change of heart, and
- Conversion** – a change of life.

"Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him..." Isaiah 55:7

It is not enough to confess our sin, we also need to reject sin mentally, to loathe it and forsake it. Repentance involves a change of habits, a change of belief and a change of behaviour.

### UnBiblical Additions to the Gospel

In place of the Biblical message of the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the Law of God, the wrath of God and eternal judgement, the need for repentance from sin and faith in the atonement through Christ's blood, many have substituted a series of unBiblical innovations:

Nowhere in the Bible will you find any example of an evangelist, apostle or disciple using any of the following popular phrases or techniques:

*"God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life."* Instead Scripture makes it clear that God is angry with those who refuse to obey and eternity in hell is His plan for the unrepentant.

*"Accept Jesus as your personal Saviour".* "Accept" is the weakest word possible and it is never used in any evangelistic context. Why don't we use the powerful words used in the Bible? eg. *"God ... now commands all people everywhere to repent"* Acts 17:30. A call to submit to Christ or to surrender our lives to Him as Lord and Saviour would be more Biblical than a weak appeal to *"accept Jesus"*.

*"Only you can open the door of your heart. Jesus is standing at the door of your heart knocking. He is a gentleman and will only come in if invited. The handle is only on the inside. Only you can let Him in."* This imaginative emotional appeal ignores the sovereignty of God. In the case of the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus it would appear that our Lord kicked the door in without any *"permission"* from Saul (Acts 9).

Nowhere in the Bible do we find a single incident of an evangelist or disciple using such imagery to describe conversion. Throughout the Gospel and the book of Acts we are challenged to come to Christ and seek entry into His house. Now we are expected to believe that the situation has so reversed that Christ now comes to us and asks us to allow Him entry!

Submit to  
Christ as Lord  
and Saviour

Perhaps this concept is derived from Revelation 3:20. However, that verse is part of Christ's letter to the church at Laodicea. Far from being an evangelistic message it is a severe rebuke to a lukewarm church: *"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth.... Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Behold I stand at the door and knock..."* Rev 3:15-20

It is tragic that part of this letter written to warn the church against the danger of half-heartedness, worldliness and compromise could have been so abused as to produce lukewarm, semi-saved converts. If only the full context of this passage was used as often as verse 20. Or have strong

Biblical words like “rebuke”, “discipline”, “earnest” and “repent” become unacceptable to today's congregations?

Similarly the insipid phrases “Just believe” and “just pray this prayer” are unBiblical. We certainly must believe – but it is the entire Bible which we must study, believe, obey, proclaim and apply. We must pray, but we need to do much more than “just pray”. The Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ commands us to “Make disciples... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” To place a “just” in front of any of the commands of Scripture is to devalue all the other important requirements.

Along with these phrases we have accepted several inadequate slogans to convey apparently Christian messages such as: “Christians aren't perfect - just forgiven”. While it is true to say that we are forgiven, yet are imperfect, the insertion of the overused “just” turns this slogan into a dangerous half truth. Are we only forgiven? Are we not regenerated as well as redeemed? And what about sanctification? If we have not evidenced a dramatic transformation in our beliefs, moral standards, way of life, behaviour and conduct then it is doubtful if we are even forgiven (Galatians 5:19-25).

If we have not evidenced a dramatic transformation then it is doubtful if we are even forgiven.

### The Gospel According to Our Lord Jesus Christ

The recorded examples of how our Lord counselled individuals for salvation stand in sharp contrast to our modern message and methods.

The rich young ruler was earnest. He did not merely raise his hand while every head was bowed and every eye was closed. He did not merely walk down the aisle in response to an impassioned appeal. No, while every eye was opened and every head raised he ran to Christ. Rather than merely bow his head and repeat a set prayer, he fell on his knees before Christ and pleaded “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Mark 10:17

What was our Lord's response? Did He say “Just believe” or “Just pray this prayer”? Did He tell him that God loved him and had a wonderful plan for his life? No. Jesus rebuked him: “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.” Our Lord began with **the nature of God and the nature of man**. Only God is holy. All men are sinners.

You may ask why Christ rebuked him. Surely our Lord Jesus is God? Yes, but did the young man realise that? Was he merely seeking to flatter man or did he realise with Whom he was talking?

Next our Lord reminded him of **the Ten Commandments**: “You know the commandments: Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honour your father and mother.”

Many would ask what the Law has to do with eternal life. The Scriptures state that: *"The Law was our tutor, to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith."* Gal 3:24

Telling people that *"Jesus is the answer"* before they are even asking the question is not helpful. No teacher hands out answer sheets to the students before an exam. Declaring that *"Jesus saves"* to people who are not yet conscious of a need to be saved is ineffective. Until people know the *"bad news"* of hell they are not ready to know the *"good news"* of heaven. Until our hearers appreciate the eternal implications of the Holiness of God and the depravity of man, the holy Law of God and eternal judgment – they are not ready to receive the glorious message of redemption through the sacrifice of Christ.

To put it more bluntly: until we understand that we are wicked sinners, lost and justly doomed to an eternity in hell we are not ready to appreciate truly the message of *"repentance and forgiveness of sins,"* Luke 24:47.

Incredibly the young man declared that he had obeyed all those commandments since he was young. No doubt he was an extraordinary individual – morally upright and devoutly religious – yet he lacked an awareness of his sinfulness. The greatest fault is to be aware of none.

The greatest fault is to be aware of none.

So our Lord tells him: *"one thing you lack... Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me"* Mark 10:21. Some may say that the Lord was demanding several things of him, but it actually amounted to one thing: **repentance**.

Our Lord had singled out the first commandment *"You shall have no other gods before me"*, and the last *"You shall not covet."* The rich young ruler had apparently made an idol of his wealth. His riches had become more important to him than obedience to God.

The Ten Commandments deal with our relationships with God, our parents and other people. They deal with God, worship, speech, time, authority, life, love, property, truth and conscience. They forbid polytheism, idolatry, profanity, desecration of the Sabbath, dishonouring of parents, murder, adultery, theft, perjury and coveting. **By studying the Law of God we come to realise how far short we fall.**

The message to those who recognise their transgressions is one of repentance and faith. And **as repentance without faith is not true repentance, so faith without repentance is not true faith.**

When he heard what our Lord required, "*the man's face fell. He went away sad because he had great wealth*" (Mark 10:22). Instead of chasing after him and lowering the standard, "*Jesus said to His disciples, 'How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!'*" *The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus said again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!'*" Mark 10:23-24

How often don't we claim that it is easy to be saved. Yet our Lord didn't lower the standard. In fact He taught that it would be hard to enter the Kingdom of God. Not only hard for the rich but hard for anyone!

*"The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, 'Who then can be saved?' Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible ...'"*  
Mark 10:26-27

All mankind is lost and no one can save himself.

Do we realise the implications of this? All mankind is lost and no one can save himself. Neither can any pastor, evangelist or denomination save anybody. No amount of sacraments, praying, singing or preaching can save anyone. Eloquence cannot do it, neither can emotional techniques or a charged atmosphere.

*"With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."*  
Mark 10:27.

A Biblical illustration of conversion is found in John 11 when our Lord stood before the tomb and called out: "*Lazarus, come out!*" Now Lazarus had been dead for 4 days. Is it reasonable to call upon a decaying corpse to respond? Nevertheless that is what evangelism is. Outside of Christ we are dead in our transgressions and sins (Eph 2:1). Faith is a gift from God (Eph 2:8) and faith comes from hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). "*The Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes*" (Rom 1: 16).

Only the Word of God can save, so why do we subtract from this powerful life-giving Word? And why do we think we can add anything of value to it?

Jesus then emphasised the need for **sacrifice** and for **endurance of persecutions**. Finally He promised **blessings, rewards and eternal life** to those who obey His message (Mark 10:28-31).

This then is the bold and balanced Gospel of Christ: **God is a holy God and His righteous standards are seen in His Law. Man is sinful and needs to repent from his wickedness and trust in Christ. This repentance and faith is to be evident in obedience to Christ, a willingness to sacrifice and to suffer persecution. To those who do so He promises great blessings,**

## **rewards and eternal life.**

Instead of offering a weak, diluted, man-centred message of *“believe and receive”*, we need faithfully to proclaim a Christ centred, Bible based and Holy Spirit led message of *“repentance and obedience.”* Rather than making converts we need to: *“make disciples ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”* (Matthew 28:19-20).

It is this message which deals with the heart of the matter. Anything else would be as inadequate as placing a band-aid plaster on a cancer. However, the Gospel of Christ faithfully proclaimed would result in a purged, purified, prayerful and powerful church – prepared to honour and obey Christ in all areas of life.

**God is holy.  
Man is sinful  
and needs to  
repent.**



## CHAPTER 11



# PRINCIPLES OF DISCIPLESHIP

*"...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Matthew 28:18 - 20

The Great Commission is great. It includes:

- A Great **Claim**: *"all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Me"* (The Lordship of Christ in all areas of life.)
- A Great **Commission**: *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations"* (The whole church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world.)
- A Great **Command**: *"teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."*
- A Great **Promise**: *"And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Discipleship is not complete until the disciple is discipling.

The Great Commission requires us to make disciples, teaching obedience to everything Christ has commanded us.

*"Entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."*

2 Timothy 2:2

Discipleship is not complete until the disciple is discipling. A disciple is a learner. Discipleship is the process of following the Lord in relationships of accountability with other believers. It involves studying the Bible and discovering and practising what it means to follow Christ.

A Disciple Follows Christ

*"Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

John 8:12



A Disciple Holds to Christ's Teaching

*"If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples."* John 8:31

A Disciple Listens to Christ

*"My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me."*  
John 10:27

A Disciple Serves Christ

*"Whoever serves Me must follow Me; and where I am, My servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves Me."* John 12:26

A Disciple Glorifies God by Bearing Fruit

*"This is to My Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples."* John 15:8

A Disciple Gives up Everything for Christ

*"In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has, cannot be My disciple."* Luke 14:33

A Disciple Denies Himself and Takes up His Cross

*"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.'" Matthew 16:24*

A Disciple Loves Other Believers

*"All men will know that you are My disciples if you love one another."*  
John 13:25

A Disciple Endures Suffering

*"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps."* 1 Peter 2:21

A Disciple Separates Himself from Sin and Becomes Useful

*"If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work."* 2 Timothy 2:21

If you do not  
give up  
everything  
you cannot  
be Christ's  
disciple.

## CHAPTER 12



# THE ADVENTURE OF DISCIPLESHIP

*“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

Romans 12:1-2

Give up your  
small ambitions  
– and follow  
Jesus.

### Salvation – “Brothers”

#### \* Come to Christ – Repentance and Faith

Repentance involves:

- Contrition – a change of heart
- Conviction – a change of mind
- Conversion – a change of life

### Dedication – “Present your bodies a living sacrifice”

#### \* Go for Christ – Sacrifice and service – Missions and evangelism

Worship is not so much what we *say* as what we **do**. Worship is more than words and songs – it’s our whole life. It involves wholehearted sacrifice and service (Mark 12:30-31).

### Separation – “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world”

#### \* Set apart for Christ – Separated from sin and sanctified – Holiness / spiritual health – Holy lifestyle.

*"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers."* Psalm 1:1

**Transformation – "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind"**

- \* Be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18-20)

The Battle for the mind (Col 2:8)

Bible based. Christ centred. Spirit led.

*"But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and on His Law he meditates day and night."* Psalm 1:2

**Reformation "Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will."**

- \* Applying God's Word to all areas of life – economic, social, education, civil, judicial, moral, ethical, entertainment, arts and sciences (2 Chronicles 14 & 15; Isaiah 33:22; Matt 28:19).

**The will of God will never lead you  
where the grace of God cannot keep you.**

Test and  
approve  
what God's  
will is.

## CHAPTER 13



# RESTITUTION

*"Fools mock at making amends for sin, but among the upright there is favour."*  
Proverbs 14:9

*"... He should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft is certainly found alive in his hand, whether it is an ox or donkey or sheep, he shall restore double. If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed, and lets loose his animal, and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard. If fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacked grain, standing grain, or the field is consumed, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution."*  
Exodus 22:3-6

*"And if a man borrows anything from his neighbour, and it becomes injured or dies, the owner of it not being with it, he shall surely make it good."*  
Exodus 22:14

*"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: If a person sins and commits a trespass against the LORD by lying to his neighbour about what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or about a pledge, or about a robbery, or if he has extorted from his neighbour, or if he has found what was lost and lies concerning it, and swears falsely— in any one of these things that a man may do in which he sins: then it shall be, because he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore what he has stolen, or the thing which he has extorted, or what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he has sworn falsely. He shall restore its full value, add one-fifth more to it, and give it to whomever it belongs."*  
Leviticus 6:1-5

*"Yet when he is found, he must restore sevenfold; He may have to give up all the substance of his house."*  
Proverbs 6:31

*"if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of his sins which he has committed shall be*

**Forgiveness  
of sin is not  
a substitute  
for  
restitution**

*remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live."* Ezekiel 33:15-16

*"And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed a certain officer for her, saying, 'Restore all that was hers, and all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the land until now.'"*

2 Kings 8:6

*"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.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham!'"*

Luke 19:84

Forgiveness  
does not  
transfer  
property  
rights to the  
thief.

Forgiveness of sin is not a substitute for restitution, but rather the foundation of it. **Forgiveness of sin is not a redefinition of sin.** We are forgiven - freed from the guilt and penalty of sin – in order to do what is right. **Forgiveness is not a cloak for sin – it is a solution to sin.**

Forgiveness does not transfer property rights to the thief. When God commanded *"You shall not steal ... You shall not covet ..."* .. He ordained and blessed private ownership of property. Man has no right to abolish what God has ordained in any area – neither in the institution of marriage nor in the institution of private property.

Theft is not only a sin against the victim, **theft is a sin against God.** God's Law is violated.

Repentance from sin and restitution are inseparable. If a sin involves damage to, or theft of, the property of another, then restitution is necessary before forgiveness can be enjoyed. **If restitution is absent, so too is forgiveness.** Grace makes true repentance possible; it does not eliminate the need for restitution. Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, loves righteousness, and theft is unrighteousness. So true restitution is made possible by a true understanding of what true grace is. Our Lord Jesus did not die on the cross in order to allow us to steal other people's property.

Restitution is the restoration of a thing to its proper place or owner. It is a reparation for injury or damage to property. The Bible requires that the restitution goes entirely to the victim of the crime. Restitution is also required for culpable negligence.

Therefore we should make a list of what restitution we need to make and to which people. We should then calculate the inflation rate, or loss of

earnings/benefit to the owner, and factor that in. We should then add 20% to the value. We should then contact the owner(s), explain what happened and write them a cheque. We should not expect them to forgive the debt, nor should we ask them to. If you do not have the means to pay the full amount due, still contact the owners and begin payment arrangements.

*"Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labour, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need."* Ephesians 4:28

Repentance  
from sin and  
restitution  
are  
inseparable.



## CHAPTER 14



# YOU ARE WHAT YOU READ

*"The discerning heart seeks knowledge."* Proverbs 15: 14

Some years ago, George and Alec Gallup undertook an exhaustive investigation as to what makes some people more successful than others. Using the polling techniques that have made them famous, the brothers researched and wrote a book titled, *"The Great American Success Story"*. One of their conclusions: **Successful people read.**

George Gallup found that reading was essential because it *"makes a person ready to converse...these people have a broad knowledge...and more information with which to make evaluations and decisions."*

Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body. Books are minds alive on the shelves. By taking up one of these books, and opening it, we can hear the voices of people far away in time and space. By reading we can hear great people of long ago speaking to us, mind to mind, heart to heart.

If it was announced that Martin Luther, John Calvin, Charles Spurgeon or David Livingstone was speaking at a particular church, Christians from all over the world would show up. But we need to remember that when we open up a book by one of those authors, we can hear them speak and learn from them in a greater way than you could if you just heard them at a single meeting.

A man is known by the company he keeps. It is also true that a **person's character is to a large extent developed by the books he reads.** A man is known by the company his mind keeps. A good book is good company.

*"The reading of all good books is like conversation with the finest men of past centuries."* Descartes.

**Reading is to  
the mind what  
exercise is to  
the body.**



*"In books lies the soul of the whole past time."*

Thomas Carlyle.

Mark Twain observed: *"The man who does not read good books, has no advantage over the man who cannot read them."*

Abraham Lincoln commented: *"The things I want to know are in books; my best friend is the man who will get me a book I have not read."*

A person's character is developed by the books he reads.

Walt Disney said: *"There is more treasure in books than in all the pirates' loot on Treasure Island...and best of all you can enjoy these riches every day of your life."*

*"In a very real sense, people who have read good literature have lived more than people who cannot, or will not, read...it is not true we have only one life to live; if we can read, we can live as many more lives and as many kinds of lives as we wish."*

S.I. Hayakawa

*"If we encounter a man of rare intellect we should ask him what books he reads."*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Charles Spurgeon counselled his students: *"Master those books you have. Read them thoroughly. Bathe in them until they saturate you. Read and re-read them...digest them...a student will find that his mental constitution is more affected by one book thoroughly mastered than by 20 books he has merely skimmed."*

Daniel Webster recommended that it is better to master a few books than to read indiscriminately. It was his contention that to master a few great writers was preferable to skimming a multitude of lesser works.

C.S. Lewis recommended: *"If one must read only the new or only the old, I would advise them to read the old. It is a good rule, after reading a new book, never to allow oneself another new one until you have read an old one in between."*

Inferior books are to be rejected in an age and time when we are courted by whole libraries. No man's life is long enough to read even those which are good and great and famous. Why then should we waste our time with lesser works when some of the greatest are available?

Francis Bacon wrote: *"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested."*

*"Read the best books first, or you may not have the chance to read them at all."*

Henry David Thoreau

*“Many times the reading of a book has made the future of a man.”*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

*“Employ your time in improving yourself by other men's writings so that you shall come easily by what others have laboured hard for.”*

Socrates.

*“Next to the Holy Scriptures, the greatest aide to the life of faith may be Christian biographies.”*

A.W. Tozer.

*“The reading of good biography forms an important part of a Christian's education. It provides him with numberless illustrations for use in his own service. He learns to assess the true worth of character, to glimpse a work goal for his own life, to decide how best to attain it, what self denial is needed to curb unworthy aspirations, and all the time he learns how God breaks into the dedicated life to bring about His own purposes.”*

Ransome W. Cooper.

*“Biography transmits personality...who can gauge the inspiration to the cause of missions of great biographies like those of William Carey, Adoniram Judson, Hudson Taylor, Charles Studd...”*

J. Oswald Sanders.

**Readers make  
leaders.**

*“History is but the lengthy shadow of great men.”*

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Those that love reading have everything within their reach. For a small price one can visit other lands and great periods of history, learn from some of the greatest minds and world shapers, grapple with great issues, learn in a space of a few hours what others grappled with, researched and studied for their whole lives.

*“When you come, bring ... my scrolls, especially the parchments.”*

2 Timothy 4: 13



## CHAPTER 15



# THE BOOK OF BOOKS

*"The Bible is worth all the other books which have ever been printed."*

Patrick Henry

*"The Bible is a book, in comparison with which, all others in my eyes are of minor importance; which in all my perplexities and distresses has never failed to give me light and strength."*

General Robert E. Lee

*"The Bible is the sceptre by which the Heavenly King rules His Church."*

John Calvin

*"The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible is the religion of Christ's Church."*

Charles Spurgeon.

*"The truly wise man is he who always believes the Bible against the opinion of any man."*

R.A. Torrey

*"The Word of God is above the Church."*

Archbishop Thomas Cranmer

*"I will put down all apparent inconsistencies in the Bible to my own ignorance."*

John Newton

*"We must never edit God."*

A.W. Tozer

*"If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we were now posterity to neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury our glory in profound obscurity."*

Daniel Webster

*"Every thinking man, when he thinks, realises that the teachings of the Bible are so interwoven with our whole civic and social life that it would be literally impossible for us to figure what life would be if those teachings were removed. We would lose almost all the standards by which we now judge both public and private morals; all*

*"The truly wise man is he who always believes the Bible against the opinion of any man."*

*the standards to which we, with more or less resolution, strive to raise ourselves."*

Theodore Roosevelt

*"The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying."*

John Flavel

*"I have done nothing; the Word has done and accomplished everything."*

Martin Luther

*"A Bible reading laity is a nation's surest defence against error."*

Bishop J.C. Ryle

*"It is a miracle how God has so long preserved His Book! How great and glorious it is to have the Word of God!"*

Martin Luther

*"The Christian feels that the tooth of time gnaws all books but the Bible...19 centuries of experience have tested it. It has passed through critical fires no other volume has suffered and its spiritual truth has endured the flames and come out without so much as the smell of burning."*

W.E. Sangster

*"Doers of the Word are the best hearers."*

Thomas Watson

*"My conscience is captive to the Word of God."*

Martin Luther

*"In regard to this great book, I have got to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this Book. But for it, we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man's welfare, here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in It."*

Abraham Lincoln

*"A man has deprived himself of the best there is in the world who has deprived himself of this, a knowledge of the Bible. When you have read the Bible, you will know that it is the Word of God, because you will have found it the key to your own heart, your own happiness, and your own duty."*

Woodrow Wilson

*"In this age of space flight when we use the modern tools of science to advance into new regions of human activity, the Bible...remains in every way an up to date book. Our knowledge and use of the laws of nature that enable us to fly to the moon, also enable us to destroy our home planet with the atom bomb. Science itself does not address the question whether we should use the power at our disposal for good or for evil. The guidelines of what we ought to do are furnished in the moral Law of God."*

Wernher von Braun

*"A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education."*

Theodore Roosevelt

*"Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; The Book widens and deepens with our years."*

Charles Spurgeon

*"Doers of  
the Word are  
the best  
hearers."*

*"Education is useless without the Bible."*

Noah Webster

*"The Bible is the chief moral cause of all that is good, and the best corrective of all that is evil, in human society; the best Book for regulating the temporal concerns of men, and the only Book that can serve as an infallible guide...the principles of genuine liberty, and of wise laws and administrations, are to be drawn from the Bible and sustained by its authority. The man therefore, who weakens or destroys the Divine authority of that Book may be accessory to all the public disorders which society is doomed to suffer..."*

Noah Webster

*"Education is useless without the Bible."*

*"The moral principles and precepts contained in the Scriptures ought to form the basis of all of our civil constitutions and laws...All the miseries and evils which men suffer from - crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery and war - proceed from their despising or neglecting the precepts contained in the Bible."*

Noah Webster

### **The Bounty's Bible**

On 28 April 1789, Fletcher Christian staged the most famous mutiny in history, on the English ship "**HMS Bounty**", in the South Pacific. The captain, William Bligh, and those loyal to him, were set adrift in an overloaded lifeboat, which they miraculously navigated 3700 miles to Timor.

The mutineers upon the Bounty immediately began quarrelling about what to do next. Fletcher returned to Tahiti, where he left some of the mutineers, kidnapped some women, took some slaves, and travelled with the remaining mutineers 1000 miles to the uninhabited Pitcairn Island. There their group quickly unravelled. They distilled whisky from a native plant. Drunkenness and fighting characterised their colony. Disease and murder eventually took the lives of all the men, except one - Alexander Smith. Smith found himself the only man on the island surrounded by an assortment of women and children.

Then Smith found the Bounty's neglected Bible. As he read it, his heart was transformed and he began to instruct the survivors of their community. He taught the Scriptures and helped to implement its instructions. The message of Christ so transformed their lives that, 20 years later, in 1808, when the crew of the Topaz landed on the island, they found a joyful society of Christians living in prosperity and peace, free from crime, disease, murder and mutiny.

That Bible resides on display in the Church in Pitcairn as a monument to its transforming message.

### **The World's Number 1 Best Seller of All Time**

The Bible is the No. 1 best selling book in all of history. The Bible Society alone has a world wide distribution of 24 million Bibles, 26 million New Testaments and 577 million portions of Scripture each year. This does not include the over 1 million New Testaments distributed each week by The Gideons. Or the New Testaments distributed by the Pocket Testament League. The over 18 million Scriptures provided each year by the Bible League, the over 22 million Scripture tracts and booklets given away so far by Scripture Gift Mission. And there are even more Bibles sold by Zondervan, Thomas Nelson, Tyndale, and others. It is estimated that well over 30 million Bibles are sold each year, and possibly over 100 million New Testaments - each year!

### **The Most Influential Book in All of History**

It is to the Bible that we owe our Legacy of the Law. It is the Bible that ushered in an era of compassion, liberty and justice. The Ten Commandments are the moral and legal foundations of Western Civilisation.

The foundations of the Common Law were made by King Alfred the Great of England who introduced his Code with the Ten Commandments, the Case Laws of Exodus, the Golden Rule of Christ, and other Biblical principles.

The Magna Carta of 1215 was the first statute, the first written restriction on the powers of government. It was written by a pastor and thoroughly saturated with Scriptural principles.

The Bible has inspired the greatest literature, the greatest art, the greatest examples of architecture (the cathedrals), the age of exploration, world missions, the rule of law, the separation of powers, checks and balances, representative government, the sanctity of life, and so much more that we take for granted.

Just consider some of the everyday things which have been inspired by the Bible. The word "*breakfast*" comes from the concept of breaking the fast. The word "*restaurant*" comes from Jesus' promise in Matthew 11:28 "*come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.*" The first restaurant, founded in Paris in 1766, placed that verse from Matthew 11:28 in bold letters outside this first public establishment dedicated to providing meals in a pleasant atmosphere.

The fact that our week consists of seven days is a testimony to the fact of God creating the world in six days and resting on the seventh. The practice of Sunday being a Day of rest dates back to the Christian tradition of honouring

The Bible has inspired the greatest literature, the greatest art, the greatest examples of architecture.

the first day of the week as the Lord's Day, remembering that Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week.

The very way we date our years is a testimony to the centrality of Christ. All of history is divided into BC - Before Christ; or AD - *Anno Domini* - in the year of our Lord. Jesus Christ is the focus of history.

Most of the world's languages were written down for the first time by Christian missionaries. The first book in most languages in the world was the Bible. Martin Luther's translation of the Bible had a tremendous impact upon the formation of the German language, as did William Tyndale's translation on the English language. Many common phrases, expressions and words come right out of the pages of the Bible. ("My brother's keeper" Gen. 4:9; "The mark of Cain" Gen. 4:15; "An eye for an eye" Ex. 21:24; "Scapegoat" Lev. 16:26; "The valley of the shadow of death" Ps 23:4; "Feet of clay" Dan 2:33; "The Fiery Furnace" Dan 3; "The handwriting on the wall" Dan 5; "In the lions' den" Dan 6; "Baptism of fire" Matt 3:16; "Go the second mile" Matt 5:41; "Our daily bread" Matt 6:11; "Pearls before swine" Matt 7:6; "The straight and narrow" Matt 7:14; "Wolves in sheep's clothing" Matt 7:15; "A den of thieves" Matt 21:13; "Blind guides" Matt 23:16; "White-washed tombs" Matt 23:27; "Good Samaritan" Luke 10; "Prodigal son" Luke 15; and literally hundreds of other expressions could be added.)

*"The Bible is no mere book, but a living power that conquers all that opposes it."*

The very word "good-bye" comes from: God be with ye.

The word "holiday" means holy day.

Napoleon Bonaparte asserted "*The Bible is no mere book, but a living power that conquers all that opposes it.*"

### **The Foundation of Modern Science**

Sir Michael Faraday, one of the greatest scientists of all times, who discovered electromagnetic induction and invented the generator, observed: "*The Bible, and it alone, with nothing added to it nor taken away from it by man, is the sole and sufficient guide for each individual, at all times and in all circumstances. ...faith in the Divinity and work of Christ is the gift of God, and the evidence of this faith is obedience to the commandments of Christ.*"

All the great pioneer scientists who laid the foundations of modern physics, astronomy, calculus, dynamics, oceanography, anaesthesiology, and every other branch of science, confirmed the Bible as the foundation and inspiration for their work. This included Johannes Kepler, Francis Bacon, Galileo Galilei, Isaac Newton, Carl van Linnaeus, Charles Babbage, Blaise Pascal, Samuel Morse, Matthew Fontaine Maury, James Simpson,



George Washington Carver, and many, many more.

As Dr. Howard Kelly asserted: *"Whatever there is in civilisation that is worthwhile rests on the Bible's precepts."*

*"Whatever there is in civilisation that is worthwhile rests on the Bible's precepts."*

**The Bible is the Word of God**

- "Your Word, oh Lord, is eternal; it stands firm..."* Psalm 119:89
- "...the Word of our God stands forever."* Isaiah 40:8
- "I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."* Matthew 5:18
- "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My Words will never pass away."* Matthew 24:35
- "But the Word of the Lord stands forever."* 1 Peter 1:25
- "Fix these Words of Mine in your hearts and minds..."* Deuteronomy 11:18
- "I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You."* Psalm 119:11
- "The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes."* Psalm 119:18
- "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."* Psalm 119:105
- "The entrance of Your Word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple."* Psalm 119:130
- "For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."* Hebrews 4:12
- "Is not My Word like fire? declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"* Jeremiah 23:29
- "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."* Colossians 3:16
- "Oh, how I love Your Law! I meditate on it all day long."* Psalm 119:97

## CHAPTER 16



# PRAYER AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

*“Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests . . . Be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”*

Ephesians 6:18

*“God gives us the Spirit as our teacher in prayer, to tell us what is right and to temper our emotions. We should seek such aid of the Spirit.”*

John Calvin

*“Prayer is an art which only the Holy Spirit can teach us. He is the giver of all prayer.”*

C.H. Spurgeon

*“There is no man, nor church in the world, that can come to God in prayer, but by the assistance of the Holy Spirit.”*

John Bunyan

*“It must be acknowledged by the spiritual mind that all true prayer is of the leading of the Spirit; that He is the author of all real approach of the soul to God. All true prayer is put into words by the Spirit. He is the Author of prayer in the soul.”*

Octavius Winslow

*“Pray for prayer - pray till you can pray, pray to be helped to pray and give not up praying because you cannot pray, for it is when you think you cannot pray that you are most praying.”*

C.H. Spurgeon

*“If the grace of God be in him, it will be as natural for him to groan out his condition as it is for a sucking child to cry for the breast. Prayer is one of the first things that discovers a man to be a Christian.”*

John Bunyan

*“He who does not habitually pray to God, cannot be a Christian.”*

Timothy Dwight

*“A prayerless man is, of necessity and thoroughly, irreligious: There can be no life without activity. As the body is dead when it ceases to act, so the soul that goes not*

*“Prayer is one of the first things that discovers a man to be a Christian.”*

*forth in its actions toward God, that lives as though there were no God, is spiritually dead."*

Charles Hodge

*"You then are not a Christian if you are not a praying person. The promise is that everyone that is righteous will pray. You, then, are a wicked wretch if you do not pray."*

John Bunyan

*"You then are not a Christian if you are not a praying person."*

- Are you living a life of prayer?
- Do you find yourself constantly at prayer throughout the day?
- Is prayer something natural for you or is it something forced?
- Why do you pray?
- Do you pray because you are supposed to?
- Is it merely a habit with you?
- Do you pray because you cannot do otherwise?
- Do you love to pray?
- Does the love of Christ constrain you to pray?

*"Prayer is a pouring out of the heart to God, through Christ, in the strength of the Spirit, for such things as God has promised. Prayer must be within the compass of God's Word; it is blasphemy or at best babbling, when the petition is beside the Book. David therefore in his prayers kept his eye on the Word of God: 'My soul cleaves to the dust; quicken me according to Your Word.'"*

John Bunyan

*"Remember Your Word to Your servant, on which you have caused me to hope. Indeed the Holy Spirit does not immediately quicken and stir up the heart of the Christian without, but by, in and through the Word. The Spirit, by the Word, directs the manner as well as the matter of praying."*

John Bunyan

*"What is it to pray according to God's will? When we pray for things which are agreeable to God's will, i.e. His revealed will; we should ask for nothing but what He commands us . . . for those things we have warrant to pray."*

John Cotton

1. Since the Christian is to do whatever the Bible commands him, we must pray because **we are commanded to pray** (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Since God commands us to pray, it is obviously of great profit and effective in procuring the blessings of God. *"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."* James 5:16

2. **All prayer is to be exercised in an attitude of submissiveness to God**, in which you really desire God's will as to what is best and good: *"Your will be done"* (Matthew 6:10). We want His will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

3. **Prayer plays a key part of the outworking of God's decree.** God has

decreed that we have not if we ask not. He has predetermined to hear our prayers and answer them. He has decreed that His eternal plan of salvation be worked out through the effectual, fervent prayers of righteous men, women and children.

**4. The doctrines of grace should strengthen and provoke believing prayer** because they point us to the absolutely sovereign God who can do what we ask. The God addressed in prayer is mighty to save, mighty to deliver and mighty to sanctify. Pray for God to save sinners and to revive saints. (It is actually the Arminian who should give up prayer, for his god is too small, too weak and too soft to answer prayer).

If God is not sovereign and man has a “free will” which even God cannot tamper with, why pray for the lost or for protection from enemies, either human or demonic? What comfort can be derived from a Deity who is biting his fingernails over whether or not men will “let” him do something?

**5. Historically, the doctrines of grace have always produced men of prayer.**

**6. If your theology has led you to abandon prayer and to sneer at the concept that prayer is vital and necessary, then your theology is not Biblical.**

**7. A close examination of the prayers recorded in Scripture reveals that the saints of old filled their mouths with arguments** when presenting their petitions to God.

They buttressed their requests with Biblical arguments. They pleaded with God in terms of His Word, His glorious Names, His covenants of promise, and His plan of redemption. They presented their prayer requests like a lawyer who skilfully presents his arguments to judge and jury.

Pleading with God in prayer and presenting reasons to God why He should grant our requests is seldom heard in our churches today. George Mueller, as his biographer pointed out: *“At this time of need . . . this man who had determined to risk everything upon God's Word of promise, turned from doubtful devices and questionable methods of relief to pleading with God . . . He used arguments in prayer and at this time he piles up eleven reasons why God should and would send help . . . He was one of the elect few to whom it had been given to revive and restore this lost art of pleading with God.”*

In his sermon on Job 23:3-4. C.H. Spurgeon commented:

*“The ancient saints were given, with Job, to ordering their cause before God.*

**Historically,  
the doctrines  
of grace have  
always  
produced men  
of prayer.**

*Not filling the mouth with words nor good phrases, nor pretty expressions, but filling the mouth with arguments . . . When we come to the gate of mercy, forcible arguments are the knocks of the rapper by which the gate is opened . . . When a man searches for arguments for a thing, it is because he attaches importance to that which he is seeking."*

**Prayer is to the soul what breathing is to the body.**

Mueller's biographer goes on to point out:

*"Of course, God does not need to be convinced; no argument can make any plainer to Him the claims of trusting souls to His intervention, claims based upon His own Word, confirmed by His oath. And yet He will be inquired of and argued with. That is His way of blessing . . . We are to argue our case with God, not indeed to convince Him, but to convince ourselves."*

To this Ezekiel Hopkins adds:

*"Now, although it be true that all the arguments that we can urge and all the reasons we can allege, cannot alter the purposes and determinations of God, as to any event that He has ordained, yet there is this twofold use and necessity of pleading them.*

*"First, because by considering the reasons we have to pray for such mercies, our desires will be the more earnest and fervent in the obtaining of them.*

*"Secondly, because reasons in prayer do mightily conduce to the strengthening of our faith and give us great encouragement to believe that we shall certainly obtain what we have so much reason to ask."*

Or again, as C.H. Spurgeon put it:

*"Why are arguments to be used at all? The reply is, certainly not because God is slow to give, not because we can change the Divine purpose, not because God needs to be informed of any circumstance with regard to ourselves . . . The arguments to be used are for our own benefit, not for His. Our use of arguments teaches us the ground upon which we obtain the blessing . . . Besides, the use of arguments is intended to stir up our fervency . . ."*

So on what basis should we construct our intercessory arguments? Where can we derive arguments from which we can present weighty reasons along with our petitions?

**1. God's attributes.** Spurgeon put it like this: *"You and I may hold anytime upon the justice, the mercy, the faithfulness, the wisdom, the long-suffering, the tenderness of God and we shall find every attribute of the Most High to be, as it were, a great battering-ram with which we may open the gates of Heaven."*

For example, we can argue from 1 John 1:9 that God's faithfulness and justice are grounds for forgiveness (cf. Psalm 51:1-3).

**2. The promises of God.** Spurgeon observes: *“If you have a Divine promise, you need not plead that with an ‘if’ in it; you may plead with a certainty.”* (1 Kings 8:56; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24).

**3. The Names of God.** When in need of strength, should we not cry out to Elohim, the God of power and strength? When seeking a blessing from the New Covenant, should we not argue from the Name *“Yahweh,”* which is God's covenantal Name? When appealing to God's sovereignty, *“Adonai”* should be upon our lips. When confronting satanic forces, the Lord of Hosts should be our shield and high tower.

**4. The sorrows of God's people.** The present condition of the church is a weighty argument for our need of revival (Psalm 80:4-7; Psalm 12:1). We should also plead our own unworthiness, weakness and poverty of spirit (Psalm 25:16; Luke 15:18-19). The history of redemption, God's mighty acts in past history, provides a foundation for our trust in God (Psalm 30:11; 143:1-6).

**5. The atoning life, death and intercession of Christ.** Spurgeon observes: *“When you plead that which shakes the gates of hell and which the hosts of Heaven obey and God feels the sacred power of that Divine plea. You would do better if you sometimes thought more in your prayers of Christ's griefs and groans . . .”*

The end result of using argument in prayer shall be a strengthened and energised prayer life. Faith will be emboldened to go to God's throne and secure the petitions inquired of God. Thus, we will rejoice in seeing our prayers avail much. Spurgeon says:

*“If the Holy Spirit shall teach us how to order our cause and how to fill our mouth with arguments, the result shall be that we shall have our mouth filled with praises. The man who has his mouth full of arguments in prayer shall soon have his mouth full of benedictions in answer to prayer.”*

**6. A study of the prayers in the Bible reveals that the saints of old - and even our Lord - set apart whole days or nights dedicated to prayer and fasting.**

When something great was requested from God or whenever the situation was desperate and important decisions were soon to be made, the saints of old would give themselves to fasting and prayer.

*“Pray Continually”*

1 Thessalonians 5:17

If you are too busy to pray then you are busier than God wants you to be. No man is greater than his prayer life. Prayer is the foundation for all

**Prayerlessness  
is a sin.**

spiritual work. A prayerful life is always a powerful life. A prayerless life is always a powerless life. Prayer is to our soul what breathing is to our body.

*“Pray in the Holy Spirit.”*

Jude 20

A sinning man will stop praying. A praying man will stop sinning. Men would live better if they prayed more. Men would pray better if they lived better. The secret of prayer is praying in secret. **Nothing is beyond the reach of prayer – except that which is beyond the will of God.**

*“If you remain in Me, and My Word remains in you, ask whatever you will and it will be given you.”*

John 15:7

God acts in answer to prayer. The only foundation for spiritual work is earnest believing prayer. You can do much more than pray, after you have prayed; but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed. All spiritual failure, dryness and defeat can be traced back to lack of prayerful contact with and dependence upon the Lord. Prayer is the source of spiritual power. Prayer is the price of spiritual success.

*“If My people, who are called by My Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”*

2 Chronicles 7:14

If you are too busy to pray then you are busier than God wants you to be.

## CHAPTER 17



# CHRISTIANS CAN CHANGE THIS WORLD

*"Those who have turned the world upside down have come here too."*

Acts 17:6

**If God can change you, then God can use you to change some part of this world.**

That our fallen world needs changing is beyond question. When our newspapers and films glamorise immorality, undermine the family and encourage selfishness, greed and lust; when criminals escape justice by legal technicalities; when half the world suffers under totalitarian dictatorships and persecution; when pornography, perversion, abortions, terrorism and the occult are increasing - then we know that this world needs to be changed.

But most Christians have abandoned their moral responsibility to bring the light of the Gospel into heathen darkness. Many Christians are allowing their own children to be brought up by godless humanism in state schools and entertained by occultism and pagan magic through Hollywood films, television and the internet.

There are many anti-Christian forces seeking to undermine and destroy the Christian Faith, including: persecution by Muslim and communist governments; secular humanist domination of educational institutions, the entertainment industry and news media; and false gospels and unBiblical heresies within many theological seminaries and all too many churches.

We've also allowed ourselves to become misinformed, brainwashed and intimidated into feeling guilty for the great achievements of Christian

**If God can  
change you,  
then God can  
use you to  
change some  
part of this  
world.**



Until we  
know the  
Word of God,  
we can  
be easily  
misled.

missionaries and reformers over the past centuries. Christians who are ignorant of history have ended up apologising for those faithful Christians who converted cannibals, ended inter-tribal genocide, abolished child sacrifice, defeated witchcraft and won whole nations to Christ.

Many Christians have surrendered to the forces of darkness, entered into negotiations and co-operation with idolaters, “demythologized” the Bible, removed “offensive” Bible passages from their preaching and lowered standards to allow the unconverted easy access to the church.

In the past the church went out to conquer the world for Christ. Today, in too many churches, Christ is being sold for 30 pieces of silver, or less. Instead of the church changing the world, the world is changing the church. Materialism, sensationalism, existentialism and antinomianism are corrupting countless congregations.

For decades now many Christians in the West have been turning away from the God-orientated, Bible-based, Christ-centred foundation of the Reformation. Instead, many Christians have been turning to the man-centred humanism of the Renaissance, which has always inevitably led to the extremes of permissiveness or totalitarianism, such as was seen in the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution.

The results of this apostasy are plain to see in the abortion holocaust, the pornography industry and the political protection of perversions in the West, and the massacres and concentration camps of the East.

The results of abandoning God's eternal standards as revealed in the Bible are: families that fail to nurture, governments that fail to punish the guilty, states that fail to provide security for the law-abiding, schools that fail to educate and churches that fail to be houses of prayer for all nations, making disciples, teaching obedience.

We're living in an age of guilt manipulation where all too many Christians are being prepared for slavery by the abuse of Scripture and by the manipulation of our emotions. Some of the key phrases in this campaign are: love, unity, equality, tolerance and reconciliation. Nice words. Noble sentiments. However, the slogan of the French Revolution was: “*Liberty! Equality! Brotherhood!*” (Actually the full, original slogan of the French Revolution was: “*Liberty! Equality! Brotherhood! Or Death!*”). Yet, despite the apparent good intentions of their slogan, 40 000 heads rolled as the guillotine went into overtime, 300 000 were executed by other means, and Europe was plunged into 25 years of war - with millions killed.

In the same way, we must be aware of the politics of guilt and pity which seek to manipulate our emotions and make us the willing tools of evil men, who know how to disguise their intentions. By observation, we can note that some of the clichés used in this moral revolution have hidden meanings. For example, love can mean the passive acceptance of evil; by unity is usually meant conformity; equality you can find in the concentration camps in Red China; by tolerance is normally meant tolerance of evil; and by reconciliation is normally meant surrender. (Why should we disagree, argue or fight? Be reasonable. Give in to my way and we'll be reconciled.)

What is the solution? What can we do? Firstly, we need to **study the Scriptures** to learn the objective truth. The Word of God must be the judge and the solid foundation of all our actions. This is where the Reformation started. Until we know the Word of God, we can be easily misled.

Secondly, we must **warn our people** about the dangers of humanism, immorality, false religions like Islam, and Marxist revisions of history. We must wake up to what is happening around us and expose the tactics of anti-Christian forces.

Thirdly, we must **realise that truth is not determined by majority opinion**, but by the Word of God. We must not confuse change with advance. Neither must we allow ourselves to become guilt manipulated. Refuse to apologise for the alleged sins of Christians of another age and place.

Fourthly, we need to **encourage our people and direct them to positive Christian action**. *"Without a vision, a people perish."* We need to instil courage and hope for the future, and build up our faith in God's Word. **People overcome by fear and guilt are unable to resist evil**. We must turn to God and find forgiveness, freedom and strength through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

**Elijah** dared to stand alone against the 450 false prophets of Baal and the 400 false prophets of Asherah. Elijah challenged their heresy and idolatry. Elijah's faith in God made him strong and bold enough to oppose the majority who were wrong. And Elijah changed history that day on Mount Carmel by exposing falsehood and turning the people of Israel back to God (1 Kings 18).

**Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Tyndale and Knox** changed the course of human history by daring to study the Bible and by boldly speaking out against the unBiblical teachings and corrupt abuses of the

**Truth is not determined by majority opinion, but by the Word of God.**

medieval Roman Catholic church.

Missionaries like **William Carey** changed history by taking the Gospel to India, translating the Bible into numerous languages, and by ending the Hindu practices of infanticide, child prostitution and the burning alive of widows on the funeral pyres of their deceased husbands.

**William Wilberforce** launched a life-long campaign to end the slave trade and set the captives free.

Eastern and tribal thought have a cyclical view of history. Repetition and *“the inevitability of history”* is so engrained in Animist and Eastern thought that they see themselves as suffering history rather than affecting or making history. Easterners see themselves as caught up in the process of history and at the mercy of the forces of nature, the spirits or the ancestors (all external forces).

*“Only one life,  
it will soon  
be past, only  
what's done  
for Christ  
will last.”*

This is in contrast to the Christian worldview, which sees a linear development of history which starts at creation, goes through the flood, the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai, the incarnation of Christ, His crucifixion and resurrection, His Ascension, the Day of Pentecost and which will culminate in the return of Christ and the Day of Judgement. Hence Christians say: *“Only one life, it will soon be past – only what's done for Christ will last.”*

Every day is unique, every opportunity must be used. Time is limited in the Christian worldview. The Christian sees himself as significant because he is an individual created by God with a purpose. This emphasis on the individual is unique to Christianity among the major world religions. We must each individually stand before God on the Day of Judgement and give an account of our faith and conduct. Each of us must repent for our own sins and exercise personal faith in Christ for forgiveness for our sins and freedom from the power of sin.

In Christian thought, nature is subject to us, able to be developed and used for God's glory. **We are able to change the course of history, because our Sovereign God is Almighty, His Word is the power of God for the salvation of all who believe, and He answers prayer.**

The Bible teaches us to have a holy dissatisfaction with second best and a bold faith to trust God for great things. It encourages us to step out and to change what is wrong and establish what is right in God's eyes. We must not underestimate the power of praying according to God's Word, and stepping out in faith and obedience to His commands. It is this faith that enabled Christians to end child sacrifice, cannibalism, polygamy, slavery, widow

burning and other atrocities of heathen religions.

But remember, **you cannot have victory without a battle**. Sacrifice and risk are essential. We can never win if we keep avoiding problems; we must solve problems by facing them and dealing with them. The future belongs to the brave and the bold.

Are you such a Christian who can claim: *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”* (Philippians 4:13)

Christianity calls us to action. Eastern religions like Buddhism and Hinduism, on the other hand, produce stagnant, backward, non-productive societies obsessed with selfish meditation and fatalism. However, as the West accepts more and more of these Eastern religions and pagan presuppositions of false religions, much of the West is decaying on the inside through secularisation, permissiveness and materialism. By neglecting God's Word, by forgetting those Christian principles which made Western nations the most prosperous and free nations in the world, they are dying on the inside. There is a practical unbelief, having the form of Christianity but rejecting its real power. Many times one can hardly tell the difference between the standards of the Christian and the heathen. All too many are obsessed with *“me, myself and I”* this existentialism (self-centered humanism — experience orientation). All this has bred selfishness, pride and rebellion against God.

One of the results of this *“me generation”* obsessed with self-gratification is that the cohesive unity of our communities has vanished. In this age of mobility and prosperity, loyalty is being rejected. Loyalty to family, wife, church, denomination, work and country is evaporating. This is an age of rebellion and self-assertion — doing your own thing. Long-term commitments seem to be no longer acceptable to most of this self-seeking generation.

It is the responsibility of God's people in the Church to offer our confused and searching young people an exciting challenge, a worthwhile cause, a demanding mission and opportunities for action. But we must again teach our people, by word and example, of the need for long-term commitment and uncompromising standards of loyalty to God and country, to church and mission, to duty and honour, to family and friends. Personal, wholehearted commitment to Christ and His cause is at the heart of the Gospel.

**By faith and obedience we can turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones.**

We have to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength. Are you committed to Christ? Are you wholeheartedly committed to His standards of duty, honour and loyalty – no matter what the cost?

By faith and obedience we can turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones, crisis situations into opportunities for ministry, battles into victory. We are "*more than conquerors*" (Romans 8:37) and "*overcomers*" (1 John 5:4) through Christ.

## CHAPTER 18



# THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST IN ALL AREAS OF LIFE

The very name holiday means “*holy day*.” Most holidays have religious significance. The events that a society chooses to centre its holidays around speak volumes about the religious worldview and value systems of that society.

For example: Ascension Day used to be a holiday in South Africa. Yet, few of us ever appreciated its significance until the government abolished it as a public holiday. It has been replaced with days that celebrate mankind such as “*Human Rights Day*”; “*Women's Day*”; “*Workers' Day*” and “*Youth Day*” – yet another indication that the ANC government has rejected Christianity and embraced Humanism. This is far more serious than we may at first suspect. Along with these secular “*holy days*” have come the abolition of prayer in Parliament and the legalisation of abortion, homosexuality, gambling, pornography and prostitution.

### **History is HIS Story**

The Christian view of history is linear. Unlike the pagan and Eastern religions which hold to re-incarnation and have a circular view of history, or the atheists who believe that “*you came from nothing, you're going nowhere, life is meaningless*”, Christians believe that History is His story. God is sovereign over time and space.

At one point in history, God created the world. At another time He judged the world in the flood. At the appointed time, Christ came and died for our sins. Three days later He rose from the dead. Forty days later He ascended into Heaven. Ten days after that He sent the Holy Spirit upon His disciples at Pentecost. One great Day He will return to this earth and judge the nations.

**History  
has a goal.  
Time has  
meaning.  
Our  
calendars  
should  
reflect that.**

**History has a goal. Time has meaning. Our calendars should reflect that.**

Jesus is the  
King of  
kings and  
the Lord of  
lords.

### A Christian Calendar

It is appropriate that the biggest and most important holiday event of our calendar year is still the one that commemorates the incarnation of Christ - when God took on human form and was born at Bethlehem. **Christmas** celebrates the greatest gift of all - the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the reason for the season. We need to put Christ back into Xmas. Wise men still seek Him. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life"* (John 3:16). We give gifts on Christmas Day to celebrate the official birthday of the King of kings, and out of gratitude for the great gifts He has given us.

The second most important holiday is **Good Friday** - when we solemnly remember the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, His great sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. He suffered, bled and died for our sins. He endured the punishment we deserved - so that we could enjoy the reward that only He deserves. We should be sombre, quiet and thoughtful on Good Friday as we meditate upon the love of God, His holiness, His hatred of sin, His justice and His atonement on the cross of Calvary. This should inspire us afresh to repentance, thanksgiving and consecration. *"In view of God's mercy ... offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God ..."* (Rom 12:1).

The third great Christian holiday event is **Easter Sunday**. Resurrection Sunday is a joyous celebration of the victory of Christ over death, hell and the grave. Jesus is risen from the dead. He is alive forever more. Death is defeated. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. Christ Jesus was *"... declared with power to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead,"* (Romans 1:4). All the founders of religions are dead. You can visit the graves of Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius and Lenin. But in Jerusalem there is an empty Tomb. *"He is not here; He has risen!"* (Luke 24:6) *"... raised to life for our justification"* (Romans 4:25).

The fourth most important event in the Christian calendar is **Ascension Day**. Forty days after Resurrection Sunday we celebrate the Ascension of Christ into Heaven. He is alive forever more and He is exalted and enthroned at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. He is above every other name and authority in Heaven and on earth. Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. We have an advocate in Heaven. He hears our prayers. He will crush all His enemies. He will come again. Therefore, we must go and make disciples of all nations.

### The Ascension is about Authority

The ANC government in South Africa saw fit to abolish the long-established

Ascension Day as a public holiday. Therefore we need to look at it in more detail. Its abolition is very significant, because Ascension Day deals with authority. Christ *"has gone into Heaven and is at God's right hand - with angels, authorities and powers in submission to Him"* (1Peter 3:22).

*"...All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..."*  
Matt 28:18-20.

**The Ascension proclaims the Lordship of Christ in all areas of life.**

The Ascension proclaims the Lordship of Christ in all areas of life. Jesus has all authority. Jesus is Lord over the world of business, sports, entertainment, and government. Jesus Christ is Lord over the schools, the shops, the cinemas, the factories, the hospitals, the law courts and parliament. There is no area of life that is outside of His authority. Every doctor, teacher, policeman, businessman, parliamentarian, factory worker, mother, father, magistrate and Supreme Court judge will have to individually stand before Almighty God on the Day of Judgement and give an account of our lives. *"When You ascended on high, You led captives in Your train..."* (Psalm 68:18).

The Ascension celebrates the vindication and victory of Christ. No doubt, Caiaphas, the high priest, King Herod and the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, thought that they were very important and powerful people. Yet these religious and political leaders are only remembered today because they arrogantly dismissed Christ Jesus. They didn't recognise that they were condemning to death the Creator, the Giver of life, the eternal Judge before whom each one of us must stand. The Emperor Augustus who issued the decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world, requiring everyone to return to their town of birth, could not have realised at the time that the baby born to third class subjects in far away Judea would one day judge him.

*"The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet'"*  
Psalm 110: 1

The Ascension proclaims the ultimate victory of Christ. Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Those that refuse to bow to Christ as Saviour and Lord today, in the day of grace when forgiveness is freely available, will one day be forced to bow to Christ as the eternal Judge — when they will be condemned to Hell forever.

*"...He will crush kings on the Day of His wrath. He will judge nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth"*  
Psalm 110:5-6



If something is important then we need to work it into our calendar.

The Ascension is a great comfort to believers who suffer persecution. *"Therefore, since we have a great High Priest Who has gone through the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the Faith we profess"* (Heb 4:14). We have an Advocate in Heaven. He hears our prayers. He ever lives to make intercession for us. He will come again. He will crush all His enemies. Therefore we should not fear governments, popes or councils. We must not bow before idols, nor should we compromise the essential principles of our Faith.

Though Christ is physically absent from the earth, yet, through His Holy Spirit, He is spiritually present. He is all knowing, everywhere present and all powerful. *"For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet"*  
1 Corinthians 15:25.

The Ascension is a wonderful reminder and assurance to us that *"... the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea"*  
Habakkuk 2:14.

*"Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the Name that is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow in Heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"* Philippians 2:9-11.

### **The Lordship of Christ in All Areas of Life**

The Ascension proclaims Christ's glorious triumph and His future return and Day of Judgement. Therefore we as Christians should return to observing Ascension Day as a holy day to our Faith. If something is important then we need to work it into our calendar.

*"But," you may protest, "how can we observe Ascension Day as a holiday when the official government calendar does not recognise it as a public holiday?"*

People of different minority religions often observe their own holidays and maintain their cultural identity in spite of official policies. The Jewish, Muslim and Eastern Orthodox adherents observe feast days and fast days and other holy days different to ours. We should have the courage of our convictions and the integrity to organise and structure our lives and work around what is important to our Christian Faith - not secular humanism with its: *"Workers Day," "Freedom Day," "Women's Day," "Youth Day" and "Human Rights Day."*

In our ministry we go to work on those spurious humanist holidays. And we observe as holidays Ascension Day, Pentecost and other Christian

holidays. I would strongly recommend that churches schedule special services for these monumentally important events. If it is not feasible to hold a service on the actual Ascension Day, at least dedicate the nearest Sunday to it to proclaiming the significance of the Ascension.

### Other Important Days

In addition, there are other days that Christians should observe like the 31st of October as **Reformation Day**. This day commemorates the great re-discovery of Biblical teaching and revival of freedom that followed after Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenberg on 31 October 1517.

Christians should also observe International **Life Chain Sunday** - on the first Sunday of October - and make a public stand for the right to life of pre-born babies. In South Africa, 1st February is a **National Day of Repentance** – the tragic anniversary of the legalisation of abortion upon demand. Africa Christian Action has also promoted the first Sunday of February to be observed as **Sanctity Life Sunday** when every pulpit in the land should proclaim the Biblical principles that life begins at conception, all life is precious and abortion is murder.

Jesus has  
risen from  
the dead and  
He is Lord of  
our lives.

We observe the **International Days of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP)** in November, to remember those believers who are persecuted for their Faith.

All these would also be appropriate additions to any Christian calendar.

The whole principle of annual festivals and celebrations is deeply rooted in Old Testament Israel. God commanded the Jewish people to remember certain events with annual celebrations.

### Keep Sundays Special

Setting aside the first day of the week as the Lord's Day, a special day, is good for our body, mind and soul. We need time set aside for relaxation, reflection and restoration. It is a matter of rhythm and routine, but also a matter of revelation and remembrance of the Lord's great work of creation and salvation (Exodus 20: 8-11 and Deut 5: 12 – 15).

By ordering our week to set apart the Lord's Day as a special day for the family to rest and worship the Lord, we proclaim to the world that Jesus has risen from the dead and He is Lord of our lives. By adhering to a Christian calendar we can reinforce our commitment to applying the

Lordship of Christ to all areas of life.

*“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.”*

Collosians 2: 6-7

## CHAPTER 19



# THE BIBLE AND ANIMALS

*“How long will the land lie parched and the grass in every field be withered? Because those who live in it are wicked, the animals and the birds have perished.”*  
Jeremiah 12: 4

All animals  
belong to God

In the course of my missionary work, which has often been spent in bush areas among wildlife, my love for animals has grown and I have sought to learn what the Bible teaches concerning them.

Often I have been asked:

*“Will animals be in Heaven?”*

*“What does God think about 'scientific' experiments on animals?”*

*“What should our attitude to animals be?”*

This is a summary of what I have found in my studies of animals in the Bible.

### **Animals and God**

**God created all the animals** (Psalm 104).

*“Then God commanded, 'Let the earth produce all kinds of animal life; domestic and wild, large and small', and it was done. So God made them all, and He was pleased with what He saw.”*  
Genesis 1:24, 25

**All animals belong to God** (Psalm 24:1).

*“All the animals in the forest are Mine and the cattle on thousands of hills. All the wild birds are Mine and all living things in the fields.”*

Psalm 50:10, 11

**God cares for the animals** (1 John 4:16).

*“Look at the birds flying around . . . your Father in Heaven takes care of them.”*  
Matthew 6:26

*“He gives animals their food and feeds the young ravens when they call.”*

Psalm 147:9

The Bible describes the Angels around God's throne as having features and characteristics like those of a lion, a bull and an eagle (Ezekiel 1).

God Himself is likened in Scripture to a lion, a leopard, a bear (Hosea 13:7, 8), and to an eagle (Deuteronomy 32:11).

Jesus is the  
Lamb of  
God who  
takes away  
the sin of the  
world.

Jesus is described as

*“The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”* John 1:29

Jesus identified Himself with all the innocent animals who had been sacrificed for the sins of mankind and declared that His was the final sacrifice. Jesus abolished animal sacrifices and so Christianity has always rejected the need for further bloodshed of animals (Hebrews 9:12, 26).

*“For the blood of bulls and goats can never take away sins. For this reason, when Christ was about to come into the world, He said to God: You do not want sacrifices and offerings, but You have prepared a body for Me. You are not pleased with animals burnt whole on the altar or with sacrifices to take away sins. Then I said, ‘Here I am to do Your will, O God.’”*

Hebrews 10:4-7

The Scriptures reveal God's anger against man's sinfulness. God condemned the type of wholesale slaughter of animals in Judaism as a cover-up for their disobedience (Psalm 40:6-10).

*“I gave your ancestors no commands about burnt offerings or any other kinds of sacrifices, when I brought them out of Egypt. But I did command them to obey Me, so that I would be their God and they would be My people. And I told them to live as I commanded them, so that things would go well for them. But they did not obey Me or pay any attention. Instead, they did whatever their stubborn and evil hearts told them to do and they became worse instead of better.”*

Jeremiah 7:22;24

There is only one way of salvation and that is through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ - the Lamb of God who died to redeem sinful mankind (Revelation 5:12, 13). He died with the result that no other animals need die . . . for man's sinfulness.

Jesus is also known as *“The Lion of the tribe of Judah”* (Revelation 5:5) and it is interesting to notice that He was born in a stable among animals rather than in an inn among sinful people (Luke 2:7), that He rode a lowly donkey in triumph into Jerusalem on that great day of the feast (Matthew 21:5) and that He is prophesied to return again in glory as the King of Kings and Lord

of Lords, riding on a white horse (Revelation 19:11).

The Holy Spirit is symbolised by a dove (John 1:32), and He chose to reveal Himself as like a pure and gentle bird (Matthew 3:16) at Jesus' baptism.

The Bible records at least one occasion when God spoke through an animal (Numbers 22:28-33). Balaam's donkey showed greater spiritual perception than the prophet himself did.

Obviously animals matter to God as the construction of Noah's Ark shows and because the presence of animals in Nineveh is recorded as a reason for God's mercy in not destroying that sinful city.

*"How much more then, should I have pity on Nineveh, that great city. After all, it has more than 120 000 innocent children in it, as well as many animals."*  
Jonah 4:11

### Animals in Heaven

A controversial question is whether it is God's plan for animals to be in heaven or not. Many Christians believe that heaven just would not be heaven without animals. Certainly I believe that the Creator of millions of different species of animals, birds, insects and fish is a God who loves variety and prizes His creation. I cannot believe that Heaven will be populated only by angels and saints. From a careful study of the Bible I have become convinced that Heaven will be richer in vegetation and animal life than the most paradise-like part of earth could ever be. Where people get the idea of harps and clouds from, I don't know. God has a far greater plan than we can imagine.

*"This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is to bring **all creation** together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head."*  
Ephesians 1:10

*"Wolves and sheep will live together in peace, and leopards will lie down with young goats, calves and lion cubs will feed together, and little children will take care of them. Cows and bears will eat together, and their calves and cubs will lie down in peace. Lions will eat straw as cattle do . . . The land will be as full of knowledge of the Lord as the seas are full of water."*  
Isaiah 11:6-9

*"Search in the Lord's book of living creatures and read what it says. Not one of these creatures will be missing and not one will be without its mate. The Lord has commanded it to be so; He Himself will bring them together. It is the Lord who will divide the land among them and give each of them a*

Jesus is the  
Lion of the  
tribe of  
Judah

*share. They will live in the land age after age, and it will belong to them for ever."*  
Isaiah 34:16, 17

When the revealed Word of God teaches us that God's eternal plan is for "all creation" to be brought together under Christ, it includes all wildlife too. When God says "everything", He means everything – animals included.

When He says that they will live for "age after age", "forever", this means eternal life. Only one place will last forever, and that is Heaven.

That great book of worship in the Bible – the Psalms – reveals that all God's creation have contact with God (Psalm 93). All God's creatures praise Him (Psalm 145:10). It is only mankind who needs forgiving and saving and teaching as to how to worship (Psalm 36 & 51); the animal kingdom worships God continually and naturally.

*"Praise Him, hills and mountains, fruit trees and forests; all animals, tame and wild, reptiles and birds."*  
Psalm 148:9, 10

*"Be glad, earth and sky! Roar, sea and every creature in you: be glad, fields and everything in you! The trees in the woods will shout for joy."*  
Psalm 96:11, 12

The last book of the Bible presents the final climax of the ages when all creation faces the Creator. First the four living creatures (the animal-like angels around God's throne as described in Ezekiel) praise God, then the twenty-four elders, then the redeemed people of God, then the angels (Revelation 4:6 - 5:12), until finally the great scene is described when all living beings present their worship to Almighty God.

*"And then I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, in the world below, and in the sea – all living beings in the universe – and they were singing: 'To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, be praise and honour, glory and might, forever and ever'".*  
Revelation 5:13

In the light of these Scriptures, I firmly believe that our loving almighty Creator intends all His creatures to enjoy heaven with Him forever. The only part of creation that will be missing from Heaven, according to the Bible, are those sinful human beings who neglect the great salvation that God has revealed in the Bible and provided through Christ. So while I believe all the animal victims of scientific experiments will be in Heaven, the same cannot be said for all the hardhearted vivisectionists and ivory poachers.

The animal kingdom worships God continually and naturally.

## Animals and Man

Millions of wild animals die painful, lingering deaths in vicious traps every year. Not for food - for furs! Millions more are bred on fur farms and slaughtered for fashion.

Then the beauty industry inflicts untold agony on many tens of thousands of animals every year for perfumes, lipsticks and other cosmetics. There are adequate synthetic alternatives, but such is man's inhumanity towards animals that the slaughter continues.

In the name of science, millions more animals suffer in laboratories worldwide every year.

In the first chapter of the Bible, God made mankind responsible for His animals (Genesis 1-28). All animals are God's animals (Psalm 50:10). **We are answerable to God for our treatment, care and protection of animals.**

*“For all of us must appear before Christ, to be judged by Him. Each one will receive what he deserves, according to everything he has done, good or bad, in his bodily life.”*  
2 Corinthians 5:10

What does God think of men battering baby seals to death so that some women can wear glamorous fur coats? What will God do to scientists who burn, infect, cripple, blind, shock, radiate, starve, asphyxiate and dissect cats, dogs, mice, monkeys, rabbits and other innocent victims for 'research' and often just trivial curiosity? How could we expect God to ignore the slaughter of magnificent elephants just to provide ivory ornaments, bracelets and necklaces?

When Jesus is identified as the Lamb of God, how can we remain unmoved at the killing and skinning of newborn karakul lambs to provide fur garments? He has provided us with cotton and the ability to make synthetic materials like nylon. We can shear sheep of their wool in summer. How can fashion justify the butchering of baby lambs for their skins?

God identifies Himself with bears, lions and leopards. How can a Christian approve the killing of these majestic wild animals for fur coats and carpets? God gave animals fur to keep them warm. He gave us the brains to make synthetic materials from plants. Why don't we use them more?

All animals belong to God. What gives us the right to torture them to satisfy our curiosity in the name of “science”?

We are answerable to God for our treatment of animals. What are we going

**We are answerable to God for our treatment, care and protection of animals.**



*“A good man takes care of his animals, but wicked men are cruel to theirs.”*

to say about trapping animals for furs, forcing them to do unnatural acts in circuses, confining and abusing them for our amusement? How can smokers justify the torture and killing of thousands of dogs and monkeys in “tobacco research”? How well do you treat your animals?

*“A good man takes care of his animals, but wicked men are cruel to theirs.”*  
Proverbs 12:10

The Bible says that God has fixed a day in which He will judge the whole world with justice (Acts 17:31). It is well to remember that although man was created in the image of God, the whole message of the Bible is that all mankind has fallen into sinful rebellion against God.

*“They are quick to hurt and kill; they leave ruin and destruction wherever they go. They have not known the path of peace, nor have they learnt to fear God . . . Everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence.”*  
Romans 3:15-17, 23

On the other hand, the Bible indicates that all animals are acceptable in God's sight. They never degenerated into rebellion against God. While all human beings need forgiveness and salvation, all animals are already in a right relationship with God. We should remember this and be humbled.

In the light of the clear teaching of Scripture concerning creation and mankind's responsibility for it, **we should treat animals with the love and concern of those who must give an account of our conduct to God.**

We must recognise that the welfare and protection of animals is an essential part of our Christian responsibility. I would challenge all Christians to make plain their opposition to such cruel practices as vivisection. We must determine to do all in our power to bring about the speedy abolition of all such mistreatment and torture of animals. (I recommend the work of Animal Voice, the Animal Welfare Society, Animal Anti-Cruelty League, Beauty Without Cruelty, the SPCA and other animal protection societies. Support your local SPCA, visit animal welfare groups, adopt some of the animals who are needing a home. Volunteer your time to help.

We must all do what we can to secure the well-being of all animals who, with ourselves, inhabit the earth and so fulfil the creative joy and purpose of Almighty God.

*“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless.”*  
Proverbs 31:8

## CHAPTER 20



# VIDEOS, GAMES AND TV

*"I will set nothing wicked before my eyes..."*      Psalm 101:3

Almost all of us have had this distressing experience. Perhaps you read a positive review of the film. Or the title in the poster attracted you. You might have even seen the trailer advertising the film. It seemed to be a promising production. As a result you took your children or friend to the nearby cinema and paid for the tickets. Or you rented the video.

The lights dim, the screen lights up and you settle back expecting some refreshing entertainment, emotional upliftment, or at least some harmless diversion. Instead, you find your ears assaulted by foul language and the profane use of the Lord's Name. Sexually arousing scenes assault the senses, followed by shocking depictions of graphic violence.

**The average child watches over 2000 hours of TV each year.**

Your mind reels as though punch drunk as you ask yourself: *"Why did none of the reviews or previews warn us? What should I do now? Do we walk out? Do we complain? And how can I ensure that I don't subject my loved ones to this again?"*

Researchers calculate that the average child watches over 2000 hours of films, videos and TV each year. Less than 7% of this will feature what is described as a *"strong redemptive or Christian worldview."*

### **The Power of Stories**

Movies and television programmes are powerful tools of communication. They plant emotional images in our minds, influence our purchases and our lifestyles, shape our standards, and direct our hopes and dreams.

Our Lord Jesus told stories, parables, in order to help people understand the Kingdom of God. Hollywood tells stories through film, television, videos, CD-roms, radio and other media.

Violence in the media fuels violence amongst teenagers.

As Dr Tom Snyder writes in his book *Myth Conceptions*: “*Stories matter deeply. They make a profound difference in our lives. They bring us laughter, tears and joy. They stimulate our minds and stir our imaginations. They help us escape our daily lives for a while and visit different times, places and people. They can arouse our compassion or empathy, spur us towards truth and love, or sometimes even incite us towards hatred or violence... Different kinds of stories satisfy different needs. For example, a comedy evokes a different response from us than a tragedy. A news story on page one affects us differently from a human interest story in a news magazine, or a celebrity profile next to the movie listings... Although different stories satisfy different needs, many stories share common themes, settings, character types, situations and other recurrent patterns. They may even possess a timeless, universal quality.*”

Many stories focus on one individual, typically a heroic figure, who overcomes trials and tribulations to defeat some kind of evil or to attain some positive goal. Through these stories we can gain insights into human nature, reality, truth, motives, meanings, values, and principles. Every story has a worldview - a way of viewing reality, truth, the universe, the human condition, and the spiritual world. A story can have a Christian worldview which shows people’s need for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to His Word, the Bible, or it can have a secular humanist worldview that explicitly or implicitly rejects the Christian worldview. By examining the worldview of a story or film, we can determine the moral, philosophical, social, psychological, spiritual, theological and aesthetic message that the story conveys (Dr Ted Baehr, *What Can We Watch Tonight?*)

How then are we to judge whether a particular film is appropriate? By what standards can we select a film? How can we protect our families, and ourselves, from destructive influences in the media?

### **The World is Being Conformed to Hollywood**

Countless psychological, sociological and neurological studies have concluded that “*violence in the mass media is contributing to increased violent behaviour amongst children and teenagers.*” Other studies have found that “*viewing sexual images in the media leads to increased sexual activity amongst children and teenagers and increased deviant behaviour, including rape.*”

A recent medical study reported by the National Cancer Institute found that “*viewing drug use in movies and TV programmes leads to increased drug use amongst children.*”

### **Visual Terrorism**

A new long term study, released in 2002, led by Geoffrey G. Johnson of Columbia University and the New York State Psychiatric Institute studied

children in 707 families for 17 years. Their report claimed “overwhelming” evidence that adolescent young adults who watch television for more than 7 hours per week are up to 200% more likely to commit an aggressive act in later years. Their report claimed that films such as Hannibal, Scream, American Pie 2, Queen of the Damned, the Harry Potter series, and others, can have “a tremendously negative impact on the lives of children and teenagers... These types of movies and programmes are nothing more than visual terrorism.”

**Sex in films leads to deviance in life.**

### **Pornography is a Manual For Rape**

Serial rapist and mass murderer Ted Bundy, in his television interview with Dr James Dobson the night before he was executed, acknowledged that pornography had played a critical role in leading him to murder as many as 28 young women and children. Reflecting on the many years he had spent in prison with violent criminals, Bundy observed: “Without exception, every one of them was deeply involved with pornography without question, without exception deeply influenced and consumed by an addiction to pornography. The FBI’s own study on serial homicides shows that the most common interest amongst serial killers is pornography.”

Dr Victor Cline’s research has shown that “sexually suggestive theatrical movies increases (men’s) aggressive behaviour towards women.”

The 1987 US Attorney General’s Commission On Pornography “carefully details the conclusive research demonstrating that sex and violence in films and on television leads to rape, child abuse, and increased divorce rates in our society.”

### **Stimulating Suicide**

Studies on teenage suicide conducted at Columbia University and the University of California at San Diego which were published in the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine: “conclusively demonstrated that movies, television programmes and even news reports involving teenage suicide lead to an increase in the number of teenage suicides during the week following such programming.”

### **Back to Blood Sports**

We seem to be seeing a return to the days of the blood sports in the Roman Colosseum when people demanded increasing decadence and violence. The insatiable lust of the public for the spectacle of gladiators fighting each other, slaughtering unarmed innocents, and even degrading sexual orgies in the arena, are now being produced in films and TV programmes.

### **Every film has a worldview.**

Every worldview has a doctrine of God, doctrine of man, doctrine of

salvation, doctrine of the Church, doctrine of History, a doctrine of the future, a doctrine of the nature of reality, and a doctrine of knowledge.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, for instance, has an occult, new age worldview that subtly encourages children to dabble in witchcraft and sorcery. As such it teaches a nature based, polytheistic religion that confuses the spiritual world with the natural or physical world, it has no doctrine of forgiveness of sin and believes human nature is basically good instead of inherently sinful.

**Compromise  
and cowardice  
leads to moral  
chaos.**

In contrast to the Harry Potter series, the Lord of the Rings reflects a Christian understanding of reality. In Middle Earth there is a clear distinction between right and wrong, and there is clear accountability to a sovereign, holy God, who is Lord of the universe. Here wielding vast supernatural power is seen as a temptation that should be shunned and best left up to God.

### **Our Christian Responsibility**

*"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing"* Edmund Burke.

We need to redeem the media by supporting good films and refusing to support the bad.

World Vision has reported that, on average, Christians spend 6,6% of their income on entertainment, but only 1,2% on church, missions and ministries. The media are merely tools of communication, just as the telephone is a tool of communication. Like other tools, these mass media of entertainment may be used for good or for evil. The printing press can print Bibles or pornography. A hammer may be used to build a church or to hit someone over the head.

The movie industry needs money to survive. If we redirect our investment away from supporting bad entertainment to investing in good entertainment, the industry will have to make more good movies and fewer bad ones.

Christians all too often go to bad films and miss good ones because of sin, peer pressure, curiosity, deceptive advertisements and lack of guidance. We need to be soaked in the Scripture, well studied on the Biblical Worldview, and have an adequate understanding of the false teachings of humanism, to recognise errors when presented to us.

Subscribe to MovieGuide, visit [www.movieguide.org](http://www.movieguide.org), read Christian books

on worldviews: *Biblical Principles for Africa, South Africa - Renaissance or Reformation, Make a Difference, The Biblical Worldview Manual, Mind Siege, Battle for the Truth, What Can We Watch Tonight?* and *The Media Wise Family*.

*"Give Thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and evil..."* 1Kings 3:9

### Learn to Discern

We also need to think critically, to ask the right questions:

1. Who is the hero / heroine?
2. What kind of role model is the hero / heroine?
3. Who is the villain?
4. What kind of message does his character convey?
5. How much sex and violence is in the film?
6. What is the premise that drives the script?
7. What worldview or value is being promoted?
8. Does good triumph over evil?
9. How does the film treat Christians, the Church and the Bible?
10. Would you be embarrassed to sit through this film with your parents, children or the Lord Himself?

Redeem the  
time.  
Clean the  
screen.

*"But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."* Matthew 18:6

**Redeem the time.** Be very selective and discerning about what media you expose your family or yourself to. Shun the bad and choose the best.

*"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will."* Romans 12:2

*"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things."* Philippians 4: 8



## CHAPTER 21



# WHEN ALL MEN SPEAK WELL OF YOU

*“Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.”* Luke 6:26

It is interesting how, in spite of all the warnings in the Scripture against gossip, slander, and tale bearing, just how much stock we tend to place in people's opinions. It is said that where there is smoke there is fire. However, the smoke may be no more than dust and hot air.

As Mark Twain observed: *“A lie can travel halfway across the world while truth is still getting its boots on.”*

The great Baptist preacher, C.H. Spurgeon, warned: *“Believe not half you hear; repeat not half you believe; when you hear an evil report, halve it, then quarter it, and say nothing about the rest of it.”*

The great Reformer, John Calvin, declared: *“No greater injury can be inflicted upon men than to ruin their reputation.”*

Thomas Brooks taught: *“Of all the members in the body, there is none so serviceable to Satan as the tongue.”*

John Calvin wrote: *“There is nothing more slippery or loose than the tongue.”*

The Scriptures command us *“to slander no-one, to be peaceable and considerate and to show true humility toward all men.”* Titus 3:2

*“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.”* Ephesians 4:31

Yet, gossip remains prevalent within the church, and the arrogance,

**By faith and obedience we can turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones.**



bitterness, jealousy and malice that so often goes along with it remains unchallenged.

King David wrote: *"Whoever slanders his neighbour in secret, him will I put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, him will I not endure."*

Psalm 101:5

Today, however, it is more common to publish the slanders than to silence or rebuke them.

Yet, it is a fact that whoever gossips to you will gossip of you.

The teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ are very clear. *"In everything do to others what you would have them do to you. For this sums up the Law and the prophets."*

Matthew 7:12

When we pray we are to say: *"Forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors.... For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."*

Matthew 6:12-15

*"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me."*

*"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

Matthew 5:11-12

*"Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets... Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets."*

Luke 6:22-26

Why then do we continue to place such value upon people's opinions? After all, mass murdering tyrants like Joseph Stalin and Mao Tse Tung have been *"Man of the Year"* of Time Magazine.

*"Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I was still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ."*

Galatians 1:10

Our Lord Jesus Christ warned us: *"Many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other."* Matthew 24:10

Even one of Jesus' hand-picked disciples, Judas, who was trusted as the

treasurer of “*The Twelve*”, took money from the high priests to betray our Lord Jesus Christ into their hands (Luke 22:8; John 13:21).

When Moses sent out twelve scouts to explore the land, ten returned with a negative and defeatist report and “*made the whole community grumble*” (Numbers 14:36). Only Joshua and Caleb, of the twelve, came back with a good report. The Lord severely judged the ten complainers and mightily blessed the faithful Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 16:38).

The great French Reformer, **John Calvin**, transformed Geneva through his preaching, teaching, writings and Academy. Under John Calvin's ministry, Geneva became the intellectual centre and hub of the Reformation, a place of religious freedom and refuge for Protestants fleeing persecution, a sending base for evangelists, pastors and missionaries who established literally thousands of Reformed churches throughout Europe and further afield.

Yet, historians have noted that: “*No good man has ever had a worse press; no Christian theologian is so often scorned; so regularly attacked.*” Throughout his life Calvin faced major opposition, often from fellow Protestants and other theologians: “*whose objections to Calvin were incessant and, usually, unpleasant.*” Even today, there are those who maintain that John Calvin was a vicious tyrant who oppressed the people under an unbearable dictatorship, and that he had people executed for disagreeing with him.

*“If I was still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.”*

Yet, the facts are that Calvin never ruled Geneva. The city was not a totalitarian society, but a republic with elections and dissent. Calvin held no civil office, he could neither arrest nor punish any citizen, nor could he appoint or dismiss any official. (To argue that his eloquence and logic constituted tyranny, is to invent a new standard.)

History records that refugees from all over Europe flooded to Geneva to find the freedom there that they were not able to enjoy in their home countries. Under Calvin, Geneva developed into Europe's greatest concentration of printers and publishing firms. It became the epicentre of the movement for freedom world wide. Yet Calvin continues to be slandered by ignorant and prejudiced people.

Similarly, the great German Reformer, **Martin Luther**, continues to be slandered to this day. Whole websites are dedicated to depicting Luther as an anti-Semite who laid the foundations for the holocaust!

The accusation that Martin Luther was an anti-Semite, responsible for massacres, reveals an ignorance of history. Luther was pro-Christ and he

was zealous in evangelism. For decades he lovingly and patiently reached out to the Jewish people in his area with the Gospel. In 1523, Luther accused Catholics of being unfair to Jews in treating them *“as if they were dogs”*. Luther was outraged and declared that such mistreatment made it even more difficult for Jews to convert to Christ.

Luther wrote *“I would request and advise that one deal gently with the Jews...if we really want to help them, we must be guided in our dealings with them, not by papal law, but by the Law of Christian love. We must receive them cordially, and permit them to trade and work with us, hear our Christian teaching and witness our Christian life. If some of them should prove stiff-necked, what of it? After all, we ourselves are not all good Christians either.”*

Many have the gift of criticism and a ministry of discouragement.

Fifteen years later, however, the persistent rejection of Christ and repeated blasphemies of those Jewish people in his community, provoked Luther to write: *“On the Jews and their Lies.”* In this pamphlet, Luther wrote against the *“madness and blindness that blasphemous Christ”* in the Rabbinic teachings. Luther declared that he could not *“have any fellowship or patience with obstinate blasphemers and those who defame our dear Saviour.”* These blasphemies included describing our Lord Jesus Christ as *“the bastard son”* of *“that whore Mary”*, and even worse. Blasphemy was a civil crime. Luther taught that to tolerate such blasphemy was to share in the guilt for it. Therefore, he proposed measures of *“sharp mercy”* which included confiscating all Jewish literature which was blasphemous and prohibiting Rabbis to teach such blasphemy.

However, to quote these reactions of Luther without explaining their local context of opposing the repeated blasphemies of Jewish individuals in his community and then to project guilt for the continent-wide, anti-Christian holocaust of World War II upon the great 16th Century Reformer is ludicrous. How can any Christian Reformer of the 16th Century be blamed for the evils perpetrated by those humanists (who clearly rejected his teachings) nearly 400 years after his death!

Hitler was a disciple of Nietzsche (the philosopher who declared: *“God is dead”*) - not Luther. Luther was not an anti-Semite. His arguments against Jewish individuals were theological, not biological or cultural. He was speaking out against blasphemy and heresy, not opposing an entire race or nation of people.

It is most disturbing that such a humble and God-fearing man who, against all odds, gave to the church and the world, the Bible, freely available in the common tongue, who introduced congregational singing, championed justification by God's Grace, received by faith, on the basis of the finished

work of Christ, who stood for sola Scriptura - that Scripture alone is the ultimate authority, and who was so wonderfully used of the Lord to bring about the greatest Biblical Reformation and birth of freedom that the world had ever known, could be the target of such vicious slander.

The Scriptures implore us: *"Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the Law and judges it."*

James 4:11

There is a disturbing tendency throughout the church, seen regularly in homes where they have *"roast pastor for Sunday lunch"*, to set ourselves up continually as judges of those who are better than we are. Many have the gift of criticism and a ministry of discouragement.

*"Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander of every kind."*

1 Peter 2:1

As the Scripture so plainly shows us, slander of every kind is inseparable from malice, deceit, hypocrisy and envy. (The middle letter of pride is "I", the middle letter of lie is "I", the middle letter of sin is "I", so too the middle letter of Lucifer is "I"). Self centred pride is often at the root of our desire to slander great men and women of the past, and to drag down others whom God has raised up.

**Jonathan Edwards**, one of America's greatest theologians, and a man most closely associated with the Great Evangelical Awakening, was actually dismissed by his own church for applying Biblical discipline. The elders of his church would not accept his position that unbelievers should not be allowed to participate in The Lord's Supper. In his farewell message, Edwards declared: *"...avoid contention. A contentious people will be a miserable people...heat of spirit, evil speaking and things of the like...directly contrary to the spirit of Christianity...watch against a contentious spirit..."*

The father of modern missions, **William Carey**, and his co-worker, John Marshman, had to endure vicious and unjust criticisms from young new missionaries who came *"to help"* at the mission base in Serampore, India. Many of these new volunteers actually split from the Serampore mission and spent an inordinate amount of time slandering William Carey and his co-workers (the controversy lasted thirteen years). So much so that the Baptist Missionary Society in England actually turned against William Carey for a time.

Writing of this, Carey said: *"The evil they have done is, I fear, irreparable; and certainly the whole might have been prevented by a little frank conversation with*

**Slander is inseparable from malice, deceit, hypocrisy and envy.**

*either of us; and a hundredth part of that self denial which I found necessary to exercise for the first few years of the mission would have prevented this awful rupture...but now we are traduced and the church rent by the very men who came to be our helpers...judge for yourselves whether it is comely that a man who has laboriously and disinterestedly served the mission so many years should be arraigned and condemned without a hearing by a few men who have just arrived, one of whom had not been a month in the country before he joined the senseless outcry."*

On a recent speaking tour to Australia, a couple of people commented on my including **Samuel Marsden** in my book *The Greatest Century of Missions*. They frankly admitted that they had never heard anything good about Samuel Marsden, but only that he was a vicious "hanging judge" and "religious hypocrite".

In fact, Samuel Marsden was a pioneer missionary and founding father of Australia and New Zealand. He was a man who upheld justice impartially, and who diligently preached the Gospel. Throughout his life he remained a humble and generous Christian who laid the foundations for the Christian church in Australia and New Zealand. Although he came to Australia as a chaplain to the convict colony of New South Wales, the Governor compelled him to be the magistrate also. Combining both demanding vocations in one person involved Marsden in one controversy after another. Samuel tried his utmost to provide for the prisoners, to establish a school for orphans, and to right the wrongs suffered by Aborigines.

**But the Lord vindicated.**

His attempts to uphold principles of justice placed his life in danger and he endured many threats to his life. On one occasion, he travelled to England to call the attention of the government to the unacceptable conditions and to secure intervention. He presented these grievances to King George III himself.

Samuel Marsden had a great missionary vision which also extended to bringing the Gospel of Christ to the cannibals of New Zealand. Despite vicious disputes between some of the missionaries answerable to him, and relentless criticism, Samuel Marsden conducted the first public worship service in New Zealand, interceded between two warring tribes, and introduced education, standards of justice and law and order to New Zealand.

It was his sad experience to be continually a victim of malicious and unfounded charges throughout his time in Australia. His fearless denunciation of sin made him numerous enemies, but the Lord vindicated Samuel Marsden. Within 31 years of his first service in New Zealand, 98% of

the Maoris had embraced Christianity.

In 1865, **Hudson Taylor** prayed for 24 “willing, skilful labourers” for his new China Inland Mission. Willing and skilful they may have been, but four of these new recruits also bought dissension and controversy. Soon these dissidents had poisoned the fellowship with their increasing bitterness and resentment. After two years of backbiting and disruption, Hudson Taylor had to dismiss the ringleader, Louis Nicole, from the mission. Other troublemakers left with him.

More unrelenting slander and lies undermined the work of the China Inland Mission. One of the accusations against Hudson Taylor was that he was “too familiar with the young ladies.” Hudson and Maria Taylor kissed some of the girls on the forehead before they went off to bed. The ladies themselves denied any inappropriate behaviour, but still the complaint reached London, and for a time led to a fall in support for the mission.

As Hudson Taylor wrote: “If the Spirit of God works mightily, we may be sure that the spirit of evil will also be active.” The China Inland Mission was engulfed in opposition, dissension, controversy, fire and death from the beginning. Their mission house in Yangchow was attacked and set on fire. Furious persecution engulfed them. Storms of criticism and controversy erupted. However, in spite of constant controversies, the number of CIM missionaries grew, in time becoming the largest mission organisation in the world. By the end of Hudson's long life, the very mission organisations that had belittled and ridiculed his methods had begun adopting many of them.

On his Zambezi expedition, pioneer missionary explorer **David Livingstone** was afflicted by interpersonal conflicts amongst his team, leading to everyone abandoning him in the field, even his own brother Charles. By the time he returned to England seven years later, Livingstone found that his disgruntled ex-co-workers had so spread an ill report against him that no-one even came out to welcome him back. He was ostracised, presumed guilty without even a chance to defend himself.

The greatest Baptist preacher of all time, **Charles Spurgeon**, was actually the target of vicious and slanderous attacks by the Baptist Union of his day. Now his books are textbooks of Baptist colleges and his statue stands outside the Baptist Union headquarters.

**George Whitefield**, one of the greatest evangelists of all time and a key figure in the Great Evangelical Awakening, was actually excluded from the Church of England that he had served so faithfully. Today the Church

*“If the Spirit of God works mightily, we may be sure that the spirit of evil will also be active.”*

of England in South Africa have named their college after George Whitefield.

Dr James Kennedy, in his book, *Delighting God*, writes "if you rise just a little bit above the common herd, if you achieve just a modicum more success than your neighbours, most surely those barbs of criticism are going to be shot your way."

*"To avoid criticism: do nothing, say nothing, be nothing."*

*"To avoid criticism: do nothing, say nothing, be nothing." "There is no defence against reproach - except obscurity." Delighting God quotes one wise old man "if I tried to read, much less answer all the criticisms made of me, and all the attacks levelled against me, this office would have to be closed to all other business. I do the best I know how, the very best I can, and I mean to keep on doing this, down to the very end. If the end brings me out all wrong, ten angels swearing I had been right would make no difference. If the end brings me out alright, then what is said against me now will not amount to anything."*

There is no doubt that **adversity builds character**. A faith that can't be tested, can't be trusted. Smooth seas do not make skilful sailors.

But unjustified criticism is still better than flattery - and less dangerous! We can always benefit - even from the most unbalanced criticism. What man means for evil, God can use for good. (Genesis 50:20)

*"And we know that all things work together for good, to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."* Romans 8:28

Such trials should drive us to prayer, humble us and deepen our devotional life as we search the Scriptures and ask: "What is God saying to me through this?"

It can also enable us to empathise with and comfort others who suffer such injustices.

Christians suffering unjust criticism should find opportunities to glorify God and to witness for Christ. Ultimately, God's opinion and approval is the only One that counts. It is He Whom we should continually be seeking to please.

And one thing that Christ requires is that we forgive those who sin against us - unconditionally, wholeheartedly. We who have been forgiven much should love much.

*"Blessed are you when men hate you and when they exclude you, and revile you and*

*cast out your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy. For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets...Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” Luke 6:22-26*

As United States President **Theodore Roosevelt** challenged us:

*“It is not the critic that counts –  
nor the man who points out how the strong man stumbled;  
nor where the doer of deeds could have done better.  
The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena;  
whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood;  
who strives valiantly;  
who errs and comes short again and again;  
who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions and spends  
himself in a worthy cause;  
who at best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement and;  
who at worst, if he fails, at least fails while doing greatly,  
so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls  
who know neither victory nor defeat!”*

**A person's character is accurately measured by their reaction to unfairness or bad treatment.**

**Everything in life is a test of character.** Extreme situations expose and bring out the best, or the worst, in people. A person's character is accurately measured by their reaction to unfairness or bad treatment. The measure of a person's character can be seen by the size of those things which upset him. The true flavour of a tea bag is only tasted after it has been placed in hot water, and so it is with ourselves. Our reputation is what men think we are. Our character is what God knows we are. And this is only revealed under extreme crisis situations.

So, when troubles and tribulations come, when you are insulted, excluded, reviled and mistreated, do what our Lord Jesus commanded: **“rejoice in that day and leap for joy!”**

On the other hand;

*“Woe to you when all men speak well of you...” Luke 6:26*





## CHAPTER 22



# HOW CAN I REMAIN POSITIVE — IN A NEGATIVE WORLD?

*"The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord, but the words of the pure are pleasant."*  
Proverbs 15:26

*"The Lord knows the thoughts of man, that they are futile."*  
Psalm 94:11

*"O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved. How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?"*  
Jeremiah 4:14

*"But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts?'"*  
Matthew 9:4

*"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."*  
Matthew 15:19

*"... although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened."*  
Romans 1:21

*"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting."*  
Romans 1:28

*"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, nor indeed can be."*  
Romans 8:7

*"This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their minds."*  
Ephesians 4:17

*"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind."*

*“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”* Romans 12:2

*“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things.”* Philippians 4:8

**Cultivate  
an attitude  
of gratitude  
to God.**

Focus on true perspectives on news and history, films recommended by Movieguide, noble and excellent characters, pure and lovely art, God's creation, uplifting music, good company and praiseworthy activities. Cultivate an attitude of gratitude to God. Put God first. Read the Bible every day.

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”* 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

*“You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You.”* Isaiah 26:3

## CHAPTER 23



# THE CROSS AND CONFLICT

The Cross is at the heart of the Gospel and it involved incredible suffering and sacrifice for our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We cannot divorce the Cross from missions.

The very purpose for Christ's blood atonement was missionary:

*"... for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, .... Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honour and glory and blessing!"*

Revelation 5:9,12

**Missions  
require  
suffering and  
sacrifice.**

God has joined the Cross and the Great Commission together, and what God has joined together, let no man separate.

*"For to this you were called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow in His steps."*

1 Peter 2:21

Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, was misunderstood, slandered, falsely accused and lied about. He was hated and betrayed. He was forsaken by His friends. Jesus was unjustly arrested, illegally tried and wrongly condemned. Jesus was mocked, beaten, whipped, insulted, slapped and crucified.

The Lord Jesus taught:

*"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet, because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you ... A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you ..."*

John 15: 18-20

The Scriptures clearly teach:

*"Yes, and all who desire to live Godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."*

2 Timothy 3:12

We read that Paul and Barnabas strengthened and encouraged the believers in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch by "*exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, we must through many tribulations enter the Kingdom God.*" Acts 14:22

Could peace and prosperity be detrimental to our spiritual health?

Could peace and prosperity be detrimental to our spiritual health? This may seem to be a shocking suggestion, but recent history and personal experience should make us seriously consider the possibility. Wars, natural disasters and suffering seem to be regularly used of the Lord to revive spiritual fervour and bring vast multitudes to their knees in repentance. The sword, rather than the olive leaf, seems to be serving the cause of both personal spiritual growth and world evangelism.

Before the Soviet invasion in 1979, **Afghanistan** was one of the least evangelised countries in the world. There were over 48 000 mosques, but not one single church building. The last Christian church had just been demolished before the Russian tanks rolled across the border. Yet the devastating war brought about the greatest openness to the Gospel ever seen in Afghanistan. Thousands of Afghans have been converted to Christ in the various wars that have rocked Afghanistan.

In **Argentina**, the disastrous Falklands-Malvinas war against Britain in 1982 led to a national economic collapse and a great spiritual revival. Literally millions of Argentineans have been converted to Christ since 1982.

**Indonesia** is the world's fifth most populous nation (over 212 million people) and it has the largest number of Muslims in any country (170 million), yet out of the bloodbath of the failed communist coup in 1965, sprang one of the greatest movements to Christianity. The harsh extremism of some Muslim groups and the fierce Muslim reprisals (over 2 million were killed in the repression following the coup) repelled many people. Millions were converted to Christianity - most from Muslim or communist backgrounds.

**Ethiopia** has suffered two great waves of violent persecution - under the Italian fascists from 1936 till 1941, and under the Marxists from 1974 to 1991. These traumatic sessions of suffering were also great seasons of spiritual harvest with millions coming to Christ. Protestants were less than 200 000 in 1960. By the year 2000, evangelicals had increased to over 12 million (20% of the population!).

**Sudan** is the largest country in Africa. It has the longest war still raging. In 1956, Christians made up less than 2% of the total population. Now, after

enduring some of the most vicious anti-Christian persecution, the church makes up over 23% of the total population. Many parts of the church in Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains are experiencing real revival and spectacular growth. Large numbers of Muslims have come to Christ in Sudan.

One could give many other examples of great missionary progress and church growth in politically unstable and violent countries.

Nobody would welcome a stranger coming into his home and rearranging the furniture. Yet we regularly allow secular humanists and the mass media to rearrange our thoughts and distort our perspectives. The secular media often erodes the faith of believers in the sovereignty of God. Like vultures, many TV cameramen swoop down to focus in on the wars, famines, disasters and tragedies. They very seldom go on to present the wide-angle picture of what God is doing, even in the midst of these tragedies, and in spite of the suffering.

Hence, most Christians (who depend almost exclusively upon the secular humanist controlled media for their perspectives on history and current events) are overwhelmed with a sense of hopelessness amidst meaningless sufferings in a world of chance. Most Christians are failing to see the big picture. We seldom consider our personal sufferings or world events in the light of eternity.

Many may feel like Christians but very few think like Christians. Many have Christian hearts, but all too few have Christian minds. The average churchgoer spends more time reading the newspaper than reading the Bible. If we spend more time watching TV than in worshipping Christ, we will become practical humanists.

There is a cosmic world war in progress between the forces of darkness and the heavenly armies of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eternal destinies are at stake. As C.T. Studd put it: *"Only one life, it will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last ... some like to live within the sound of church or chapel bell - I'd like to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell."*

There is something spiritually purifying about suffering. There is nothing quite like the possibility of sudden death to straighten out one's priorities! Comfort softens us, but hardship strengthens us. Health and wealth often breed complacency, selfishness and greed. However, suffering can encourage sharing and self-sacrifice.

*"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you*

**We seldom consider our personal sufferings or world events in the light of eternity.**

*have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

1 Peter 1:6-7

Over the last 22 years, as a missionary, I have had the privilege of ministering in conflict areas such as Mozambique, Angola, Rwanda, Sudan and Zimbabwe. I have found people in war-torn regions far more receptive to the Gospel than those in stable, peaceful areas. Combat soldiers in operational areas are much more open to the Gospel than administrative and support troops in the secured areas. Many more people come to genuine repentance and faith in Christ in hospitals and prisons than in our churches.

In my own spiritual life, I can clearly see that my greatest times of spiritual growth have been in the army, in the mission field and in prison. My most earnest times of repentance and heart-searching prayer have been when sick, after a motorbike accident, when captured by communist troops and in the intensive care unit with my newborn son when he was in critical renal failure.

Our missionaries have also observed that we cannot compare our devotional fervour in the mission field with that in the comforts of home. Comfort and complacency are the enemies of our devotional lives, while conflict and crisis can fuel the fires of spiritual zeal. This is also true in world missions.

We are living in a time of great uncertainty and instability. World wide, there are over 40 wars in progress and many hundreds of millions are afflicted by famines, epidemics and other natural or man-made disasters. Yet we are also living at a time of the greatest ingathering of people into the Kingdom of God. Every day there are an average of 80 000 more Protestants added to the church worldwide, net gain. Every week, 3500 new Protestant churches are planted, and most of the growth has been in Asia and Africa amidst the most severe suffering.

The Chinese word for crisis is made up of two words - danger and opportunity. Certainly in missionary work, it is true that crisis situations are the most fertile fields for ministry. Wherever there is danger - such as in wars or persecution - there are unique opportunities for serving God.

In the light of eternity, any sacrifices made to bring lost sinners to the Saviour, will be seen as eminently worthwhile. **What man means for evil, God often uses for good** (Genesis 50:20).

Wherever  
there is  
danger -  
there are  
unique  
opportunities  
for serving  
God.

God does send disasters upon nations and individuals to judge specific persistent sins (Acts 5:1-11; 12:23; 1 Corinthians 11:30-32). However, we should not assume that an individual or nation is suffering because of their own sin. Job's suffering was not an indication of God's displeasure, but rather the opposite.

Often suffering is sent by God to strengthen our faith and to demonstrate that our faith is genuine. People are attracted to Christ when they see Christians handling suffering with grace and confidence in God. Suffering is part of life and we are called to *"endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."* 2 Timothy 2:3.

*"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."* Luke 9:23

God can use our suffering for our spiritual good and for the strengthening and extending of His Kingdom. *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."* Romans 8:28

Our attitude amidst suffering must glorify God and draw unbelievers to Christ. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."* 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Suffering should drive us to depend upon God and grow in faith. Therefore, the Scriptures exhort us to *"count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience ... Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."* James 1:2-3, 12

Since we are God's children, we will share in His blessings and in His sufferings. For if we share in Christ's sufferings, we will also share in His glory. And our present sufferings cannot be compared with the glory of eternity (Romans 8:17-18).

Our Lord's last command must be our first concern. The Great Commission should be our supreme ambition. We must centre on what is central to God's Word - missions. Our great God and Saviour deserves all glory and honour and so we should invest all our strength and wisdom to proclaim all of His Word to all of the world and to persuade rebellious sinners to surrender fully to the Lordship of Christ.

**What man means for evil, God often uses for good.**



However, having said that, we need to recognise that God's army often advances on its knees in prayer and on its back in pain. The Cross required suffering. Fulfilling the Great Commission will require no less.

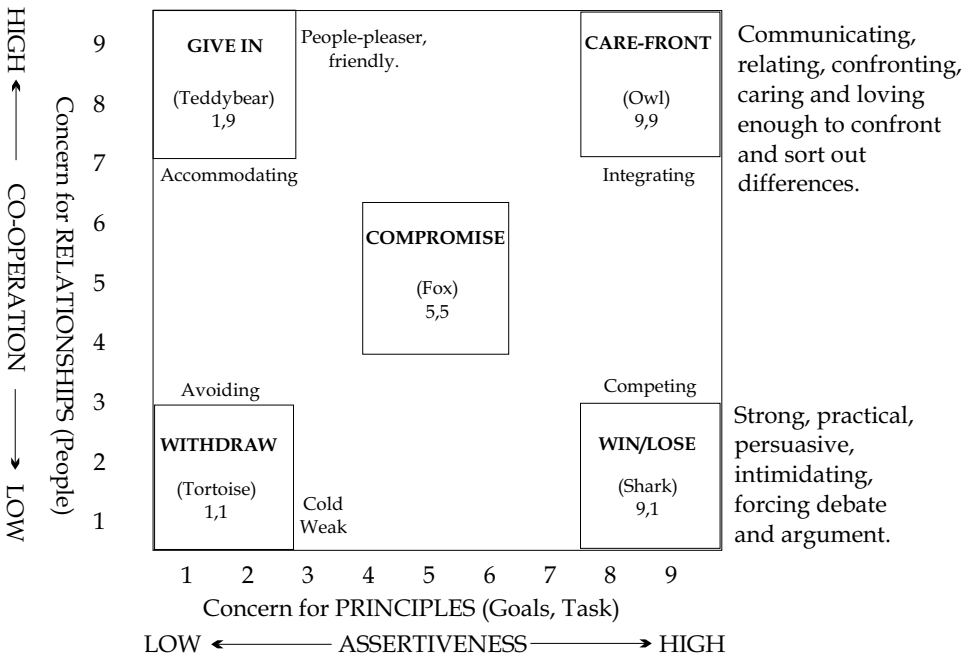
**God's army  
often  
advances  
on its knees  
in prayer  
and on  
its back  
in pain.**

# CHAPTER 24



# HANDLING CONFLICT

The various reactions of people to conflicts, crisis, arguments and differences can best be illustrated by means of a graph. Where do you fit in?



<b>Types of Conflict Management</b>	<b>Assumptions Behind Each Style</b>	<b>Situations In Which This Style of Handling Conflict Would Be Best</b>
WITHDRAW (1,1)	Differences are eternal, inevitable, unchangeable. Differences are bad.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) When you have no power.</li> <li>2) Damage of confrontation too great.</li> <li>3) The issue is trivial.</li> </ol>
WIN/LOSE (9,1)	Differences are black and white, someone is right. Differences need to be erased.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) When time is short.</li> <li>2) Principles are of crucial importance.</li> <li>3) You don't want to be taken advantage of.</li> </ol>
GIVE IN (1,9)	Differences drive people apart because they are personal attacks - conflict calls for sacrifice and yielding.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) When you are wrong.</li> <li>2) Building credit for future.</li> <li>3) You have low power or desire harmony.</li> <li>4) Willing to let others learn by mistakes.</li> </ol>
COMPROMISE (5,5)	Differences must be seen in the light of common good. Should be aired - then give and take. Split the difference.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) When goals are moderately important.</li> <li>2) When participants have equal power.</li> <li>3) A permanent settlement would be complex</li> <li>4) Time is a factor.</li> </ol>
CARE-FRONTING (9,9)	Differences are natural, neutral, and normal; occasions for creative problem solving.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) When both sets of concerns are too important.</li> <li>2) Commitment to principles and/or each other.</li> <li>3) Where learning is important.</li> </ol>

\* IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO STRIVE FOR UNDERSTANDING THAN AGREEMENT.

*"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."*

Matthew 18: 15 - 16

*"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the Law of Christ."*

Galatians 6: 1-2

## CHAPTER 25



# STRATEGY FOR LIVING

*"Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established."*  
Proverbs 16:3

1. Decide what God wants you to do and be - **Set Goals**.
2. Discover which goals are more important - **Establish Priorities**.
3. Analyse the best way to reach your goals - **Do Your Planning**.
4. Start working towards your goals according to your plans - **Start Living**.
5. Use what you have learnt to
  - set new goals;
  - revise priorities;
  - improve plans.

**If you fail  
to plan,  
you plan  
to fail.**

How we live our life is determined by our **Goals** (objectives, aims).

What goals we choose are determined by our **Priorities**.

Whether we reach our goals is determined by our **Planning**.

A strategy for **Living** needs

- good goals;
- Christian priorities;
- effective plans.

It is in living that we find better goals, higher priorities and more effective plans.

This strategy is a **Process** -

**Goals** ⇨ **Priorities** ⇨ **Planning** ⇨ **Living**

**Goals** must be: measurable and realistic.

A **Purpose** is an aim or direction - something which we want to achieve, but which is not necessarily measurable. E.g.: My purpose can be: to glorify God, but my goal can be: to read a chapter of the Bible each day.

- Good **Goals** are:
- stated in terms of **results**.
  - **achievable** in a definite time.
  - **definite** as to what is expected.
  - **practical** and **feasible**.
  - **precise** in terms of quantities involved.
  - **limited** to one important statement.

If you aim at nothing any road will get you there.

My **Greatest Purpose** in life is to:-----  
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Five years from now I would like to be: -----  
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By the end of the year I intend to be:-----  
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This week I intend to: -----  
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**If you fail to plan - you plan to fail.**

# ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES

*"For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."*  
2 Corinthians 5:10

## Ask Yourself:

- ▶ How important is it?
- ▶ Why must it be done?
- ▶ Can someone else do it more effectively?
- ▶ What will happen if this is not done at all?
- ▶ When must it be done by?
- ▶ Is this the best way?

*"Do not sacrifice the permanent on the altar of the immediate."*

## A. B. C. Technique:

- A. = Must do (High value)
- B. = Should do (Medium)
- C. = Can do (Low)

## Priority Levels:

1. **Our Commitment to GOD** - Worship, Trust, Obedience, Loyalty, Faithfulness, etc.
2. **Our Commitment to the PEOPLE of God** - Relationships, Love, Dependability, etc.
3. **Our Commitment to the WORK of God** - The tasks God gives us to do.

## Joy:

- Jesus first - *"All I want is to know Christ."* Phil. 3:10
- Others next - *"I only want to complete my mission."* Acts 20:24
- You last - *"But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness..."* Matt. 6:33

**In the light of eternity - what are my priorities?**

**In the light of  
eternity -  
what are my  
priorities?**

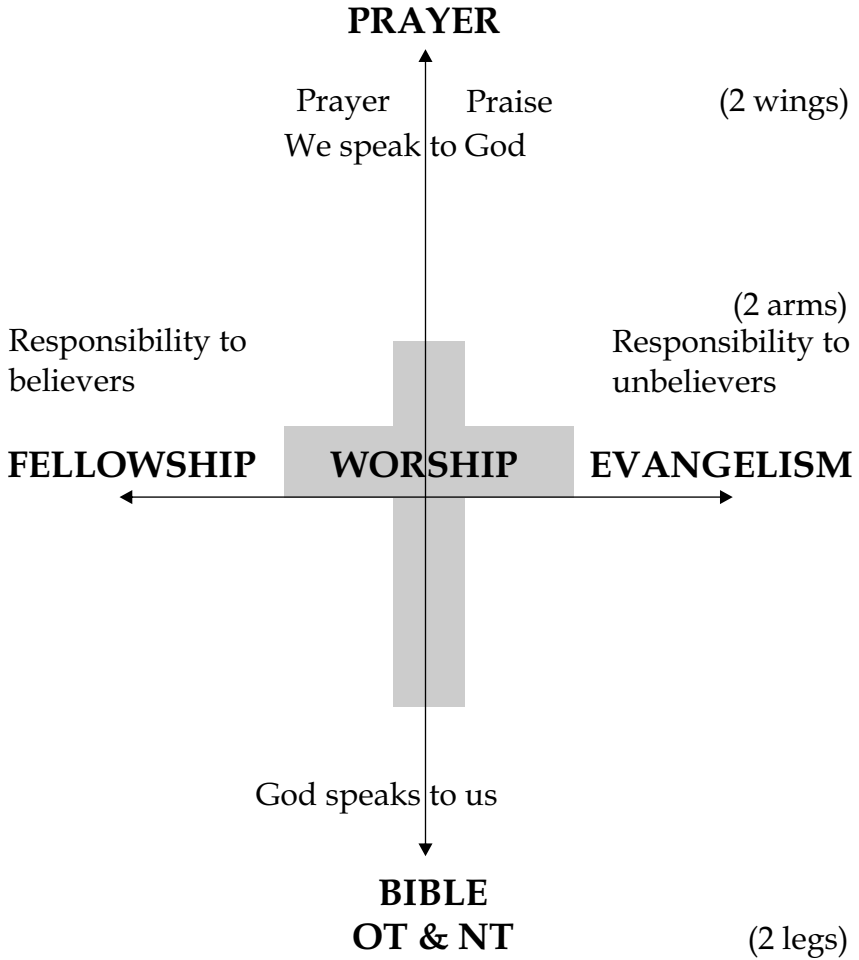
# LIFE AREAS WORKSHEET

PRIORITY	AREAS	COMMITMENTS	SITUATION	GOALS
	God			
	Family			
	Friends			
	Colleagues			
	God's Creation			
	Church			
	Mission			
	Occupation			
	Service to Others			
	Learning			
	Relaxation			
	Recreation			
	Hobbies			
	Physical Health			
	Spiritual Health			
	Emotional Health			
	Finances			
	Achievements			
	Qualifications			
	Possessions			

*"For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord, and He examines all His paths."*

Proverbs 5: 21

# BALANCED DISCIPLESHIP







## CHAPTER 26



# TEN QUESTIONS TO REFOCUS YOUR LIFE

1. What do you feel deeply burdened by and uniquely qualified to deal with? .....

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.....

2. What do you ultimately want to achieve or become? .....

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.....

3. What are your greatest strengths, talents or gifts? What do you do best? .....

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4. Describe yourself – make an exhaustive list of every adjective you would use to describe yourself – both positively and negatively: .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Don't settle  
for less than  
God's best.**

5. What is heavy on your shoulders/overwhelming you? What decisions are causing you the most stress? What's out of control? Where are you being indecisive? .....

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6. What's the one thing that's holding you back more than anything else? What problem, if you could solve it, would allow everything else just to flow? .....

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7. If you could only do three things in your life time what would you choose? .....

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8. What should you stop doing, give up or cut down on to free up more time for matters of greater priority and eternal significance? .....

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.....

**Where God  
guides, He  
provides.**

9. What can I postpone or delegate to someone else? .....

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.....

10. What are your most important priorities and projects that you need to focus on in the next three to six months? .....

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.....



# TIME MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

*“Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”*

Psalm 90:12

**Time is life -**  
squander time  
and you  
squander life.

Ecc1 3:1-8; 12:11; 1 Cor 7:29,31; Eph 5:15-16; Col 4:5

- Time is **the most valuable commodity** of all - it is a non-renewable resource.
- Time is measured in past **activities, relationships, achievements and accomplishments** — not mere hours, days and years.
- **Time is life** — squander time and you squander life.

### Identify Time Wasters

Television, newspapers, lack of planning, lack of purpose, lack of organisation, not planning ahead, procrastination, telephone interruptions, low priority tasks, unnecessary meetings, unnecessary travel, carelessness, sin.

### Make the Most of Your Time

- To be effective we need to **eliminate less important tasks and concentrate on the most important tasks.**
- **Plan** your time in accordance with your **long term goals and priorities.** Do the **must do** tasks first, not the can do items.
- **Focus on the high priority work.** Complete your projects. A half done job is a waste of time, effort and money.
- **Discourage interruptions.** (Unless you run a counselling or coffee bar ministry discourage *“just thought I'd drop in”* uninvited guests and long phone calls at work).
- **Avoid unnecessary meetings** (especially committee meetings).
- **Avoid unnecessary travel.** Sometimes *“the Spirit bade me go”* but often we just have itchy feet.
- Always carry a small **Bible** and **notebook** and pen and **reading matter**

with you whenever you travel or need to wait. **Redeem the time.** Read.

- Read **Newsletters** and **Magazines** from independent Christians rather than Humanist newspapers.
- **Read books** rather than watch TV.
- **Delegate** as much as possible. Recruit volunteers, enlist the inactive, use them or lose them.
- **Do it right** the first time.
- **Don't try to re-invent the wheel** - Co-operate and communicate. Network.
- **Make check lists** and **to do lists**, prioritise and work through them.

*“Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil.”*

Ephesians 5:15-16

## CHAPTER 28



# HOSPITALITY

*"Share with God's people who are in need. Practise hospitality."*  
Romans 12:13.

### The Christian Family in the Bible

- ▶ The Christians **greeted** one another with a holy kiss (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14).
- ▶ They **shared** material possessions (Acts 2:44,45; 4:32; 11:29; Romans 12:13, 20; 15:26; 1 Corinthians 16:1; 2 Corinthians 8; Galatians 2:10; 6: 10; Hebrews 13:16; James 2:15, 16; 1 John 3:17).
- ▶ The early Christians **met** in homes (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2).
- ▶ They **ate** together (Acts 2:46; 20:11; 1 Corinthians 11:20 ff; Jude 12).
- ▶ They **cared** for their widows (Acts 6:1-6; 9:39; 1 Timothy 5:1-16).
- ▶ When appropriate, they **disciplined** their members (1 Corinthians 5, 6; 2 Corinthians 2:1-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 5:19, 20).
- ▶ **Brotherliness** provided the guiding principle of conduct between members (Romans 14:15, 21; 1 Corinthians 6:8; 8:11-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15; Philemon 16; James 4: 11).
- ▶ They showed **hospitality** (Acts 16:15; 21:8, 16; Romans 12:13; 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:9, 10; Hebrews 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9; 3 John 5-8).
- ▶ 1 Timothy 3:2. *"Now **the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.**"*
- ▶ 1 Timothy 5:10 *"... and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, **showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in***

*trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds."*

- ▶ Titus 1: 8. *"Rather **he must be hospitable**, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined."*
- ▶ Hebrews 13:2. *"Do not forget to entertain strangers for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it."*
- ▶ 1 Peter 4:9. *"Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling."*

### **The Distinctives of Christian Hospitality**

1. Christian hospitality is one of the birthmarks of early Christianity.
2. Christian hospitality is a virtue and a ministry.
3. God requires every Christian to pursue Christian hospitality. Hospitality is **His command, not an option** (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:1,2).
4. Christian hospitality is a **Biblical requirement for church leaders** (1 Timothy 3:2).
5. Christian hospitality is a **Biblical requirement for church-supported widows** (1 Timothy 5: 10).
6. Christian hospitality is a **practical expression of brotherly and sisterly Christian love** (Hebrews 13:1,2).
7. Christian hospitality **fans the flames of love in extraordinarily powerful ways**.
8. Every Christian should **eagerly pursue hospitality** (Romans 12:13).
9. Christians are to practice hospitality **with a glad heart** (1 Peter 4:9).
10. Christian hospitality **helps to advance the Gospel by providing an indispensable service for the Lord's messengers** (Luke 20:7, 8; 3 John 5-8).
11. Christian hospitality **seeks to minister to the poor, the uninvited, and the needy of society** (Luke 14:12-14).
12. Christian hospitality is a **practical vehicle for exercising one's spiritual gifts** (1 Peter 4:9,10).
13. Christian hospitality **leads to unexpected rewards and blessings**.

## CHAPTER 29



# FLYING THE CHRISTIAN FLAG

All across the world, at churches, Christian schools, mission schools and communities - from Sudan to Japan, from Angola to Zambia, from the United States to South Africa, Christian Flags are being raised.

What is the significance of the Christian Flag and why are so many flying in the wind across Africa? The international Christian Flag has a red cross to symbolise the blood of Christ, a blue square to symbolise heaven and white for the robes of righteousness.

In Exodus 17 : 15 we read : *“Moses built an altar and called it: The Lord is my Banner.”*

Psalm 20 : 5 *“We will shout for joy when you are victorious and will lift up our banners in the Name of our Lord.”*

Psalm 6 : 4 *“But for those who fear You, You have raised a banner to be unfurled against the bow.”*

Song of Solomon 2 : 4 *“And His banner over me is love.”*

Song of Solomon 6 : 4 *“Majestic as troops with banners.”*

Isaiah 18 : 3 *“All you people of the world, you who live on the earth, when a banner is raised on the mountains you will see it....”*

In Sudan *“Beyond the rivers of Cush”* these prophecies are being fulfilled as churches fly the Christian Flag, even in the Nuba Mountains. When the enemy comes in like a flood, God will raise up a standard to which the righteous can rally.

By flying the Christian Flag we are testifying to the salvation which can only come through Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

**The Christian  
Flag is a  
witness, a  
testimony and  
an inspiration.**



Jesus Christ is *"The King of kings and the Lord of lords."*

*"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other Name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."* Acts 4:12

The Christian Flag proclaims the Lordship of Jesus Christ, that He is *"The King of kings and the Lord of lords."*

*"The kingdoms of the world have become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever."* Revelation 11 : 15

The Christian Flag is a reminder that we who are Christians are also citizens of the Kingdom of God.

*"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light."* 1 Peter 2 : 9

The Christian Flag celebrates the victory of the cross of Christ.

*"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."* Colossians 2 : 15

May the Christian Flags continue to inspire us to stand firm, to fight the good fight of faith, and to overcome evil by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of our testimony (Revelation 12 : 11). Let us raise Christ's banner for the nations and proclaim the Lordship of Christ.

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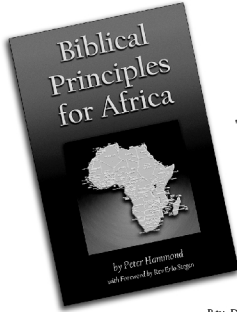
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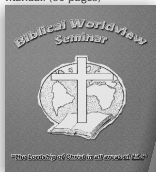
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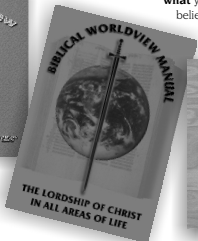
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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Peter was born in Cape Town (in 1960) and brought up in Bulawayo (in what was then war-torn Rhodesia – now Zimbabwe). He was converted to Christ in 1977, worked in Scripture Union and Hospital Christian Fellowship, served in the South African Defence Force and studied at Baptist Theological College, Cape Town. Peter is married to Lenora, whose missionary parents Rev. Bill and Harriett Bathman have pioneered missionary work into Eastern Europe for over 50 years. Peter and Lenora have been blessed with 4 children whom they homeschool: Andrea, Daniela, Christopher and Calvin.

For over 22 years, Dr Peter Hammond has pioneered missionary outreaches into the war zones of Mozambique, Angola and Sudan. Often travelling by off-road motorbike, Peter has travelled hundreds of thousands of kilometres to deliver Bibles to persecuted Christians in Africa and Eastern Europe. In the course of his missionary activities, Peter has been ambushed, come under aerial and artillery bombardments, been stabbed, shot at, beaten by mobs, arrested and imprisoned.

Rev. Peter Hammond is the Founder and Director of Frontline Fellowship, the Founder and Chairman of Africa Christian Action and the Director of the Christian Action Network. He is the author of *Faith Under Fire In Sudan, Holocaust in Rwanda, In the Killing Fields of Mozambique, Putting Feet to Your Faith, The Greatest Century of Missions* and *Biblical Principles For Africa*. He is also the Editor of both Frontline Fellowship News and the Christian Action magazine.

Along with his family, Peter enjoys hiking and mountain climbing and is involved in various animal welfare groups. He has been involved in rescuing and caring for a wide variety of wild and domestic animals including penguins.

Peter is regularly involved in personal and literature evangelism in the streets and in the townships. Since he was converted 27 years ago, Peter has maintained a regular practice of going in to some of the busiest, poorest and most neglected areas to conduct mass literature distribution, film evangelism and personal one-on-one evangelism and discipleship. In squatter camps, shanty towns, inner city ghettos, bus and train stations, prisons, military bases and hospitals, he has continued to engage in evangelism and discipleship.





