

HOW TO LIVE IN VICTORY

Lay Counseling Series

by

Claude Townsend

All India Prayer Fellowship

Q-3, Green Park Extension

New Delhi-110 016

FOREWARD

So many times and in so many instances books on counseling are written by professionals in the fields of psychiatry or psychology or pastoral ministering. It is no exaggeration to avow that these wonderfully gifted and trained experts are filled with wisdom and are born out of vast experience from penetrating observation. We praise God for the ministries of these dedicated and trained leaders who help us in our hours of need and in our times of trouble.

But all of the above is prelude to another avowal. Practically all of the people who are counseled and who come for help and encouragement are lay people. It is not reasonable that a layman would know intimately and experientially the problems of those who live in his own world and who are struggling with like difficulties? This is the fundamental and basic reason why the books published by Claude Townsend of the Lay Counseling Institute are so pertinent and so useful. They are tools that have been beat out on the anvil of actual life and living, the situations and problems we ourselves face in the same context that the counselors themselves have worked through. Looking at the layman through a layman's eyes immediately commends itself as an approach most fraught with the possibilities for real answers and actual solutions.

Claude Townsend is correct when he says that all of us at some time or another are counselors. The question is not, "Do you counsel?" but, "How good a counselor are you?" The purpose of this Lay Counseling Series is to help us to be at our best in speaking words of direction and helpfulness and encouragement to others. There are so many fine things presented in the Series until we have not opportunity in a brief Foreword even to summarize the marvelous contents of the books. Just let it be said and received in all truth that the Christian laymen and laywomen who take time to read these volumes and to incarnate their wisdom in actual practices will be used of God to bless uncounted numbers of people who desperately need our loving prayers and heavenly encouragement.

God bless the eyes that read the books, and God bless the author and people who have made possible the publication of the Series.

W.A. Criswell, Pastor
First Baptist Church
Dallas, Texas

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ACCEPTANCE IMPROVES OUR SELF-WORTH

Every person that has ever come to me for counseling had a lower self-worth than what God desired. Self-worth is primarily based on our acceptance of ourselves. Since no one had perfect parents, we have all experienced acts of rejection. Most of us have never experienced total rejection, but all of us have experienced acts of rejection. Every act of rejection drives our self-worth downward. Rejection comes in many forms, such as anger, criticism, judging, unforgiveness, and all forms of psychological defense mechanisms. One of the basic causes of our problems is rejection.

God made us with a sensational desire to love and to be loved. That means that God made us with a burning desire to have intimate, meaningful relationships with others. Somewhere down life's highway we discovered relationships that were not as desirable as we had hoped. When these relationships became undesirable, that caused emotional pain and emptiness. We began building our defenses trying to shield ourselves from these pains. It was unknown to us that they would make the relationships worse. Since the relationships became worse, we sensed greater emptiness, more severe pains, and loneliness. Then we built our walls higher, thicker, and much more sophisticated. We found ourselves in this downward spiral with compound reactions. All of this was because we experienced rejection. Since the basic cause was rejection, can you see that the basic solution to the problem is acceptance?

John 14:20, "At that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." You know about Christ being in you because when you received the Lord, He came into you. We find in John 1:12, "As many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the children of God." But do you know that you are in Christ? I have asked many Christians that question, and they said that they never knew that. John 15:4, "Abide in Me and I in you." Most people have heard about abiding in Christ. No one can abide in Christ unless he knows that he is in Christ.

Acts 17:28, "In Him we live and move and have our being." Is that interesting? Ephesians 2:10, "You are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." Did you know that you were created in Christ Jesus? What does it mean for us to have been

created in Christ Jesus? That speaks of our spiritual beginning.

For us to better understand this, let us consider our physical creation. When were you created physically? Most people say at conception or at birth. That is what medical science teaches. That is what we have heard all our lives. What does the Word of God teach? Genesis 1:27, “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them.” Will you agree with me according to the Word of God that we now have a man and woman?

Genesis 2:18, “And the Lord God said it is not good for man to be alone. I will make him a helper comparable for him.” Where is the woman now? Some would say that Chapter 2 of Genesis is the second account of creation. I have a problem with that and I will tell you why. Look at chapter 1:27, and please notice that God chose to use the word “created,” and then look at chapter 2:18, and please observe that God chose to use the word “made.” What is the difference between “creating” and “making?” When you create something, you start from nothing. When you make something, you start from something. What I am suggesting is that God created woman in man. We know that is so, because in Genesis 2:21-22 we discover that God put Adam to sleep and took Eve out. This is what it says. We need to see a principle, that God created woman in man.

Romans 5:19, “For by one man’s disobedience, many were made sinners.” Now according to the Word of God, when were you and I made sinners? It was when Adam sinned. The only way that you and I could have been made sinners when Adam sinned is because we were in Adam when he sinned. This shows that we were created in Adam.

Did God tell Adam to create babies, or to be fruitful and multiply? Children are the fruit of their parents’ bodies. I am the fruit of my parents’ bodies, they were the fruit of their parents’ bodies. You see we were all in Adam. Levi was spoken of as having paid tithes to Melchisedec because he was in the loins of Abraham when he paid tithes. I have a pecan on my desk that I use to help people better understand this. I tell them that I have about 10,000 pecan trees in my hand. They look at me as though they think that sounds a bit strange. I tell them that I know that is not even one pecan tree, much less 10,000, but it is the seed of 10,000, maybe a million! You start with one pecan, then only one pecan tree, but that pecan tree makes many pecans and you plant those. They all come from one pecan.

We were all created in Adam physically, and we were all created in Christ

spiritually. So when you were born physically, you were born with a bad nature, and I want you to know it was very bad. I want you to know that when we received Christ we receive a new nature, and it is good. In fact, it is very good.

1 Corinthians 1:30, “But of Him are you in Christ Jesus.” But of Him – whom? God. God put us into Christ. I am not sure I understand the difference between being put into Christ and being created in Christ, but the Bible speaks of both. Romans 6:3, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? The word “baptized” simply means immersed or put into. So let us read it that way: “Or do you not know that as many of us as were put into Christ Jesus were put into His death?” Verse 4, “Therefore, we were buried with Him.” When? The little preposition “with” is very important. With Him. Verse 6, “knowing this that our old man was crucified” with Him. How could we have been crucified with Christ and be crucified at a time other than when He was crucified? It is impossible.

Suppose I took a \$20 bill and put it into my Bible and threw the Bible into the fire. What would happen to my \$20 bill? It would burn with the Bible. Why? Because it is in the Bible, God put us into Christ. God crucified us with Christ and that is how God did away with all that we inherited from Adam.

1 Corinthians 15:45, “And so it is written, the first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.” Did you ever hear someone speak of Christ as being the second Adam? Christ is never spoken of as the second Adam in the Bible. Verse 47, “The first man was of the earth, made of dust. The second Man is the Lord from Heaven.” Verse 45 tells us that our blessed Lord Jesus died as the last Adam. Now you may ask, “Why do you make so much to do over the fact that the Lord Jesus is the last Adam and not the second Adam?” It is simply because God put us into Christ and crucified us and said, “That ended that. That is the last of it.” Then when God resurrected the Lord Jesus, He started over and He called Christ the second Man. Amen.

You can see that much more clearly when you consider II Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away. Behold; all, things have become new.” Did you know that you are a new creation? You must know that the little word “if” in Greek is a definite article which means “since” you are in Christ, you are a new creation. Old things have already passed away, behold all things have already become new. We all need to know that we are a new creation.

When did you become a new creation according to the Word of God? The next two verses tell us: “Now all things are of God who has (and notice the past tense verb) reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. That is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. The word “world” is exactly the same word that the Lord Jesus used in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world.” We are not trying to say that everybody is already saved and all you need to do is tell them about it. We do want you to see what God did for us in Christ 2000 years ago, which is salvation provided. He did provide salvation for everybody. The Word of God says that it is not His will that any should perish. He also stated that it is His will that all be saved. The last part of verse 20 says, “Be reconciled unto God.” Do you know what we must do to be reconciled unto God? Nothing. You know why? Because God did it all. Oh, yes, we must accept what God did for us before we can experience His blessings and benefits. We see this a little more clearly when we look at Ephesians 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.” This verse tells us that God has already given us all the spiritual blessings that there are in heaven, but He tells us that He put them in Christ. But God will never let us enjoy them when we walk in the flesh. That is what some are trying to do.

The Spirit of God led Paul to start listing some of those blessings. Verse 4, “Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” Notice particularly the word “chose.” He chose us. God is saying, “I want YOU.” There may be some people that do not want you, but God said, “I chose you and I want you.” God wants us to be holy. Also, that verse reveals that God desires that we stand before Him without blame.

Verse 5, "having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will. Consider the word "adoption." There are women who give birth to children that they do not want, but you have never known a woman to adopt a child that did not want it. You must know that God is telling you, "I want you, I have chosen you, I want you to be my child." He did not do it because He had to. He said He did it because He wanted to. It also tells us that it gave Him pleasure to do so. In fact, it tells us that it gave Him good pleasure to do so. Should that not get you excited a little bit, nothing will, except the next verse, because it gets better.

Verse 6, “To the praise of the glory of His grace by which we were made accepted in the Beloved.” Here Paul is praising the glory of God. He is praising the glory of God because of the grace of God. He praises the glory of God about the grace

of God because by the grace of God we have been made acceptable to God in Christ. Grace may be what God gives, but it is also what He does.

II Peter 3:18, “But grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” The only Christian growth we have ever experienced has been all of grace. The Spirit of God wants us to see that it was God who worked this work of grace in us to make us acceptable to God. That is exactly the same principle that we saw in II Corinthians 5:19, God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. That is that work of grace. We need to understand that when He worked that work of grace, He was not working on Himself. He was working on us because He did not need to be changed. It was you and I who needed to be changed. That was that work of grace that HE did to make us accepted in the Beloved.

To help us better see what that means, look at Colossians 2:10, “You are complete in Him.” That word “complete” speaks of the finished product. A woman who sews and makes a dress says, “It is now complete.” She simply means there is nothing more that needs to be done to it. Do you get it? **There is nothing else that needs to be done to you in Christ.** In the flesh is a different story.

Hebrews 10:14, “For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified.” This verse tells us first of all, that it was by one offering that we were made perfect. When did that happen? 2000 years ago. Did you know that God said in His Word that you are perfect in Christ? That is good news. It is good news to discover that we are perfect in Christ. Once you discover you are perfect and accepted, then you do not have to perform to be accepted. Our knowledge that we are perfect in Christ comes from the Word of God, not from how we feel or from what others think. Your husband may not think you are perfect, or your wife may not think you are perfect, but that does not change the Word of God. God says that He has perfected us in Christ. How long will you remain perfect according to this verse? Forever. Sinning will not affect who you are in Christ. Sinning only proves that you have not put off the old man.

Amos 3:3 says, “How can two walk together except they be agreed?” God wants us to know that the only way that we can walk with Him is to agree with Him. To agree with God is to say the same thing He says. The reason God made us perfect and complete in Him is so He can express His love and accept us unconditionally with no reservation. Since He has accepted us unconditionally with no reservation, He wants us to say the same thing about ourselves that He has said about us. Some of us have experienced lots of rejection, therefore, it may take some time for us to see and believe that we are perfect in Christ. I have had numbers of people tell me,

“Well, I surely don’t feel like I’m perfect.” May I ask, “Is our faith based on feelings or on the Word of God?” We know sometimes that your feelings tell us something different from what the Word of God says. Would you like to make the choice to accept yourself the way God has accepted you? Some have said, “I can’t do that.” John 15:5, “Without me you can do nothing.” We may not be able to make that decision without the Lord. Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Right now I want you to bow your head.

You may have already made the decision to accept yourself as God has accepted you in Christ, unconditionally with no reservation, because He made you perfect and complete in Him. Should you not, I suggest that you bow your head and close your eyes. Simply say, “Father, I choose to accept myself the way you have accepted me in Christ, unconditionally with no reservation, because you have made me perfect and complete in Christ. And now, Father, enable me to walk in this new truth. Amen.”

II Corinthians 5:17, “Since you are in Christ you are a new creation.” Verse 16 says, “Know no man henceforth after the flesh.” That simply means from this day forward for us to know anyone according to the flesh is forbidden. How are we to know people? According to whom they are in Christ. In Christ they are a new creation, perfect and complete. After you accept yourself as being perfect and complete, it will be much easier for you to accept your spouse, your boss, or anyone as being perfect and complete in Christ. Since the Bible says, “Know no man henceforth after the flesh,” that includes yourself. That means that from this day forward it is a no-no for you to know yourself according to the flesh. You are to know yourself in Christ as being perfect and complete.

Therefore, whatever you discover about yourself that you do not like, you must know that is of the old creation and you must not know yourself according to that.

What do you think it would be like to be in a church where everyone had already discovered who they are in Christ, knew that God has accepted them unconditionally with no reservation and they have accepted themselves and everyone else unconditionally with no reservation? What do you think it would be like? It would be marvelous. That is what God desires. When visitors come into a church like that, they will know something about the presence of God. When we begin to understand this, it will be a new day in our lives.

Romans 15:7, “Therefore, receive one another, just as Christ also received us, To the Glory of God. How are we to accept one another or receive one another? God

wants us to know that the cure for rejection is acceptance. It is also the cure for low self worth. Once you accept yourself unconditionally with no reservation, your self-worth will begin to go up.

Once you choose to accept yourself and others in Christ, then your next major lesson is to discern acts of rejection that you express toward yourself and others. You will learn how to deal with this problem in the next lesson.

QUESTIONS ON ACCEPTANCE

1. Self-worth is based on _____.
2. What drives self-worth down?
3. What causes relationships to get worse and worse?
4. What is the solution to rejection?
5. How did you get into Christ?
6. When were you created physically?
7. When were you created spiritually?
8. When did you become a sinner?
9. When were you crucified?
10. When did you become a new creation?
11. When were you reconciled to God?
12. What were the blessings Paul listed in Ephesians 1:4, 5 & 6?
13. How did God make you acceptable to Himself?
14. When were you made complete in Christ?
15. When were you made perfect in Christ?
16. What must we do to walk with God?
17. Have you made the decision to accept yourself as being perfect in Christ?
18. Have you made the decision to accept everyone in Christ?

SCRIPTURE VERSES FOR ACCEPTANCE
IMPROVES SELF-WORTH

John 14:20 - Not only is Christ in us, but we are in Him.

John 15:4 - We must stay where God put us.

Acts 17:28 - We live, move and have our being in Christ.

Ephesians 2:10 - We were created in Christ spiritually.

Genesis 1:27 - Eve was created in Adam physically.

Genesis 2:18, 21-22 - God put Adam to sleep and took Eve out.

Romans 5:19 - Since we were created in Adam, we sinned when
he sinned.

I Corinthians 1:30 - God put us into Christ.

Romans 6:3-6 - We were crucified when Christ was crucified.

Galatians 2:20 - We were crucified when Christ was crucified.

I Corinthians 15:45-47 - Christ was crucified as the last Adam and resurrected
as the second Man.

II Corinthians 5:17-21 - God reconciled the world to Himself.

Ephesians 1:3 - God has given us all the spiritual blessings in heaven.

Ephesians 1:4 - God chose us in Christ.

Ephesians 1:5 - God adopted us as His children.

Ephesians 1:6 - God made us acceptable to Himself.

Colossians 2:10 - We are complete in Christ.

Hebrews 10:14 - God made us perfect forever in Christ.

Amos 3:3 - To walk with God we must say the same thing He says.

II Corinthians 5:16 – We must know everyone in Christ, not in the flesh.

Romans 15:7 – We must receive one another as Christ has received us.

Father, I choose to accept myself the way that You have accepted me in
Christ, unconditionally with no reservation because You have made me
perfect and complete in Christ. Father, enable me to walk in this new
truth.

Ephesians 4:22-24 - We must put off the old man and put on the new man.

HOW TO DEAL WITH GUILT

One of the most common problems we have is our feelings of guilt. Most Christians confess that they feel guilty more than they have peace. It may be common for Christians to have feelings of guilt, but it is not normal. You must know that God reveals in His Word how to deal with feelings of guilt. Once we meet God's conditions, He will remove the guilt feelings.

You may ask why we have feelings of guilt. The answer is simple. It is because we are guilty. In fact, God gave us the law so we would have feelings of guilt.

Romans 3:19, "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." The law was given so that we all may know we are guilty before God. How can you tell when you become guilty? You can feel it. We all have had problems with feelings of guilt. We need to discover how to deal with these guilty feelings according to the Word of God.

- I. **Eternal Forgiveness:** First, let us think about eternal forgiveness. There is more than one kind of forgiveness spoken about in the Bible. You have eternal forgiveness and you have communal forgiveness. Eternal forgiveness is what God did for us in Christ. Communal forgiveness is what God does in us. Communal forgiveness restores our communion with God.

You may ask, "What is eternal forgiveness?" Hebrews 9:12, "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." Consider the expression "eternal redemption." Redemption is what God did for us in Christ. Redemption speaks of the purchased price. God redeemed us from the curse of the law. What is the relationship between redemption and forgiveness? The word "forgiveness" means that the debt has been cancelled. Matthew 18:27, "The master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him and forgave him the debt." So forgiveness is the cancellation of a debt.

Let me give you an illustration that will help you better understand the relationship between redemption and forgiveness. Suppose you were making payments on

your automobile at the bank. These payments are somewhat like redemption. When you make your last payment, the bank will give you a receipt marked PAID IN FULL. The receipt shows that the debt has been canceled. That is forgiveness. Therefore, since you have eternal redemption, you have eternal forgiveness. The Lord Jesus redeemed us and Father forgave us.

Colossians 2:13-14, "And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." Notice in verse 13, "being dead in your trespasses." When did God forgive you for all of your trespasses? The answer is found in verse 14, which speaks of wiping out the handwriting of requirements that was against us.

An illustration will help. It was customary in those days when a criminal was convicted to give him a handwriting of requirements. Suppose his sentence was two years in jail. He could take this handwriting and nail it to his cell wall. Each day he could mark off the day. When he completed the two years, this handwriting was stamped CANCELED. His debt was paid in full. He could keep this handwriting the rest of his life to show that he would not have to pay that debt again. That is the picture. His debt was canceled or forgiven. All of our sins were written on this handwriting of requirement nailed to the cross and Jesus said, "It is finished," paid in full or forgiven. Since the debt was paid, the debt was canceled. That is eternal forgiveness. This is what God did for us in Jesus Christ.

Let us not confuse what God did for us in Christ with what we must experience by faith in the blood on a day-to-day basis as the children of God. We will come to this later in I John 1:9. Right now, we want to consider what God did for us, and later we will trust God to work this out in us. Colossians 1:14, "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. You see, since we have redemption in Christ, we also have the forgiveness of sins in Christ. This verse speaks of the fact that God forgave us all our sins nearly 2000 years ago. We all know that our sins were paid for at the cross, but why is it so difficult to see that the debt was cancelled?

There are some additional verses that will help substantiate the fact that all of our past, present, and future sins were forgiven at the cross: Luke 24:47, "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations,

beginning at Jerusalem." Remission of sins means forgiveness. This verse reveals that the forgiveness of sins must be preached. For the forgiveness of sins to be preached means that our sins have already been forgiven. This is the Good News. God has forgiven us for all of our sins.

Acts 13:38, "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins." This verse reveals that God desires that the forgiveness of sins be preached. The Lord Jesus desires that we tell people that all their sins were forgiven at the cross.

Acts 26: 18, "to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me." Notice in verse 17 that Jesus said He was going to deliver Paul from the Jews and the Gentiles, and then send him to preach to the Gentiles. Notice in verse 18 the message is "receive the forgiveness of sins." Paul was to preach to the Gentiles, or the lost people. God's message was that they must receive the forgiveness of sins. Their sins had to be forgiven for them to be able to receive that forgiveness. This is marvelous news – all the sins of all the people of the world have already been forgiven. That is the marvelous love of God which is expressed by His mercy and grace.

God took the initiative and forgave us for all of our sins. Now He wants us to deal with our sins by faith so He can deal with them in our consciences, hearts, and minds. Look at I John 2:2, "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." The Lord Jesus dealt with all the sins of the whole world on the cross. This is marvelous news.

Romans 5:19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous." This verse reveals that we became sinners when Adam sinned. What God desires for a lost person is to confess that he is a sinner. God desires Christians to confess each act of sin. I John 1:9. Nowhere in the Bible do I find that God desires or requires that a lost person confess each act of sin. Remember, eternal forgiveness is what God did for us in Christ. This is salvation-provided, and each person must receive Christ and then receive God's provision, which means we must receive God's forgiveness for all of our sins.

II. **Communal Forgiveness:** Now let us talk about communal forgiveness. This is for the child of God. Communal forgiveness is essential to restore our fellowship with

the Lord. 1 John 1:9 is possibly the most familiar verse in dealing with our sins. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

First, consider the word "confess." The word "confess" means that we have the same attitude toward sin that God has. God not only desires that we confess each act of sin, but also that we choose to give up the practice of each sin. You find this more clearly revealed in Proverbs 28:13, "He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." For us to prosper spiritually we must not cover our sins. To cover our sins means that we may neglect them, ignore them, try to justify them, blame someone else for them, or rename them. Have you ever heard someone say, "Well, we all have little bad habits"? What does God call bad habits? SINS. There is a cure for sins. God has a remedy for sins, so we must not cover our sins.

Look at the word "mercy." Mercy means that you do not get what you deserve, while grace means that you get what you do not deserve. I do not want what I deserve. Do you? For us not to get what we deserve we must not only confess each act of sin, but we must choose to give up the practice of each sin. Many Christians confess the acts of sin, but many do not choose to give up the practice of each sin.

Remember Acts 26:18, "That they may receive the forgiveness of sins." The third thing a child of God must do in regard to sins is to choose to receive God's forgiveness for each act of sin. For us to receive God's forgiveness means that we also must choose to forgive ourselves. Many Christians have told me that they did not know that they must choose to receive God's forgiveness of sins. Romans 5:17 speaks of "receiving the abundance of grace." We can enjoy God's abundance of grace only when we receive it. To receive God's grace is to receive His forgiveness of sins. For us not to receive God's forgiveness is to refuse what God has offered us.

God is not only faithful and just to forgive us of our sins, but also to cleanse us from all sins. To forgive us is to remove our sins from between us and God. To cleanse us is to remove the defilement caused by that sin. To cleanse us from our sins is to remove our feelings of guilt.

Hebrews 10:2, "For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purged, would have had no more consciousness of sins." This speaks of the Old Testament worship when they offered animals as sacrifice for sins. The Bible reveals that the blood of animals could not cleanse perfectly the conscience of one who approached God. In other words, the blood of animals could not cleanse the conscience and remove the feeling of guilt. Notice a most profound statement in Hebrews 10:2, "no more consciousness of sins." What does it mean for a child of God to have no more consciousness of sins? An illustration may help. It is crude, but it is the best I know. Suppose our bodies had to go too long without a bath. We would become conscious of the filth. Should we go very long, others would become conscious of it. We could take a bath and become clean. Mentally we could remember about our unclean condition, but physically we would have no more consciousness of the filth. That is what God desires that each of his children experience in regard to sins. God has made adequate provision for us to have no more consciousness of sins. Three different translations say, "once cleansed you would have no more feeling of guilt." Yes, the blood is for the purpose of removing the guilt feeling from the conscience and easing the pain. Sin defiles the conscience. With undealt-with sin we feel guilty. Once we are cleansed, we have no more consciousness of sins. We will have no feelings of guilt. That is a marvelous thing. So we must choose to receive the cleansing of the blood of each act of sin.

Let me give you five affirmations. This is how God requires that we deal with each act of sin. 1. I must confess each act of sin. 2. I must choose to give up the practice of each sin. 3. I must choose to believe that God has forgiven and cleansed me of each sin. 4. I must choose to receive God's forgiveness for each act of sin. 5. I must choose to receive the cleansing blood for each act of sin. Remember that eternal forgiveness is salvation-provided. It is what God did for us. Communal forgiveness is our receiving God's abundance of grace. It is our experiencing what God has provided for us.

III. **The Courtroom Scene:** Think about a lawsuit, a case that is being tried in a courtroom. Hosea 4:1, "Hear the word of the Lord, You children of Israel, For the Lord brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: 'There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land.'" "Charge" is a legal term. Some translations use the word "controversy," some "case," and others "lawsuit." Remember, we have broken God's law by sinning, so naturally this is a legal matter. When one of us sins, God will call us to the courtroom. Should one sin in this land, he would be sued and summoned to court. How can you tell when God

summons you to court? By a feeling of guilt. When we have a feeling of guilt, we must know that God has summoned us to court.

What would happen should one not appear when he is summoned to court? They would send and get him. That is what God does. The feelings of guilt will become heavier and heavier and hurt more and more. They will never get any better until the blood washes them away.

Revelation 12:10, "Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.'" This verse speaks of the accuser of the brother. He not only accuses us in our conscience, but he also accuses us before our God day and night. Satan functions as the prosecuting attorney. When court convenes, God will allow Satan to show up just as he did with Job. Just as he accused Job before God, he will accuse you and me.

I John 2:1, "My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The word "advocate" means lawyer. Jesus serves as our defense attorney. Now we have the courtroom scene complete - the Father is the Judge, Satan is the Prosecuting Attorney, the Lord Jesus functions as our Defense Attorney, and the accused is whomever sins, When we sin, we are summoned to court by our feeling of guilt. The quicker we show up and deal with our sins, the less pain we will suffer.

When we show up for court, God will rap the gavel and call court to order. He will allow Satan to speak. I can hear him now, "Ha-Ha-Ha, I caught him," "And what did you catch him doing?" Then Satan will name it. Next, God will call the accused to the stand. "Will you raise, your right hand, swear to tell the truth, the whole truth; and nothing but the truth, so help me God?" "I do." Satan has accused you of this act of sin. What do you have to say for yourself?" We must say "Yes, Father, I am guilty. I committed this act." Then I can hear the Lord Jesus. He may even stand and say, "Your honour, I paid for that one." Regardless of how many sins we have committed and are accused of, the Lord Jesus will say, "Father, I paid for that one, too." Praise the Lord!

Once we confess each act of sin, the Father may ask, "Do you have anything further to say for yourself?" Then we should say, "Yes, Father, I do, you have said

in your Word that when I sin, provided I choose to confess each act of sin and choose to give up the practice of that sin, that you would be faithful and just to forgive me and to cleanse me. Father, I have confessed this sin. I choose to give up the practice. I know now that you have forgiven me and cleansed me. Therefore I receive your forgiveness and I receive the cleansing of the blood.” Then the Father is going to rap the gavel and say, “I now pronounce you NOT GUILTY.”

Now hear this: Rev. 12:11, “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” This verse reveals that we overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. Before we get home Satan will accuse us again. “You did it again.” Then he will try to get you to say, “I knew better than that.” What are we saying? We are saying, “I am guilty,” but remember, God has just pronounced us, “Not Guilty.” That is not a life of faith.

It is very difficult for us to come to see and believe that even though we committed the act of sin, we are not guilty. We are not guilty because the Lord Jesus paid the price and the Father has forgiven us. He has pronounced us NOT GUILTY. Remember, Amos 3:3, “How can two walk together except they agree.” To walk with God we must say the same thing that God said. Since God said, “Not guilty,” then we must say, “Not guilty.” God wants every child of His to come to know, believe, and testify before God, Himself, and all mankind, “I am not guilty of any past act of sin.” This is God's way of dealing with guilt. This is God's way for us to deal with our sins. Only when we testify that we are not guilty of any past act of sin will we be free from guilt and condemnation.

When we deal with all our sins in this way, then the feeling of guilt will be replaced by peace. Isaiah 26:3, “You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.” God wants us to have peace in our heart and we can never have peace in our heart as long as we have feelings of guilt. May we deal with our sins and guilt God's way and rejoice with the Father that these sins have been forgiven and the feelings of guilt are gone. Since our sins have been paid in full, and we have dealt with them God's way, He will say, “Not guilty.” May we agree with Him and say, “Not guilty, praise the Lord,” and reject Satan's accusation that we are guilty.

QUESTIONS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH GUILT

1. Is it normal for Christians to have feelings of guilt? Yes___ No ___
2. Where can we find how to deal with guilt?
3. Why do we have feelings of guilt?
4. Why was the law given?
5. What is eternal forgiveness?
6. What is communal forgiveness?
7. What does the word “forgiveness” mean?
8. What must a lost person confess?
9. List a difference between mercy and grace.
10. List the five affirmations on dealing with sins and guilt.
11. How can you tell when God summons you to court?
12. The judge is _____.
13. The prosecuting attorney is _____.
14. The defense attorney is _____.
15. To walk with God, we must say _____.
16. When we deal with our sins and guilt God’s way, our guilt will be replaced by _____.
17. Give an example of how you have overcome Satan by the Word of your testimony.
18. Do you still have any feelings of guilt? Yes___ No ___

SCRIPTURE VERSES ON HOW TO DEAL WITH GUILT

Romans 3:19 – The law was given so that all may become guilty before God.

I. Eternal Forgiveness is What God Did for Us.

Hebrews 9:12 – Eternal redemption brings eternal forgiveness.

Matthew 6:27 – Forgiveness means that the debt is canceled.

Colossians 2:13, 14, & 1:14 – God wrote our sins, nailed them to the cross and forgave all sins.

Luke 24:47 – Forgiveness of sins must be preached.

Acts 13:38 – Forgiveness of sins preached.

Romans 5:19 – A lost person must confess that he is a sinner.

II. Communal Forgiveness is What God Does in Us. It restores our communion with God.

1 John 1:9 – I must confess each act of sin.

Proverbs 28:13 – I must choose to give up the practice of each sin.

1 John 1:9 – I must choose to believe that God has forgiven and cleansed me of each sin.

Acts 26:18 – I must choose to receive God's forgiveness for each act of sin and I must choose to forgive myself.

Hebrews 10:2 – No more consciousness of sins means no more feeling of guilt.

I must choose to receive the cleansing of the blood for each act of sin.

III. The Court Room Scene

Hosea 4:1 – God brings a lawsuit when we sin. His summons to court is our feeling of guilt.

Revelation 12:10 – The accuser functions as the prosecuting attorney.

1 John 2:1 – Jesus, the Advocate, is our defense attorney. When we deal with sins God's way, God, the Judge, will pronounce us "not guilty."

Revelation 12:11 – We must believe that every sin dealt with is under the blood and our testimony is that we are "not guilty."

HOW TO DEAL WITH CONDEMNATION

Romans 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit,” Let us notice that in Christ there is no condemnation, but when we walk in the flesh there is condemnation. As long as a person experiences condemnation he is not walking in the Spirit. When one has condemnation it proves that he is walking in the flesh.

The question is, who condemns the child of God? What is the source of our condemnation? Some have said, “God.” Romans 8:33, “Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.” Consider the word “justified.” Justified means not guilty. Condemnation means guilty. These are two legal words and they are very simple in meaning. When we read in the Bible “condemnation,” we must know it means guilty; when we read the word “justification,” we must know it means not guilty. Vine's Dictionary defines justification as the act of the judge that pronounces one not guilty.

Remember that God justified us by grace because Jesus met the righteous requirement of the law. Romans 3:24. Since God justified us, He will never condemn one of His children, but He does condemn our conduct.

Since God will not condemn one of His children, then who does? Revelation 12:10 speaks of the accuser of the brethren. Yes, Satan will accuse us. What is the relationship between accusation and condemnation? Satan can accuse us, but he cannot condemn us. Consider the courtroom scene. Suppose you have been tried and pronounced not guilty. You walk outside the courtroom and someone says, “There he is, he did it, he's guilty.” How would he react to a situation like that? The best way is to say, “The judge said, ‘Not guilty.’” Do you understand that since the judge said, “Not guilty,” no one on the street has the authority to pronounce you “guilty?” Do you understand the principle? Since God said not guilty, Satan does not have the authority to pronounce you guilty.

Well, since God said not guilty, Satan does not have the authority to pronounce you guilty.

Well, since God will not and the devil cannot, then who does condemn the child of God? Should I be counseling a couple at this point, I would ask the husband, “Sir,

has your wife ever condemned you?” Most of the time he would say, “Yes.” Then I would ask her, “Has your husband ever condemned you?” Most of the time she would say, “Yes?” Then I would say to them, “I really don't know whether I have good news or bad news, but the truth is, God never gave either of you the authority to condemn the other.”

Well, since God will not and the devil cannot, and God will never give anyone else the authority to condemn us, then who condemns the child of God? Romans 14:22, “Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.” Please notice that this verse reveals that it is possible for the child of God to condemn himself. This reveals that only the child of God can condemn himself. It is amazing that all the condemnation that we as God’s children have ever experienced has been self-imposed. When we learn what causes condemnation and deal with it God’s way, we will never have to experience or live under condemnation. This verse also reveals the condition for staying happy. You will stay happy should you never condemn yourself.

Since it is the child of God who condemns himself, then we may ask, “How does he do it?” Romans 2:1, “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.” Notice that when we judge others, we condemn ourselves. Now we have discovered that the way we condemn ourselves is by judging others. You may ask, “Why do we judge?” You find the answer in the last part of the verse, “You who judge practice the same thing.” That is something! When there is something in our life with which God wants us to deal, He will allow someone to do or say something that will cause us to desire to judge them. He wants us to be alert and know that something has been pointed out in our lives that God wants changed.

You may ask how may we judge others. James 4:11-12, “Do not speak evil of one another, brethren, He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another? This passage reveals that when we speak evil of others we judge them. Remember that when we judge them, we condemn ourselves. To speak evil of others includes gossip and all criticism. Have you ever heard someone say, “I don't mean to be gossiping, but did you know...?” Now, I know you have never done that, but the ones who have judged others and pronounced themselves guilty. The amazing thing is that you can judge someone

without knowing it.

There is a “righteous” judgment, but right now we are talking about the “unrighteous” judgment. James 4:12 says there is only one judge. Folks, God is the judge. He is the only judge, and He will never share His throne with anyone else that judges. When we judge each other, in essence we say to God, “Move over. I don't trust you to handle this properly. You may not handle it quickly enough.” But remember, when we do that we judge others, condemn ourselves, and become unhappy.

Not only do we condemn ourselves when we judge others, but we also condemn ourselves when we judge ourselves. It is so easy to judge ourselves. Have you ever heard someone after they have finished eating a meal say, “Well, I did it again?” What does he mean? He means, “I am guilty of eating too much.” Or, another situation, one says, “I knew better than that.” What is he saying? “I am guilty.”

A verse that has helped me much is Romans 14:5, “One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.” One must be fully convinced in his own mind about what he approves. One must not do anything until he has his mind made up as to what God allows or what He approves. Suppose you believe that it is all right to do a certain thing. Then you can do it and not condemn yourself. Should you not have your mind fully made up and you do something and later say, “I should not have done that,” then you will live under condemnation. Should we not be sure before we act, we will pronounce ourselves guilty after we act.

One of the major keys is to discover what God approves and what you allow. Then you must live by faith, trusting that you are doing what God approves. Romans 14:23, “But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.” This is a most important verse because unless what we do is an act of faith, then it is sin, and we must deal with it accordingly.

1 John 3:20-21, “For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.” This passage reveals that it is possible for our heart to condemn us. You may ask, “Under what conditions will my heart condemn me?” Sin defiles our conscience. When our conscience is defiled, our conscience will accuse us.

When our conscience accuses us, our heart will condemn us. That reveals that every undealt-with sin brings condemnation. When we have feelings of guilt, or when we have an undealt-with sin, there is no way for us to keep our heart from condemning us. This is why we place so much emphasis on dealing with our sins and guilt God's way.

Matthew 7:1-2, "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you." Notice first that God says, "Judge not." How must you deal with the habit of judging? First, call it sin. Then deal with it as with any sin. You confess it, choose to give up the practice, believe that God has forgiven you, receive God's forgiveness, and receive the cleansing of the Blood. You must deal with the sin and the guilt. Each time you discover that you have judged someone or yourself, you must deal with it as sin and have faith in the blood to remove the feeling of guilt.

Verses 3 & 4, "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me remove the speck out of your eye and look, a plank is in your own eye?" The Lord said get the plank out of your eye before you try to get the speck out of your brother's eye. When one tries to get the speck out of his brother's eye and has not removed the plank from his own eye, what does Jesus call him? Verse 5, "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye." Yes, He calls him a hypocrite. Have you ever heard someone say, "sweep around your own back door before you try to clean around someone else's"? Notice verse 5, "First remove the plank from your own eye, then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye." This verse reveals that God expects us to be in the business of removing specks from each other's eyes.

As long as we have a plank in our own eye, we can't see correctly and our judgment will be an unrighteous judgment. But once the board is removed from our own eye, then we will see clearly and be able to get the speck out of our brother's eye. Once the board is removed, you can see clearly and then your judgment will be a righteous judgment. Our motive will be restore our brother rather than criticize him and cut him down. You may be right when you say someone is committing a sin, but should you have a board in your own eye you are judging him in an unrighteous manner.

Romans 14:13, “Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way.” Please notice that when we judge another person, we put a stumbling block in his way. What would you think of a father or a mother who put a box between a small child’s bed and the bathroom? Should he get up at night to go to the bathroom, he might stumble. You may say, “No one would do such a thing.” I tell you we have done worse things by judging others, because that stumbling block will hurt more than a physical one. It is very common for one person to judge another and then the other person judges him. They are each putting stumbling blocks in the other’s way.

Let us consider ways that we judge. 1. Criticizing. Each time we criticize someone we have judged him. 2. Speaking evil against someone. Each time we gossip, we judge. 3. Pronouncing ourselves or others guilty. That means that we try our own case and function as our own judge.

One thing we must understand is that we have already judged someone each time we try to defend ourselves in any way. That means we have already judged someone every time we get angry, hold resentment, run, hide, cover, blame, lie, etc. When we deal faithfully with all our judging before God we will stop using all of our defenses. It is normal that when we use a defense, we have judged that there is a need to do so. We would never use a defense unless we have judged that there is a reason to do so.

We must faithfully deal with condemnation so we can walk in the Spirit. We must faithfully deal with the sin of judging or we will experience much condemnation. The Lord Jesus was judged for us, so we must not judge ourselves. We must choose to get the board out of our eye so we can get the speck out of our brother's eye.

QUESTIONS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH CONDEMNATION

1. How can you tell, according to Romans 8:1, when you are walking in the flesh?
2. Who condemns the child of God?
3. Can Satan condemn the child of God?
4. Justification means _____.
5. Paraphrase Romans 14:22.
6. How can we stay happy according to Romans 14:22?
7. How can we condemn ourselves?
8. Why do we judge others?
9. List several ways we may judge others.
10. When will our hearts condemn us?
11. Is judging a sin? Why?
12. What is the difference between a “righteous” judgment and an “unrighteous” judgment?
13. What does Jesus call one with a judgmental attitude who tries to help someone else?
14. What must we do before we can judge one rightly?
15. When we judge someone, we are putting a _____ in his way.
16. Can you defend yourself in any way and not judge another?

SCRIPTURE VERSES ON HOW TO DEAL WITH CONDEMNATION

Romans 8:1 – There is no condemnation in Christ, but there is condemnation when we walk in the flesh.

Romans 8:33 – God will never condemn the child of God since He is the one who justified us.

Romans 3:24 – Remember that God justified us by grace because Jesus met the righteous requirement of the law. Condemnation means guilty, justification means not guilty.

Romans 5:1 – Being justified by faith brings peace.

Revelation 12:10 – Satan can accuse, but he cannot condemn. No person has the authority to condemn us.

Romans 14:22 – The child of God can condemn himself. All condemnation we experience as God's children is self-imposed.

Romans 14:5 – We must make up our mind about what we approve.

Romans 2:1 – We will condemn ourself when we judge others or when we judge ourself. The reason we judge others is because we practice the same thing.

James 4:11 – We judge others when we speak evil of them or when we gossip or complain.

James 4:12 – There is only one Judge. God will not let us judge for Him.

1 John 3:20-21 – When our conscience is defiled by sin, it will accuse us and then our heart will condemn us.

Matthew 7:1-5 – Judging is a sin. When we deal with the sin of judging, get the beam out of our own eye, then we will see clearly to get the speck out of our brother's eye.

Romans 14:5 – We must be sure before we act. Should we not be sure before we act, we will pronounce ourselves guilty after we act.

Romans 14:13 – When we judge another, we put a stumbling block in their way. Judging is an act of rejection.

Romans 15:7 – We must receive each other as Christ received us rather than reject them by judging them.

Romans 8:2 – The Law of the Spirit overcomes the Law of Sin.

THE POWER OF THE CROSS

Psalm 100:4, “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.”

The only way that we can move into the Holy of Holies is through His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. God desires that we show our appreciation, and He desires that we praise Him. The reason God makes it so profitable for us to praise Him and give thanks to Him is because it is so important to Him. Complaining and criticizing reveals we are moving away from God.

1 Thessalonians 5:18, “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Many people ask me how they can know the will of God. This verse reveals God’s will. We are to thank Him in everything. Let us remember that there is always good reason to give thanks, which is why God said so. There is always more reason to thank God regardless of the circumstances than there is to complain. God will not allow us to choose to do portions of His will. We must do all of God’s will. That not only includes thanking Him in good situations, but also in undesirable situations.

Ephesians 5:20, “Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Not only is it God’s will for us to thank Him in everything, but also to thank Him for everything. Again, this not only includes everything that is desirable and pleasant, but everything that is undesirable and unpleasant. This seems very strange to man’s way of thinking. I have been told that this sounds foolish. Yes, God agrees, 1 Corinthians 1:18, “For 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.” Everyone wants the power of God, but no one desires the cross. We must know that the power of the cross comes from submitting to the will of God. When we try to avoid God’s will, the cross will not work and we will miss the power of the cross.

James 1:2-3, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” This passage reveals what our attitude should be toward temptations. Count it all joy. Notice, God did not say “be sad.” We must be glad instead of sad when we are tempted. Why?

Because the trying of our faith is more precious than gold. 1 Peter 1:7.

Philippians 4:4, “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” To rejoice is an expression of joy. The more meaningful spiritual things become to us and the less meaningful the things of this world become, the easier it will be for us to rejoice in the Lord always and the easier it will be for us to turn loose the things of this world without complaining or criticizing someone else.

Romans 1:7, “To all who art in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Please notice that the book of Romans was written to Christians. “Beloved of God” and “saints” refer to God's children. Verse 16 and 17, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” Notice that the gospel is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. This refers to Christians who believe. Notice verse 17, “for in it.” In what? The gospel – the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. No unregenerate ever had faith. That shows that this refers to Christians. The famous expression, “the just shall live by faith,” is a quote from Habakkuk 2:4. No unregenerate lives by faith. This truly refers to Christians.

Verse 18 speaks of the wrath of God being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Just because the wrath of God is spoken of does not mean that this refers to unregenerate people, because the wrath of God is expressed toward the child of God. The wrath of God is never expressed toward the child of God the same way that it is toward a lost person. The wrath of God is revealed toward the child of God in the form of discipline to encourage him to repent. Revelation 3:19, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”

Verse 21, “Because, 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.” Verse 21 states that they knew God. No unregenerate ever knew God. He may know something about God, but he doesn't know God. This passage says that they knew God, but even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful. There is a tremendous principle revealed in this passage. Remember, verse 17 speaks of living by faith. Verse 21 reveals how God expects us to express that faith. He desires that we express that faith by praising Him and

thanking Him. One who lives by faith will thank God and praise Him. To complain and criticize others is not an expression of faith. The only options we have are to thank God and praise Him or complain and criticize others.

Verse 21 also reveals that should we not be thankful and praise God, we will become futile in our thoughts and our foolish hearts will become darkened. It is possible for a child of God to deceive his own heart. I believe that this chapter was written to Christians, although I believe that it applies also to lost people.

Ephesians 4:17-19, "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 mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart." The reason God said, "Do not live like the rest of the Gentiles" is because it is possible for a child of God to live like a non-Christian. God would not tell us not to live like heathens except that it is possible for us to do so. Therefore, I believe Romans 1:21 reveals the first step toward the downward spiral for the child of God who drifts away from God.

The second step is revealed in Verse 24, "Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves." Should a Christian not repent, then God will give him up to uncleanness, and should that discipline not encourage him to repent, God will give him up further. Verses 26-27, "For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men, committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due." When God gives people up to vile passions, women become lesbians, and men become homosexuals.

I believe this speaks of the wrath of God toward the child of God, which refers to Verse 18. Should this discipline not encourage a person to repent, the fourth stage is revealed in Verse 28 and following. God gave them over to a debased mind. That means an evil mind, and we must know that the further down the spiral a person falls, the more difficult it will become to return to God.

What we are saying is this. The just shall live by faith and glorify God by thanking Him and praising Him. When a person does not walk by faith he will complain and criticize others. God calls that sin, and it is the nature of sin to multiply. This

passage reveals that the power of God will be experienced in a person's life when he glorifies God, thanks God, and praises Him, but that he will move into the downward spiral should he not repent. It is very encouraging that we repent. After I shared these truths with one man, he said, "That is exactly what happened to my brother." He said that he died of AIDS. Romans 2 reveals that should God's child not repent, He will discipline him.

Romans 2:1, "Therefore you are inexcusable, O man whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things." The Word, therefore, in verse 1 shows that this verse is related to Chapter 1. Should we not thank God and praise Him we will complain and criticize others, and that is judging. When we judge others we condemn ourselves.

Romans 5:3-5, "And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope." Notice in Verse 3, the Bible says "glory in tribulations." This reveals our attitude about tribulations. Remember that we must be glad rather than sad. The word "glory" is a difficult word to explain. One word that helps explain glory is "value." In other words, we must believe that there is value in tribulations. Once we believe there is value in tribulations, it will become easier to thank God for them and glory in them. In fact, the verse goes on to say that when we glory in tribulations, it will produce patience. One of the most common requests that I receive as a counselor is to help people have patience. I tell them that in order to have patience they must deal with their impatience. Patience is fruit of the Spirit while impatience is a work of the flesh.

The works of the flesh have to be dealt with before the Spirit can produce its fruit. The way the flesh is dealt with is by thanking God and praising Him in our tribulations. The purpose of tribulation is to drive us to the cross. Jesus chose the cross, but it seems that we have to become conscious of God's discipline before we are willing to submit to the cross. It is like the small child who moves more quickly when he sees daddy's paddle. So we need that encouragement. Therefore, when we submit to the undesirable things in life, the cross works, alleviates the impatience and enables the Holy Spirit to produce its fruit. That is how patience, or perseverance, is produced.

Verse 4 tells us that perseverance produces character. No one will ever experience God's holy character who continuously tries to avoid the cross. They spoke to

Jesus and said, “Come down from the cross, others he saved, but himself he cannot save.” Satan is still shouting, “Come down from the cross.” He uses any voice he can. “You deserve better than that, come down from the cross, avoid the suffering.” We have that choice, but we cannot choose the consequence. When we choose to glory in our tribulations, then we will experience patience, and patience will produce character, and character will produce hope. That is how God desires to produce the power of the cross in our lives. Complaining and criticizing causes the power to leak out.

II Corinthians 12:7-10, “And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” This passage deals with Paul's thorn in the flesh. Why was Paul given the thorn? Verse 7 reveals that a thorn was given to restrain Paul's boasting. Sometimes we need to be given a thorn to deal with our pride Remember, pride is the work of the flesh. The cross must deal with pride deeply for us to become humble.

Verse 8, Paul asked three times to have the thorn removed. In Verse 9, the Lord Jesus responded and said, “My grace is sufficient for you.” How many times do you suppose Paul asked to have the thorn removed after the Lord Jesus said, “My grace is sufficient for you?” Not once, Why? Because he preferred the grace of God than to have the pain of the thorn relieved. He would prefer to suffer the pain so that he could experience the work of grace. Remember, grace may be what God gives, but also there is the work of grace. This is the work of the cross. The more the cross works in our life, the more power we will experience.

Paul chose to submit to God's discipline knowing that this would enable the cross to work in his life. Paul knew that when the cross worked, he would experience the power. That is why he said, “Most gladly I will rather boast in my sickness that the power of Christ might rest upon me.” The reason some of us do not have the power of God is because we have been trying to avoid God's discipline.

Verse 10, Paul's conclusion, “Therefore I take pleasure in my infirmity,” which

was a sickness. Paul found pleasure in reproaches. Reproaches are when people reject you, get angry, criticize, or speak evil of you. He said, "I will find pleasure in needs." That is amazing. When he had a need that was not met, he took pleasure in the fact that it had not been met. That is the attitude God expects us to have toward our needs. Yes, that is foolish to the human mind, but it provides the power of God unto salvation for those who respond with pleasure. He said he found pleasure in persecutions. He found pleasure in distresses. We all have many distressful situations. Whenever we have a distressful situation, we must choose to find pleasure. Notice this one other thing. Paul says, "For Christ's sake" - there is the motivation, for Christ's sake. You see, to do all of this just so we may have the power of God is not quite right. We must desire the power for God's sake, that God might be blessed through us.

Paul said when he was weak, then he was strong. In my younger days, I thanked God that I was as strong as I was, but that too was not quite right. God did not want me to hold on to what little strength I had left. God wanted me to recognize and admit that I was weak, and even find pleasure in it. God desires that we be glad instead of sad because it is when we are weak that we will receive His strength. Sometimes we try to overcome a sin. We try and try and try, and become sad because we fail. God wants us to recognize our weakness and our inability to overcome sin and confess that we are helpless. He even desires that we praise Him and thank Him for our weakness. It is when we trust in the power of God that we experience deliverance. This is God's way.

Hebrews 13:15&16, "Therefore, by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." This is a very interesting, helpful and profitable passage. God desires that we offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving continually. First, let us look at the word "sacrifice." Sacrifice means that there is a loss. In Old Testament times when a man offered a bull, he did not bring it back home. He suffered loss. Therefore, the only time we can offer a sacrifice of praise is when we have experienced loss.

There is a lot of difference between praise that comes from a heart of joy and from heart that has experienced loss. The sacrifice of praise is what God desires. The sacrifice of praise is when we praise when we have loss. That is the only time that we can offer a sacrifice of praise. This lesson is one of the most difficult and painful lessons for a child of God to learn, but it is one of the most profitable.

II Chronicles 20:17, 21-22, “You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!” Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them for the Lord is with you.....And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: “Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever.” Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.” We must remember to sing praises to God and not fight, so the cross will work in our life.

Philippians 2:14, “Do all things without murmuring and disputing.” ·To do all things without murmuring and disputing means that we must do all things without complaining and arguing. Since God said, “Do all things without complaining and arguing,” that reveals that complaining and arguing are sins. How do we deal with those sins? We confess them and choose to give them up just as we do any other sin. To repent of a sin means that you choose to give it up. In closing, I want to suggest a life-changing affirmation or decision. “I choose to use every undesirable feeling to remind me to thank God and praise Him rather than complain or criticize others.” You may want to write this statement of intent on a 3”x5” card and place it where you can see it and read it often. You must repeat this decision until you develop the habit of thanking God immediately for every undesirable feeling rather than complain or criticize others. This must include all undesirable physical or emotional pains.

This is the way the cross is translated from an historical fact into experience in our life. The cross was an external thing for our Lord, but it is an internal thing for us. God will bless you more and more as you live by these truths and give Him the glory. “Father I thank you and praise your Holy Name.” Amen.

QUESTIONS ON THE POWER OF THE CROSS

1. How can we move into the Holy of Holies?
2. We must _____ God rather than _____.
3. It is God's will that we thank Him for undesirable things?
4. The message of the cross is _____ to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, _____.
5. Everyone wants the _____ of God, but no one desires the _____.
6. What keeps the cross from working?
7. What should be our attitude toward temptations?
8. To rejoice is an expression of _____.
9. Discipline is an expression of God's _____.
10. How does God desire us to express our faith?
11. It is possible for a child of God to live like _____.
12. What causes one to drift away from God?
13. What produces patience in our life?
14. Why was Paul given a thorn?
15. How did the Lord answer Paul's prayer?
16. Why did Paul stop praying?
17. How did Paul respond to the thorn?
18. What was it that gave Paul power?
19. What was Paul's basic motive?
20. What is a sacrifice of praise?
21. Is it a sin to complain?
22. Have you made the decision to use every undesirable feeling to remind you to thank God and praise Him rather than complain or criticize others?

SCRIPTURE VERSES FOR THE POWER OF THE CROSS

1. II Corinthians 12:7-10
 - a. v.7 – a thorn was given to restrain boasting
 - b. v.8 – Paul asked the Lord three times to remove the thorn
 - c. v.9 – “My grace is sufficient for you.” He found value in the thorn, so he thanked God for it and praised Him. Submission to the thorn brought power.
 - d. v.10 – He found pleasure in sicknesses, reproaches, needs, persecutions, and distresses for Christ’s sake. When he was weak, then he was strong.
2. I Corinthians 1:18 – For 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.
3. Psalm 100:4 – The only way we can enter into the holy of holies is into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. Complaining reveals that we are moving away from God.
4. I Thessalonians 5:18 – It is God’s will that we thank Him in everything.
5. Ephesians 5:20 – God has commanded us to thank Him for everything.
6. James 1:2, 3 – Our attitude toward temptations.
7. Romans 5:3-5 – Our attitude toward tribulations.
8. Romans 1:7, 16-21, 24, 26, 28 – When we live by faith we will thank God and praise Him for everything.
9. Hebrews 13:15, 16 – We must offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving continually.
10. Philippians 2:14 – Do all things without complaining or arguing.
11. Philippians 4:4 – Rejoice in the Lord always.

I choose to use every undesirable feeling to remind me to thank God and praise Him rather than complain or criticize others.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

HOW TO DEAL WITH ENEMIES

Luke 1:67-75, “Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: “Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people, And has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, who have been since the world began, That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us, To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant, The oath which He swore to our father Abraham: To grant us that we, Being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.”

Notice in verse 71 that we should be saved from our enemies. Please notice that “enemies” is plural. We need to understand that we have more enemies than just Satan. You must never believe that Satan is **the** enemy. He is **an** enemy, but he is not **the** enemy. We have many enemies, and God desires that we be saved from all of them. Notice also in verse 71 that God wants us to be saved from the hand of all who hate us. Regardless of who it is that has any anger, rejection, or criticism toward us, God desires that we be saved from them.

Verse 72 speaks of performing the mercy promised to our fathers. To perform mercy is an expression of love. We must see a principle revealed in these two verses. When we are delivered from all our enemies we can express our love to God and to one another as God desires. You find this principle expressed also in verse 74, “that we being delivered from the hand of our enemies might serve Him.” The way we serve God is to express our love to Him and to one another. What a blessed truth, “that when we are saved from the hands of all of our enemies we will be able to serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.” That does not mean some of the days, not even most of the days. It says, “All the days of our life.” This reveals that there is salvation provided that we have not yet experienced. Let us now name and deal with our enemies.

1. Sins Are Our Enemies. Matthew 1:21, “and she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call his name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” This verse speaks of bring saved from our sins. To be saved from something reveals that that thing is an enemy. Sins are truly our enemies. Unless we are saved from our sins,

we will be unable to express our love to God and each other.

Have you ever had an undealt-with sin in your life? You not only did not want to love anyone, maybe at times you did not even want others to love you. This is the work of Satan. It is his desire to use whatever he can to keep us from being able to serve God and treat others as we should. But God has commanded us to love Him and our neighbor. Matthew 22:37-39, “Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind! This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

God made us with the desire to love and be loved. We were created with the desire to have meaningful relationships. We have a sensational desire to be accepted and have meaningful involvement with others. Our heart cries out for intimacy with others.

Satan deceives us into believing that we can reduce the pain caused by rejection by using defenses. These are only sins that compound our problem. All defenses serve only to make us more lonely, empty, and miserable. The more lonely, empty, and miserable we become, the more we use these defenses. This is a vicious cycle that God allows to bring us to a crisis. The crisis is a call for us to discover our sins of rejection. The rejection is expressed by defenses, judging, anger, criticism, complaining, etc.

Love receives, accepts, approves, and frees. Romans 15, “Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.” We must choose to be open and courageous. We must choose to know others in Christ rather than in the flesh. II Corinthians 5:16.

Notice Matthew 1:21 says, “Saved from our sins.” There is a difference between being saved **from** our sins and **in** our sins. Suppose you are in a small boat and something happens that causes the boat to sink. Should you have on a life-jacket, you would be saved, but you would be saved in the water. Suppose a large boat came by and rescued you. Now you would be saved from the water. There are many people who are saved from hell, but they are still in their sins. The Lord Jesus came to save us from our sins.

Matthew 6:13, this part of the model prayer instructed us to pray “lead us not into temptation.” One reason we sin as much as we do is because we do not pray and

ask God not to lead us into temptation. We must remember that it is Satan who tempts us. However, in Matthew 4:1, the Bible reveals that the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. God will allow Satan to tempt us, but not as much when we pray and ask Him not to lead us into temptation.

Matthew 26:41, Jesus told His disciples, “Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation.” What does it mean to watch? It means watch out for the enemy. He is the tempter and he has a burning desire for us to sin. We must not only watch, but we must also pray. Should we always be watchful and always prayerful we would avoid many temptations and thereby avoid many sins. The first enemy that we must be saved from is our sins. We are saved from the penalty of sins by the blood of the Lamb.

2. The Flesh Is Our Enemy. Galatians 5:16, “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh, For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.” We see a battle between the Holy Spirit and the desires of our flesh. This reveals that our flesh is also an enemy. Should a person not deal with this enemy, he will find himself fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and that is sin. Jeremiah 17:9, “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?” Since our heart is so deceitful and so desperately wicked, it can be enticed by the desires of our flesh, which are contrary to the desires of God.

You may ask, “How may I identify the desire of the flesh?” For us to deal with an enemy, that enemy must be identified. Anyone who goes to the battlefield must be able to identify the enemy to be successful in warfare. The desire of the flesh is a desire to fulfill a normal desire in an abnormal manner. It is the desire to fulfill a lawful desire in an ungodly manner. For example: There is nothing wrong with becoming conscious of the desire for food. That is a God-given, holy desire. But should there be an occasion when you are hungry and without food or money, and there comes an opportunity to steal in order to satisfy that holy desire, then the desire to steal in order to eat is a desire of the flesh. To desire food and drink that is not good for our body must be classified as a desire of the flesh.

The same is true in the area of sex. A desire to fulfill the holy God-given desire for sex before or outside of marriage is a desire of the flesh. The same thing is true in all areas of life.

The devil seeks to cause us to become conscious of these desires, then he puts thought into our mind to receive desires as our own. Once we accept the desire of the flesh as our desire, then that is sin. Please remember that to become conscious of a desire of the flesh is not more a sin than to become conscious of an ungodly idea that Satan places in your head.

The next question is how do we deal with the desires of the flesh? Romans 6:12, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts." The word "lust" simply means desires. When we have an undealt-with sin it will cause the desires of the body to be mixed with sin and then we will become conscious of the desires of the flesh. The basic natural desires of the body are the desire for food and drink, to defend the body, and to reproduce the body, or the desire for sex. A desire to fulfill one of these natural, God given holy desires in an unlawful way is a desire of the flesh. To fulfill desire of the flesh is sin.

Romans 8:13, "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." We must put to death the deeds of our body by the Spirit. We must not only put to death the deeds of our body by the Spirit, but we must also put to death the desires of the flesh by the Spirit. Speaking directly to the Holy Spirit has been successful and very helpful to me. I say, "Holy Spirit, if trust You to put to death the _____ of the flesh." An example: When I become conscious of impatience, I know that impatience is a desire of the flesh. Therefore I simply speak, "Holy Spirit, I trust You to put to death the impatience of the flesh." You may ask, "Will that take care of it?" We must remember that Jesus said, "As you believe, so shall it be done." Yes, when we express our faith, the Holy Spirit transforms what we believe into reality.

Exodus 14:13, "And Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever.'" This is another verse that has helped me greatly in dealing with the desires of the flesh. There are found words in this passage that are very meaningful -- stand, still, see, salvation. For us to deal with the desires of the flesh, we must know that in Christ the flesh has already been dealt with. The war is over and the victory is of the Lord.

The first thing that God desires is that we stand. The word "stand" reminds me of Ephesians 6:11, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand

against the wiles of the devil.” That reveals that the beginning position of our warfare is standing. Standing is the position of victory. We must know that when we began dealing with the desires of the flesh that we began at the point of victory. Therefore, we must choose to stand.

We also must stand still. When I think of standing still, I think of Hebrews 4, “the position of rest.” When we know that we are standing in victory, we can stand still. Should we have any anxiety we cannot stand still. When we do not stand still, that reveals a restlessness of the flesh. So we must recognize the restlessness of the flesh and put it to death by the Spirit.

We not only need to stand still, we also need to see the salvation of the Lord. Should we not stand still we will not be able to see God’s salvation. In Exodus 14:13 we find that Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid.” Fear causes a person not to be able to stand still. The verse also says, “see what the Lord will accomplish for you today.” Verse 14, “The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.” The biggest problem in dealing with the flesh is that we try to do something. Victory is won not by how hard we try, but by how much we trust, because the Lord has already delivered us. We must now by faith claim this deliverance. When we try, we have our mind on self, but when we trust, we have our mind on the Lord. When our faith is based on the fact that the Bible reveals that we have victory in Jesus, the Holy Spirit will translate this into experience for us. What a marvelous thing to realize that God is going to fight the battle of the flesh for us. In Galatians 5:17 we discover that the battle is between our flesh and the Holy Spirit.

When we stand still we will see God’s salvation. Salvation is of the Lord. That word “Salvation” means deliverance. What a marvelous thing to know that God has already delivered us from the desires of our flesh and the only thing we need is to experience that deliverance by faith. Faith will express itself by standing still and trusting to see God’s salvation. Since we have victory in Jesus, we can live in victory when we live in Jesus. However, when we live in the flesh we will experience defeat.

Colossians 2:11, “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.” This helps us see more clearly how God has already delivered us from the desires of the flesh. This speaks of what God did for us in Christ on the cross. He dealt with the body of the sins of the flesh by circumcising our heart. Your

heart was circumcised nearly 2000 years ago. The only reason that we can experience a pure heart today is because our heart was circumcised when Christ died on the cross. We experience a pure heart by trusting the Holy Spirit to put to death the desires of the flesh.

Matthew 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.” This reveals that God desires that we have a pure heart. It reveals that it is possible to have a pure heart. Our faith must bring into experience what God did for us in Christ a long time ago. These are some most marvelous truths. They have helped many of us deal very effectively with the desires of the flesh. God desires that you identify each desire of the flesh and put it to death by the Spirit. All Christians have victory in Jesus, but not all Christians live in victory. God desires that we live in victory. It is absolutely essential for us to put to death the desires of the flesh to live in victory.

3. The World Is Our Enemy. Galatians 6:14, “But God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” This verse reveals that we have been crucified to the world and that the world has been crucified unto us. This reveals that the world is our enemy. I John 2:15, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” The devil seeks to get us to love something that is of the world. This verse tells us that when we love the world, the love of the Father is not in our hearts. We must see that this is one of the devil’s methods of keeping us from being able to express our love to God and to one another.

All he needs to do is succeed in luring us to love just one thing of the world. One lady told me, “I know what my problem is – it’s shoes and dresses.” She said, “I love shoes and dresses.” God allows us to **like** the things of the world. It is all right to like it, but it is not right to love it. Therefore, since we have been crucified to the world, we must put it to death. We can do that in a manner similar to the one we use to deal with the desires of the flesh. We can say, “Holy Spirit, I trust you to put to death this ungodly love for this thing of the world.” It might be a new automobile, house. Land, food, drink, sex, etc., whatever it is that you love, you must exercise your will and faith and put it to death by the Spirit. Fasting is a spiritual exercise that will make it easier for us to turn loose the things of the world. The purpose of prayer is for catching hold of the supernatural. The purpose of fasting is for helping us turn loose the natural. The Spirit is well able to put to death in our lives what God put to death in Christ on the cross. You may ask,

“How may I tell what is of the world?” It is anything that will not go into the next world. We must trust the Spirit to put to death all love that we have of this world.

4. Satan Is Our Enemy. Satan is the arch-enemy, but he is not **the** enemy. The reason I say Satan is the arch-enemy is because he will use these other enemies to accomplish his purpose. John·10:10, Satan came to steal, kill, and destroy. Remember that Satan’s primary purpose is to keep us from expressing our love to God and to one another as the Lord Jesus desires. I believe the single verse that has helped me the most in dealing with Satan is James 4:7, “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Consider three major truths in this verse: Number one – “submit yourself to God;” Two – “resist the devil;” and Three – “he will flee from you.” Please notice that there is a divine order. First, we must submit ourselves to God. That means that we submit to the authority of God. To submit to the authority of God means that we submit our will to the will of God. When we submit our will to the will of God, then we will do the will of God. That means obedience. Obedience is the expression of our love to God. We find this truth in John 14:21, “He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me.” You can tell how much you love God by how obedient you are to God. You can tell when you are submissive to God because you will be obedient to God. Once we have submitted our will to do the will of God, then we can take authority over Satan. Reject him and he will run. God does not want us to be busy dealing with Satan day and night. He wants us to be free of Satan so we can turn our hearts and minds toward Him. Revelation 12:11, “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” Our testimony must be that we are submissive to God; we have resisted Satan and he is gone. We must say "yes" to God, "no" to Satan, and testify that he is gone for us to live in victory.

5. Death Is Our Enemy. I Corinthians 15:26, “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.” This not only refers to the crisis experience of death, but also to all the aches, pains, sicknesses and aging processes between birth and death. The reason death is so horrible to some is because they are in bondage to the fear of death. Hebrews 2:14,15, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Praise God, the Lord has destroyed him who had the power of death and He has released those who were in bondage to the fear of death all their lives.

Since God has already released us from the bondage of the fear of death, we can now experience deliverance by expressing our faith based on the Word of God.

There are some verses that enable us to deal with fear. II Timothy 1:7, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” Satan is the author of fear, but Christ is the author of faith. It is essential that we know the source of fear. I John 4:18, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” Since perfect love will cast out fear, we can see that love is more powerful than fear. Should we put rocks into a glass filled with water, the rocks will drive the water out. That is what God’s love does when it is perfected in our hearts. I John 2:5, “But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.” Our obedience enables God to perfect His love in our hearts.”

Psalm 34:4, “I sought the Lord, and He heard me, And delivered me from all my fears.” We must pray and expect God to deliver us from all our fear. Psalm 23:4, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” We must deal with fear until it becomes a thing of the past.

Death spread to all men by sin. Romans 5:12, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.” In verse 17 we find the “death reigned” through Adam, but that life reigns through Christ. You have death in Adam and life in Christ. When we live in Adam, death will reign, but when we live in Christ, life will reign. When death reigns we will experience defeat. When life reigns we will be able to live in victory. When we live in victory we will be able to express our love to God and to one another.

QUESTIONS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH ENEMIES

1. When we are delivered from all our enemies, we can _____.
2. List the enemies that are listed in the text.
3. What is the first and great commandment?
4. We were created with the desire to have _____.
5. List ways that we express rejection.
6. How is love expressed?
7. Is it a sin to become conscious of a desire of the flesh?
8. How must we deal with the flesh?
9. List some examples of sex sins.
10. When does a desire of the flesh become our desire?
11. Explain what is a desire of the flesh.
12. List the four main words in Exodus 14:13 that describe what we must do when we discover a desire of the flesh.
13. According to Colossians 2:11, why is it possible to have a pure heart?
14. How did God deliver us from the world?
15. When anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is _____.
16. How do we deal with the love we have for the world?
17. List the three things we must do to overcome Satan.
18. List the verses that help us deal with fear.
19. When we live _____, we will be able to express our love to God and to one another.

SCRIPTURE VERSES ON HOW TO DEAL WITH OUR ENEMIES

Luke 1:67-75

- I. Matthew 1:21 – Sins are our Enemies.
I John 1:9 – We must confess each act of sin.
Proverbs 28:13 – We must choose to give up the practice of each sin.
Acts 26:18 – We must receive forgiveness for each sin.
Hebrews 10:2 – We must receive cleansing from each sin.
- II. Romans 6:7 – Sin is our Enemy.
We must reckon ourselves dead to sin. We must reckon ourselves and our members to God.
- III. Galatians 5:16,17 – The Flesh is our Enemy.
Exodus 14:13, 14 – Stand still and see the Salvation.
II Chronicles 20:17-22 – Praise brings victory.
- IV. Galatians 6:14 – The World is our Enemy. We are crucified to the world.
I John 2:15, 16 – Love not the world.
- V. John 10:10 – Satan is our Arch-Enemy. His motive is to steal, kill, and destroy.
His method is deception and lies.
James 4:7 – 1. Submit to the authority of God.
2. Resist Satan.
3. He will flee.
Revelation 12:11 – We overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of our testimony. “Forgiven and not guilty.”
- VI. I Corinthians 15:26 – Death is our Last Enemy
Hebrews 2:14, 15
 1. Satan, who had the power of death, has been destroyed.
 2. Those who have been in bondage all their lives through fear of death have been released.
 3. Luke 13:16 – We were released from bondage at the cross. We need to experience deliverance by faith.

Once we deal with all our enemies, we can express our love to God and others as God desires.

THE BLESSINGS OF FASTING

Isaiah 58:6-14, “Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hid yourself from your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; You shall cry and He will say, ‘Here I am.’ If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. Those from among you shall build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In. If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the Lord honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words, Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Isaiah 58 is possibly the greatest passage in the Bible about fasting. First let us look at some other scripture and we will come back to Isaiah. Matthew 6:16, “Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.” Notice this verse says, “when you.” It is obvious that Jesus expects us to fast. Matthew 6:5, “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.” Let us notice the similarity between verses 5 and 16.

People do not talk much about fasting. Whenever fasting is mentioned, most people seem to want to be hush-hush about it. People seem to believe that you should not talk about fasting. Even when you fast, people believe that you should not let anyone know about it. Notice that Jesus said the same thing about fasting that He did about prayer. What Jesus said was that you do not present yourself to men to be fasting, but neither do you pray standing in the synagogues or on the streets that you may be seen by men. This is a heart attitude toward God.

However, we are to preach the Word, and the Word teaches about fasting. Matthew 9:14 & 15, “Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, ‘Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.’” Jesus simply said that as long as the bridegroom is here, they will not fast; but when He is taken away, notice, then they will fast. We must know that the bridegroom has been taken away. Since that is true, Jesus said, “Now is the time to fast.” Since now is the time to fast, then we must fast. So the question is, when do we fast? The answer is... NOW is the time we must fast.

Matthew 17:19-21, “Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, ‘Why could we not cast him out?’ So Jesus said to them, ‘Because of your unbelief; for assuredly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, “move from here to there,” and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.’” A little background will help to understand this passage. There was a man who brought his child to the disciples and the disciples tried to cast the demon out, but failed. Jesus said, “Bring him to me.” Verse 18 reveals that Jesus rebuked the demon, and he came out.

Verse 19, the disciples asked privately, “Why could we not cast him out?” I would have asked him privately too, should I have had so great a failure. In Verse 20, Jesus reveals their problem. It was because of their unbelief. Their problem was the lack of faith, for Jesus told them that should they have faith as a mustard seed they could even move mountains and then nothing would be impossible for them. Then Jesus revealed a profound truth. Verse 21, “However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

The question we want to ask is, Why do we fast? We find in this passage the reason. Faith is strengthened by fasting. That is one of the greatest motivations for

fasting that I know. We must be actively involved in anything that will strengthen our faith. So fasting strengthens our faith.

Now let's go back to Isaiah 58 and discover some more reasons for fasting. Verse 6 - to loose the bonds of wickedness. The Bible tells us that the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. We need to be loosed from our evil heart. There may be certain sins with which we have problems. Fasting looses us from these sins. That alone is reason enough to fast. What a blessing to discover how we can experience deliverance from any sin.

Verse 6 - to undo the heavy burdens. Many people have many burdens. Many people are stumbling beneath the load. This does not have to be true, because these burdens can be lifted by fasting. Another reason to fast is to have our burdens lifted.

Verse 6 – to let the oppressed go free. Another reason to fast is to free the oppressed. This possibly not only means us personally, but also that by our prayer and fasting God may use us to free someone else. To be oppressed means that one will experience depression. It is marvelous to discover that God teaches us how to deal with depression. We can deal with depression by fasting. Fasting frees the oppressed.

Verse 6 – and that you break every yoke. You may be yoked, or bound to something or someone in some way. Sometimes it seems that we are under the control of someone else. This yoke, or this control, can be broken by fasting. Why should we fast? To break every yoke, which means breaking bad habits.

Verse 7 – another reason to fast is to share our bread with the hungry. Read on and you will discover that verse 7 speaks of covering or clothing the poor. When we have a heart-desire to feed and clothe the poor enough to fast in order to conserve our money, we will have made great progress in the spiritual life. Any one of these reasons revealed in verses 6 & 7 is enough to justify the pain and agony that one may experience when he fasts.

One thing we will discover when we fast is how much we love food. Another thing we will discover is how much we love ourselves and how little we deny ourselves for the sake of the Lord and others. There are plenty of good reasons to fast.

Verse 8 – “Then your light will break forth like the morning.” We will have greater revelation. What a blessing! Many people who have fasted have told me that reading and studying the Word of God becomes so much more meaningful to them. Our mind will be clearer. Our spirit will be pure. It will be much easier to receive light from the Lord. That alone is a blessing great enough to justify fasting.

But read on – “your healing will spring forth speedily.” By fasting we will experience quicker healing. What a marvelous thing to experience quicker healing so we will be better able to live for the Lord and glorify Him more. Healing always glorifies God. What a tremendous blessing this can be to many of God’s children.

But read on – “and your righteousness shall go before you. The Glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard.” You will have better protection, which is another blessing. When we fast, God Himself will protect us from the rear. Ephesians 6 tells us about the spiritual armor. It has been noted that there is no armor for the rear. The reason is because God Himself will be our rearguard. Folks, that's how we are delivered from our enemies. God Himself will protect us.

Verse 9 – “Then you shall call and the Lord will answer. You shall cry and He will say ‘Here I am.’” Another blessing is that you will have a more effective prayer life. What a marvelous blessing for a child of God to have his prayers answered. By fasting you will experience more answers to your prayers. But more than that, you will have a greater sense of the presence of the Lord. He will become more personal to you. You will discover that you will have a more intimate relationship with Him. You will come to know Him better, not just know about Him. You will learn more about His ways. It will be easier to praise the Lord and thank Him even for the adverse things in life rather than complain and criticize others. What blessings! It is well worth the suffering that could come from fasting.

Andrew Murray said that fasting enables us to turn loose the natural, and that prayer enables us to take hold of the supernatural. Verse 11 “The Lord will guide you continually.” For the Lord to guide us continually means that we will know the will of God and do it. So many people want to know God's will for their life. God said fasting will enable us to know God's will and have the power to do it.

I have discovered that there are many more people who have a desire to **know**

God's will than there are who desire to do God's will. Fasting will give you the knowledge of God's will and the power to do it. My, what a great blessing from fasting – that we may know and do the will of God because He will guide us continually.

Verse 11 – “and satisfy your soul in drought.” Would it be a blessing for us to have our soul satisfied? Our soul is our will, mind, and emotion. Many people need to have their will satisfied. Many people are concerned about the things that they want. They think about things that they desire. Some are troubled because they cannot get what they want. Their will is not satisfied. Fasting will satisfy our will. Many people have minds that they cannot control. Their mind is not free from exterior control. It seems that their mind thinks about things they do not want to think about at times. What a blessing to have a free mind!

But there is more – our emotions. Can we conceive of having our emotions purified, at rest? To come to a place in our life so that our emotions do not rage when they should be at rest?

Please understand that I am not saying that should we fast one day or even three days that we will experience total satisfaction in our will, our mind, and our emotions. What I am saying is that a life of fasting will move us in that direction. We not only need a life of prayer, but we need a life of fasting. What a marvelous blessing to have our will weaned, as David said. What a wonderful blessing to have our mind free, at rest, and at peace. What a wonderful blessing to have our emotion still, healed, and at rest.

But read on – “and strengthen your bones.” This refers to being stronger physically. Some of us need to be stronger physically and God tells us that fasting will bring greater strength. Everyone, without one exception, whom I have talked with, that has fasted has told me that he experienced more physical strength. Spiritual strength is more important than physical strength. So read on – “you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.” You shall be spiritually refreshed. How many people are looking for a fresh drink of water spiritually? So many need to be refreshed, and that alone is blessing enough to fast.

Let us remember that in the Old Testament we study about many people who fasted. Esther is a good example. She called a public fast. There are others, and so there is nothing wrong with letting people know that you fast. Tell people the

blessings it brings, for that will give glory to God. It is not right to seek the blessing for yourself. We must teach these truths to others that they may experience them and bring more glory to our Heavenly Father.

We are listing below some basic information about fasting: Should you have never fasted, then it would be best that you move into a life of fasting gradually. I suggest that maybe once a week you do without the evening meal. Partake of no food from lunch until breakfast the next day. Drink only water. That is the kind of fast that I recommend for a beginner. Drink only water and take in nothing of food value. You need the water to help flush out poison from the body.

As you feel that you can move into a longer period of fasting, you may eat breakfast and then take in no food value until the next morning. Then you should choose a 24-hour period and do without 3 meals. Drink only water and eat no food. Do that once a week for 3 or 4 weeks until your body becomes accustomed to fasting. I believe that at least once or twice each year we should increase this to at least 3 to 7 full days unless there is a physical problem involved.

Now, particularly should you fast as long as 7 days, afterward you will need to gradually take in nourishment in order to give your body time to readjust. You should not attempt to eat a steak the first meal after you have fasted for 7 days. It would be better to drink fruit juices and eat easily digestible kinds of fruits and vegetables.

Jesus said, "Now is the time that my disciples will fast." We must decide to develop a life of fasting so that not only will we be blessed, but that God will be glorified.

QUESTIONS ON THE BLESSINGS OF FASTING

1. How much have you fasted?
2. What is our motive for fasting?
3. Do you think there should be more preaching and teaching on fasting?
4. When should we fast?
5. List the blessings or rewards of fasting.
6. What does it mean to “break every yoke?”
7. What did Andrew Murray say about fasting?
8. What does it mean to have our soul satisfied?
9. Are you willing to develop a lifestyle of fasting?
10. List the people in the Bible who fasted.
11. What is forbidden in fasting?
12. Are you willing to ask God to let you fast?
13. When do you desire to fast again?

SCRIPTURE VERSES ON FASTING BRINGS BLESSINGS

Isaiah 58:6-14

The Meaning of Fasting is to Cease from Eating.

Matthew 4:2 – Jesus fasted forty days and nights and was hungry.

- I. When Do We Fast?
 - a) Matthew 6:16-18
 - b) When you fast, not should you fast. Fasting is not for show.
 - c) Matthew 6:5-7 – We have the same instructions about fasting as with praying.
 - d) Matthew 9:14, 15 – Then they will fast.
- II. Why Do We Fast?
 - a) Matthew 17:19-21 – Strengthen our faith
 - b) Isaiah 58:6
 - Deliverance from sin
 - Lift our burdens
 - Free the oppressed
 - Break every yoke (bad habits)
 - c) V. 7 – To feed and clothe the poor
- III. What Are the Blessings of Fasting?
 - a) Isaiah 58:8
 - Greater revelation
 - Quicker healing
 - Better protection
 - b) V. 9 – More effective prayer life
 - c) V. 11
 - Know and do God’s will
 - Will, mind, and emotions satisfied
 - Stronger physically
 - Spiritually refreshed
- IV. How Do We Fast?
 - a) The Normal Fast is no food, only water
 - b) The Absolute Fast – Acts 9:9 – Paul neither ate nor drank three days.
 - c) The Partial Fast – Joel 2:15 – “Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly.”