Deal Pentecostal Church Bible Studies 2026

Scripture is the wisdom of God by which I can order my daily life.

Father, may we clearly know Your will and achieve the height and depth of spiritual wisdom and understanding. May our lives be a credit to You, Lord; and what's more, may we continue to delight You by doing every good work and growing in the true knowledge that comes from being close to You. Strengthen us with Your infinite power, according to Your glorious might, so that we will have everything we need to hold on and endure hardship patiently and joyfully. Thank You, Father, as You have made us eligible to receive our portion of the inheritance given to all those set apart by the light. You have rescued us from dark powers and brought us safely into the kingdom of Your Son, whom You love and in whom we are redeemed and forgiven of our sins through His blood.

[*Colossians 1:9-14 The Voice]*

Never deny in the darkness what God has shown you in the light

God is Spirit and He reveals Himself to spirit and He can reveal Himself to our spirit through the Word. For instance, we hear someone read the Word of God. The thing that is read is weighed and measured by our intellect but in some way which is inexplicable to reason, it affects our spirit. It answers a need. Listening to the Word God changes our spirit. E.W.Kenyon

There's no mention in Acts of anybody needing to be taught to hear how God speaks, or being taught to hear the voice of God. It's not a skill that can be acquired. It's not a discipline to be developed over time. It's not something we learn to do. Because if God is not speaking, you're not going to hear Him no matter what skill you have developed, no matter how hard you listen. And if God is speaking, you're not going to miss Him because God is powerful enough to ensure that when He speaks that He is heard." *Jim Osman, S1:E5 "Bethel Redding (Part 3) - The Prophets" of "American Gospel: Spirit & Fire"*

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Introduction

The Bible is unlike any other book because the very words were breathed (inspired) by God. *God has breathed life into all of Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right. By using Scripture, the servant of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing.*[2Tim.3:16] The words in the Bible still contain God's breath (His life) and they are our spiritual food: *Life is spiritual. Your physical existence doesn't contribute to that life. The words that I have spoken to you are spiritual. They are life.*[Jn.6:63] *Jesus answered, 'It is written: Man doesn't live only on bread. He also lives on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'*[Matt.4:4] *The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.*[Ps 19:7-8] And so it is important for us to study the Bible. *Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarrelling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*[2Tim.2:14-15] However, we should be careful to only take out of the Bible what is there and not add anything to the Bible: *Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.*[Deut.4:2] *I am warning everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If you add anything to them, God will add to you the plagues told about in this book. If you take any words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from you your share in the tree of life. He will also take away your place in the Holy City. This book tells about these things.*[Rev.22:18-19]

Exegesis and **Eisegesis.** Exegesis is the process of getting "*out*" ('*ex*') of the text what is truly there in the first place. The opposite of **exegesis** is **eisegesis** which is the process of putting "*into*" ('*eis*') the text something that wasn't intended by the author and is almost a "*blank cheque*" for you to make the Bible say whatever you want! To do **exegesis**, the correct principles of Bible interpretation (hermeneutics) need to be understood:

The first principle is context: Always read the entire passage/chapter/book before extracting the meaning of a verse.

The second principle is consistency (non-contradiction): Never interpret a text in a way that contradicts the overall message of Scripture.

The third principle is: Always look for the original intended meaning. Double references (*One thing God has spoken, two things I have heard: "Power belongs to you, God, Ps.62:11*) are rare and should only apply where the Bible is clear—for instance "*The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" Is.7:14* is clearly refereeing to Mary and Jesus (Matt.1:23). Most erroneous interpretations of prophecy is due to speculating about another meaning of Scripture that was never intended.

Don't be afraid of using other reference studies besides the Bible—even Paul did that: *When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.*[2Tim.4:13] But be careful not to get side-tracked from the main purpose of the Bible—**which is to explain God's plan of salvation to mankind through Jesus Christ, His Son and our Saviour!**

Teleology—the universe viewed from the realisation of God and His eternal purpose—how God has designed the way we should live

God's purpose for our life (God's mission for us)

To see God's view of the world

To live within God's moral boundaries for us

To be God's stewards

1Pet.5:6-7

If you bow low in God's awesome presence, he will eventually exalt you as you leave the timing in his hands. Pour out all your worries and stress upon him and leave them there, for he always tenderly cares for you.[TPT]

God is great and powerful, so remember that you are not important at all. Wait for him, and at the right time, he will get everybody to respect you. God loves you, and he is looking after you, so tell him about everything that makes you sad, or angry, or worried, and trust him to look after you properly. [PEV]
Remember that God is strong and powerful. So be humble in front of him. Then he will lift you up to a good place at the right time. If you have any kind of trouble in your mind, give it to God. God has promised to take care of you. [EasyEnglish]

So bow down under God's strong hand; then when the time comes, God will lift you up. Since God cares for you, let Him carry all your burdens and worries. [The Voice]
So be content with who you are, and don't put on airs. God's strong hand is on you; he'll promote you at the right time. Live carefree before God; he is most careful with you. [TM]

Jesus said He loved all people and wanted to save them from an eternity of misery, but He never sugar-coated His message to make it all-inclusive, in an attempt to please all of the people, all of the time. Jesus was about truth and justice as much as He was about love, because truth, justice and love are inseparable virtues and deeply intertwined. Jesus taught that God is perfectly loving, truthful and just, and practising the same virtues, along with having faith in Him was the only way to true joy, love, peace and purpose in this life and in the next.
Jesus offered a new agreement with God. He said that humanity had gone astray and needed a savour to make it right with God. To anyone who trusted Him, He promised a spiritual transformation and eternal life with Him in a perfect place, free from suffering and pain. This offer applied to anyone and everyone. Status in society, race, wealth, age, or gender made no difference and neither did whatever sins people had committed in life, before turning to Jesus.
Come the final judgement day, if you're committed to following God, you've genuinely repented for any sins you've committed previously and you've then gone on to live a new, improved life, following Jesus' teachings (which others will notice in you) then, Jesus said, you will not be judged for your sins. Your soul will enter Heaven, as if you were sinless and you'll be with Him for eternity… This was quite a shocking claim to say the least.
Those who, of their own free will, reject Jesus, however, will not enter Heaven. They'll spend their eternity in another place – the place referred to as Hell. This will be the place of their own choosing – a place where God is not present.
Jesus called His teachings " *The Good News* ". It was unusual news, that's for certain, but it promised to be good news of a new, spiritually healthier and much improved life, which Jesus offered (and offers) to anyone, for absolutely nothing in return – no favours, no money, just a dedicated belief in Him and His teachings. He'd do the rest.
The good news for a good life that Jesus talked about, though, was seen by some then, and still is today, as a possible contradiction. That's because He never promised we wouldn't go through our fair share of human trials and sorrows; they are a natural part of life, and lead to growth and understanding for the soul. Instead, He promised that His spirit within us would help and guide us through our pain and anxiety when these things inevitably arrived to test us. This spiritual guidance would come once we surrendered our hearts, minds and souls to God and put Him above all things.
Jesus taught that, as well as loving God, we should " *value others above ourselves* ". He said, " *Love your neighbour as yourself* ". Loving and caring for others is a core principle of His teachings. That doesn't imply being subservient to others but means treating people as we'd expect to be treated, with respect, justice, fairness, righteousness and courage to do what is right, to protect others and to reject evil, even if that comes at great personal cost.
This is against what many people, then and now, might think to be the key to a 'great life'. They might value self-love, material wealth, pride and adoration from others.

A life with Jesus, then, would take work, but it was promised that the rewards would be freeing and would far outweigh any effort. For this new life to begin, however, a spiritual re-birth was (and is) required. Jesus said He'd show people how to be 'born-again'.
Jesus encouraged His followers to question everything and everyone, including those in authority, and to search deeply for the truth. He said they should not be closed off to new ideas, but open themselves up to God and make their own enquiries, to stretch their minds, to test every claim, and to judge everyone by their actions (their fruits) not by their words and promises. This of course was an invitation to test Him and come to their own conclusion as to whether what Jesus was saying and doing was true. There are no accounts, in either Christian or non-Christian writings, of Jesus ever behaving in a way that contradicted His teachings. According to all ancient documents, Jesus was morally and ethically flawless.
When people had carried out their own tests and enquiries, Jesus invited them to look around at the evidence for God, including in creation. He often used examples from nature, such as seeds and flowers, to teach spiritual lessons. He challenged people to give up their old selfish ways and to trust and follow Him. In return, He promised, they would gain.
Jesus taught that communicating with God did not require any help from any priests. This effectively made the priests redundant and even angrier and was another reason why the religious leaders were apoplectic that this man Jesus was able to gain such a platform for His message. Communication with God did not require overly fancy or complex language either, but rather a simple and honest heartfelt personal conversation with God. This relationship would be built through faith in Jesus, by living by His example and confessing all thoughts and feelings to God through prayer. Being open and vulnerable to God would allow people to unburden their worries and anxieties, share their deepest fears, doubts and hidden struggles, then ask for forgiveness and seek His guidance. Through this trusting relationship, a direct connection to God would be made, followed by a promise that the Holy Spirit would love unconditionally and dwell within all believers and that He'd guide and empower them throughout their lives.
God Conundrum David Harper

Respecting the Revelation
Some think getting a word from God is a substitute for careful Bible study. But it's presumption to think the Holy Spirit will simply give you the right interpretation of a text. Paul said *All scripture is god-breathed* [2Tim.3:16]—the word is *graphe* in Greek. The writings are inspired and authoritative, not the interpretation we think the Holy Spirit is giving us. This is why the words should be our focus, not our feelings. If you think God is telling you something through Scripture that is not connected to the meaning of the words in their context, it can't be of God because God chose to communicate through language, not around it. Yes, the Holy Spirit is our teacher, but that means He illuminates what's already there. All teachers work from a body of information, clarifying it and passing it on. The Holy Spirit does not give new information not already in the inspired words. The curriculum, so to speak, is standardized for all Christians. Every person has equal access to the meaning. There are no private messages in Scripture. God took pains to give us an objective revelation in the words of the Bible to protect us from subjectivism. When Christians opt for an anointed "*reading between the lines*" instead of sound exegesis, it actually shows disrespect for the revelation the Holy Spirit inspired.
GK

The graces of the Spirit are more important the gifts of the Spirit
D.W. Evans in '*The Life of Faith'* 19 March 1913. In comparing the conditions at Penybont with those at Cwmtwrch, he made several perceptive observations about Stephen Jeffreys:

> *" Stephen Jeffreys … had been surprised and awed by the power manifested. He is a simple, humble, and yet intelligent, level-headed man of the superior South Wales miner type. He is more at home and at ease when*

conversing in Welsh than in English, although he has a fair command of the latter language. He protested that he was not a preacher, but that he simply delivered what he was taught in the Word and prompted by the Spirit to declare, together with his personal testimony of the great work of grace wrought in his own soul in the Revival of 1904 – 05, and ever since.

He and his brother George receive invitations from many places to conduct Revival meetings, but they will only go, as they believe the Spirit clearly leads. He is most anxious that the present awakening should be kept on right and safe lines, without any denominational label or interference from any sect or movement as such. All extravagances are discouraged, and all undue sensationalism is discountenanced. Both brothers realise that the graces of the Spirit are more important than the gifts, and that the Gospel of a full salvation must ever be their theme. They fully appreciate how important it is to be exceedingly careful to do all that is possible to avoid the mistakes of the past in connection with the Revivals in the Principality."

Our mouths are too often, more educated by our circumstances than by the Word of God. If we say with our mouth more about our circumstances than we say about Christ, our mouth serves circumstances rather than Christ and we honour the circumstances with abilities and powers that they certainly do not have. And we also dishonour Jesus because we don't affirm and glorify Him for the reality of what only He is able to do. We need to make up our minds who it is that we're actually ruled over by, who's really in charge! And I want you to know that it's not the devil, it's not your past, it's not how you feel, it's not your boss, it's not the person that's getting mad at you, it's Jesus who's in charge! We affirm Him and Him alone, and to Him alone be the glory. (M.P.)

To be blessed means that God has empowered us with His Word

I want you to be happy and strong, so I'm writing this letter to you. And I want you to remember that God is very good, so keep on thinking about how good he is. Then you will keep on trusting him. 1 Peter 5:12 PEV

I am Peter, and this letter is from me. My other name is Simon. I work for Jesus Christ. I am one of his special workers. You people believe in Jesus Christ, just like I do, so I'm writing this letter to you. Jesus helps us trust him, and that is really special for us. Jesus Christ is God, and he saves us. He is always right, and he is always fair. You know, God is really powerful. He is very great, and very good too. He picked us out to be his own people, so we can get to know him properly. And he gives us everything we need to live the right way. And he promised us some very important things, and they are very special to us. He promised that we can think the way he thinks, so that we become really good people. He says that we can get away from bad things. We are not like the people that belong to this world. They want to do bad things, then they go and do those bad things, and they become bad people. But God says that we can get away from all that. So think about what I am saying, and you will know that you have to be as good as you can. You believe in Christ, and you have to keep trying to live his way all the time. This is what you have to do, – you always have to try to do what is right, and you have to try to know God better, – and you have to learn to control yourselves too, – and you have to learn to keep going strong, no matter what happens, – and you have to be good to each other too, so that you will make God happy, – and you have to love other Christians like they are your own brothers and sisters, and you have to love everybody else too. If you keep on living like that more and more, you will get to know our leader, Jesus Christ, better and better. And you will be a good worker that does a good job for him every time. But if you don't live like that, it shows that you don't understand God's message properly. You are like blind people that can't see anything properly. It's like you forget about what God did for you. You used to do wrong things before, but God made you free from all that, and he made you clean inside yourselves. So don't forget that. Don't do wrong things again. My Christian friends, try hard to do all those good things. God picked you to be his own people, and whenever you do those good things, you show everybody that you really are God's people. If you do those things, you will never turn away from God. Then God will be very happy with you, and he will make sure you live with him for ever. You will be in Jesus Christ's family. He is our leader, and he saves us. 2 Peter 1:1, 3-11 PEV

If we love people properly, then we are living God's way, and we will know for sure that we belong to God. And if we ever feel shame, and if we think maybe we don't belong to God, we can remember that God knows everything, and he says that we belong to him. Then we will feel happy inside ourselves. We have to trust what God says, not the way we feel. 1 John 3:19-20 PEV

So don't just think about the law that comes from Moses. It talks about the bad things people do. If you just think about that, you will want to do those same bad things yourself. Then that law will be your boss, and your bodies will make you want to do bad things too. Don't be like that. Don't let any part of your body be your boss. Don't do whatever it wants. Instead, you have to give your bodies to God and let him use you to do good things. You have to think about him all the time, and remember that he is very good to you, and that he made you alive again in a new way. If you think like that, you will not want to do anything bad. God is really good to you. That law is not your boss any more. But maybe you think like this, "We can do whatever bad things we want to do, because that law is not our boss any more and God will be good to us anyway." No way. Don't think like that. You know that if you always do whatever another person wants, you make that person your boss. So if you do bad things all the time, you make those bad things your boss, and in the end you will die. But if you do whatever God wants all the time, you make him your boss, and in the end he will say that you are really good. Actually, you used to do bad things all the time, but now you have made God your boss, and you really want to do whatever he wants. I thank God for that. You are free now. You don't have to do those bad things any more. You have got a new good boss now, and you have to do good things all the time. I'm trying to say this in a way that you will really understand. Rom.6:14f PEV

The heart of God opens itself to us in God's Word.
I do not treasure God's promise in my understanding but in my heart.
It is not to be analysed by my intellect, but to be pondered in my heart.
Therefore, it is never sufficient simply to have read God's Word.
It must penetrate deep within us, dwell in us,
like the Holy of Holies in the Sanctuary, so that we do not sin in thought, word, or deed.
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Scripture can be more than the rule of faith—it can also be the source of meaning which inspires all our willing, planning, acting and serving in the world. Scripture's history, personalities, stories, prophets, precepts, wisdom and challenges can all become a source of inspiration when we apply them to our life's circumstances. In order for this to occur, we need to make time to reflect on our life's circumstances as well as Scripture, and then bring the two into careful dialogue. We must prayerfully and carefully read the Scriptures—not just for information but to let God's Word mold our conscious and subconscious thoughts so that we begin to think like God. It is easy to turn time with Scripture into a game of "*Twenty Questions*": how to have a happy relationship, learn financial faithfulness, or whatever. A sharp line can be drawn between utilitarian approaches that treat the Bible as a how-to manual or a database for addressing my questions, and the formation of Scripture-shaped minds that understand God and God's creation through Scripture-shaped lenses. **The latter requires patient, deliberate reading—reading, as it were, for no good reason but for the sake of having our dispositions and reflexes shaped by Scripture**.

Lk.9:44
Let these words sink into your ears NRSV
Let these words sink into your ears: ESV
Mark these words diligently: Geneva
Take these words to heart, NET
Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: NIV
Listen to me and remember what I say. NLTse
Treasure and ponder each of these next words: TM

The Spiritual Benefit of Studying Scripture

I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation.Ps.119:99

The study of God-breathed Scripture is the main way of discovering how to live. In Scripture, we find teaching on how to be good, and the examples of how blessed men actually lived. These examples are given in writing, like living and breathing images of a godly life, that we may follow their good works. Thus, in whatever way each individual feels he is lacking, he may commit himself to this imitation, finding the right treatment for his malady as from some medicine chest. Whoever wishes to make himself complete in all the branches of moral excellence, he should keep his eyes trained on the lives of God's holy people in Scripture, as if they were living and moving icons, and thus absorb their virtue into himself by imitation. ***Basil of Caesarea (330-79)***

We forgive people since we have been forgiven, and because the penalty of their actions against us have been fully paid for in Jesus Christ. Far be it from us, to expect an additional punishment on them, above the one already inflicted upon them, in Christ as their substitute. May it never be that we declare Christ's suffering insufficient grounds for us to fully forgive them, and in so doing, condemn ourselves in that act of ungrateful unbelief. It is out of our honour and appreciation of Jesus Christ, and what he did for us, that we release people from the obligation to repay us, understanding that the penalty of their violation against us has been discharged by Christ himself. To doubt that is to doubt that we ourselves have been paid for. *Mike Petzer - Complete Redemption*

Don't just pretend to love other people. You have to love them properly. That means you have to hate everything that is bad for them and love everything that is good for them.
Romans 12:9 PEV
You see, if God's spirit is not living inside people, they can't believe any message from God. They can't understand what God wants to teach them. They think it is all stupid. You see, the Holy Spirit is the only one that can help people understand the things of God. People that have God's spirit can think about all these things and understand them. But people that haven't got God's spirit can never understand the people that have got his spirit.
1 Corinthians 2:14-15 PEV
Even though you are Christians you still don't live like Christians. You still let your old human spirits control you. You want things that other people have. And you argue with each other. That shows that you are letting your human spirits control you, not the Holy Spirit. You are still like people that don't know God. 1 Corinthians 3:3 PEV

Biblically, *faith is a power or skill to act in accordance with the nature of the kingdom of God, a trust in what we have reason to believe is true.* Understood in this way, we see that faith is built on reason. We should have good reasons for thinking that Christianity is true before we dedicate ourselves completely to it. [Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind*]

Faith is believing "**that**" God exists: *believe that [God] exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*[Heb.11:6] but even the demons believe in God.[Jas.2:19]) **Faith is also believing** "**in**"—it is an active reliance on, or trust in, what you believe is true. Both are necessary for genuine Christian faith. Faith is a response to evidence, not a rejoicing in the absence of evidence.

04/11/2026

Psalm 50

Video: Council of Nicaea 325 AD

Questions

What is Baptism?
Who should be baptised?
What does Baptism do for us?
Is Baptism essential for salvation?
Why do you think that rebaptism used to be penalised by death?
Explain: *buried with him through baptism into death.*[Rom.6:4]

What is Baptism?

Baptism is literally an immersion or washing and always means "*saturated*"—either with water, with the Holy Spirit or with emotion.
In a Christian setting baptism is an immersion into God
By the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body (the Church)—Conversion
By people in water—as a declaration of conversion
By Jesus in the Holy Spirit—empowerment to live for God and be His Witness

Who should be baptised?

Those who Believe. Believer's Baptism is for Believers—those who have already been baptised into the Body of Christ.
Believer's Baptism is an Acknowledgment of Faith in Jesus Christ:
If you believe with all your heart, you can be baptized. [He answered] I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God.[Acts 8:37]
Believers' Baptism **always follows conversion** and **can never precede it**:
Each of you must repent of your sins, turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ to show that you have received forgiveness for your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is to you, and to your children, and even to the Gentiles—all who have been called by the Lord our God.[Acts.2:38-39]

What does Baptism do for us?

Believer's Baptism is the pledge of a clear conscience toward God:
God was patient while Noah was building the ark. He waited, but only a few people went into the ark. A total of eight were saved by means of water. The water of the flood is a picture of the baptism that now saves you also. The baptism I'm talking about has nothing to do with removing dirt from your body. Instead, it promises God that you will keep a clear sense of what is right and wrong. Jesus Christ has saved you by rising from the dead.[1Pet.3:20-21]
Believer's Baptism is an Act of Obedience: *Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*[Acts 2:38]

Is Baptism essential for salvation?

No! Baptism doesn't save us and neither is it a requirement for serving God, but it serves as an illustration of what Jesus has done for us—that we are **dead** to our old life, **alive** to our new life **and** spiritually **clean**:
Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.[Mk.16:16]
Those who aren't baptised, reject God's purpose for their life:
All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.[Lk.7:29-30]

Why do you think that rebaptism used to be penalised by death?

Religion always keeps people away from God by introducing rules and regulations as an intermediary between people and God. And religion always needs a priest to mediate. But Jesus is our Mediator—pastors, preachers, elders, and other Church giftings bring order and accountability but their function is to bring everyone into maturity not to mediate:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Eph.2:11-16

The name Anabaptist means "one who baptizes again". Their persecutors named them this, referring to the practice of baptizing persons when they converted or declared their faith in Christ even if they had been baptized as infants, and many prefer to call themselves "Radical Reformers."[10] Anabaptists require that baptismal candidates be able to make a confession of faith that is freely chosen and so rejected baptism of infants. The New Testament teaches to repent and then be baptized, and infants are not able to repent and turn away from sin to a life of following Jesus. The early members of this movement did not accept the name Anabaptist claiming that infant baptism was not part of scripture and was therefore null and void. They said that baptizing self-confessed believers was their first true baptism: *I have never taught Anabaptism. ... But the right baptism of Christ, which is preceded by teaching and oral confession of faith, I teach, and say that infant baptism is a robbery of the right baptism of Christ. [Hubmaier, Balthasar (1526), Short apology.]*

Roman Catholics and Protestants alike persecuted the Anabaptists, resorting to torture and execution in attempts to curb the growth of the movement. The Protestants under Zwingli were the first to persecute the Anabaptists, with Felix Manz becoming the first Anabaptist martyr in 1527. On May 20 or 21, 1527, Roman Catholic authorities executed Michael Sattler. King Ferdinand declared drowning (called the **third baptism**) "*the best antidote to Anabaptism*". The Tudor regime, even the Protestant monarchs (Edward VI of England and Elizabeth I of England), persecuted Anabaptists as they were deemed too radical and therefore a danger to religious stability.

Emperor Justinian (A.D. 529) made rebaptism one of the two heresies penalized by death (the other being Anti-Trinitarianism). During the Reformation this law was enacted by both Catholics and Protestants against the Anabaptists (Zurich decreed the death penalty for Anabaptists in 1526): "*Since in both ecclesiastical and civil law Anabaptism is forbidden under severe penalties, and since the imperial code decrees and orders, on pain of the highest penalty of death, that no one shall have himself baptized a second time or baptize another . . . ."*

Martyrs Mirror, by *Thieleman J. van Braght*, describes the persecution and execution of thousands of Anabaptists in various parts of Europe between 1525 and 1660. Anabaptism stands out among other groups of martyrs, in the fact that during the reform in the 16th and 17th centuries, 30 to 40 percent of martyrs were women.

Explain: *buried with him through baptism into death.* Rom.6:4

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.]

If this passage refers to Water Baptism it would mean that the ceremony of Baptism saves us:

If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

The early Church baptised people immediately they were converted and so there was no need to make any distinction between conversion and baptism.

28/10/2026

Questions

Everything God made was good—so where did evil come from?
Should we blame the devil for our problems?
Jesus defeated the devil at Calvary so why is satan still troubling us?
Will we ever be free from trouble?
How can we overcome our problems?

Everything God made was good—so where did evil come from?

Evil comes from the devil

He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.[1Jn.3:8]
"The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.Matt.13:37-39
God made all things good in the beginning. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.Gen.1:31
But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.2Pet.3:8
Thousand represents a large number **1000** = large number, when linked with years = long time, equates to "the Kingdom of God". **144,000** = 12,000 (12 x 1,000 = many redeemed) from 12 tribes (the redeemed)
Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel… After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.Rev.7:4-9
And so there is no need to take the 6 days of creation as 6x24 hours (especially as our 24 hour day is calculated by the earth's rotation round the sun—and the sun wasn't created till the 4th day)
And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.Gen.1:14-19

The only intimation of the devil's state before he sinned and why he sinned is in Ezekiel

The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:" 'You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendour. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.Ezek.28:11-17
The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."Lk.10:17-20
Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted

up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.Jn.12:28-33

Should we blame the devil for our problems?

Although the devil was the originator of evil, evil now comes from our own heart

A person's own folly leads to their ruin, yet their heart rages against the LORD.Prov.19:3

Why aren't my words clear to you? Because you can't really hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil. You want to obey your father's wishes. "From the beginning, the devil was a murderer. He has never obeyed the truth. There is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his natural language. He does this because he is a liar. He is the father of lies.Jn.8:43-44

But your own evil longings tempt you. They lead you on and drag you away. When they are allowed to grow, they give birth to sin. When sin has grown up, it gives birth to death.Jas.1:14-15

You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.Acts.7:51-53

Jesus defeated the devil at Calvary so why is satan still troubling us?

All spiritual beings have the same eternal characteristic as their Creator—i.e. they cannot be destroyed. That is why humans are different from animals—animals are not eternal and when they die, that is the end of them (our pets will not be in heaven—or hell)! And so when Jesus defeated the devil, he wasn't destroyed (i.e. annihilated) but "bound" or shackled for a long time (i.e. a "thousand years" or the present Kingdom of God, which began from Jesus' death and resurrection and will end when Jesus returns and hands the Kingdom over to His Father.

Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.Rev.12:7-11

Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels because he is spirit and cannot be destroyed:

Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.Matt.25:41

And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.Rev.20:10-15

Will we ever be free from trouble?

Not is this life

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."Jn.16:33

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me.Jn.17:18-21

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith,1Pet.3:8-9

How can we overcome our problems?

Faith—simple yet complete trust in God—He is our Saviour, protector and provider

In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.1Jn.5:3-5

but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.1Jn.4:3-4

I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.1Jn.2:14

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.Rom.12:21

21/10/2026

Psalm 49

Video: Council of Nicaea 325 AD

Questions

What is religion?
Why is religion universal to all cultures?
Why is Christianity true?
Why are other religions false?
Does it matter which religion we follow?

Comments

What is religion?

Religion is the beliefs behaviours and practices that generally relate humanity to supernatural and spiritual elements. There are an estimated 10,000 distinct religions worldwide. Four religions—Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism—account for over 73% of the world's population
The term *religion* comes the Latin word *religiō—re* (meaning *'again'*) + *lego* (meaning *'read'* or *'choose'*, or *'consider carefully'*).
Religion can be good for society if the adherents are pious—in fact the Bible describes true religion as being pious but only if you are not polluted by the world:
Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.[Jas.1:26-27]
This world is not the geographical world that God created but the mindset of the world system that is in opposition to God and His Kingdom
Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. 1Jn 2:15-17
And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh. Ro 13:11-14
All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. Ep 2:3
Eve enjoyed the ascetics of the fruit but went against God's instructions and tried to gain wosdom from the wrong source
When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Ge 3:6-7
For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2Co 10:3-5

Why is religion universal to all cultures?

God made mankind in His image and so we all have an in-built yearning to connect with our Creator.
I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. Eccl 3:10-11
The thought of God stirs a person so deeply that he cannot be content unless he praises Him—because He made us for Himself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in Him. (Augustine of Hippo)

Why is Christianity true? (How can we know that Christianity true?)

Resurrection of Jesus is the evidence

But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 1Co 15:12-20

There are credible witnesses

The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them. Jn 3:31-36

The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid." Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me." Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also." He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come. Jn 8:13-20

Why are other religions false?

Because Religion is the beliefs that relate humanity to the spiritual, there is no natural way of confirming the validity of a thought system/world-view/philosophy that is unseen, unmeasurable and non physical. The only way to validate a religion is by comparing it with what can be seen, measured and is physical—such as historical events, true science, moral values.

God has set a standard and any religion that contradicts God's values and statements (including the value of a human life) is false.

"But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each human being, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being. "Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind. Ge 9:4-6

No one can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for them— the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough— so that they should live on forever and not see decay. Ps 49:7-9

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done. Mt 16:25-27

And God spoke all these words: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before me. "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my

commandments. "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. Ex 20:1-7

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD during the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah: "Go to the Rekabite family and invite them to come to one of the side rooms of the house of the LORD and give them wine to drink." So I went to get Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah, and his brothers and all his sons—the whole family of the Rekabites. I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the room of the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah the man of God. It was next to the room of the officials, which was over that of Maaseiah son of Shallum the doorkeeper. Then I set bowls full of wine and some cups before the Rekabites and said to them, "Drink some wine." But they replied, "We do not drink wine, because our forefather Jehonadab son of Rekab gave us this command: 'Neither you nor your descendants must ever drink wine. Also you must never build houses, sow seed or plant vineyards; you must never have any of these things, but must always live in tents. Then you will live a long time in the land where you are nomads.' We have obeyed everything our forefather Jehonadab son of Rekab commanded us. Neither we nor our wives nor our sons and daughters have ever drunk wine or built houses to live in or had vineyards, fields or crops. We have lived in tents and have fully obeyed everything our forefather Jehonadab commanded us. But when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded this land, we said, 'Come, we must go to Jerusalem to escape the Babylonian and Aramean armies.' So we have remained in Jerusalem." Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying: "This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Go and tell the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, 'Will you not learn a lesson and obey my words?' declares the LORD. 'Jehonadab son of Rekab ordered his descendants not to drink wine and this command has been kept. To this day they do not drink wine, because they obey their forefather's command. But I have spoken to you again and again, yet you have not obeyed me. Again and again I sent all my servants the prophets to you. They said, "Each of you must turn from your wicked ways and reform your actions; do not follow other gods to serve them." Then you will live in the land I have given to you and your ancestors." But you have not paid attention or listened to me. The descendants of Jehonadab son of Rekab have carried out the command their forefather gave them, but these people have not obeyed me.' "Therefore this is what the LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Listen! I am going to bring on Judah and on everyone living in Jerusalem every disaster I pronounced against them. I spoke to them, but they did not listen; I called to them, but they did not answer.' " Then Jeremiah said to the family of the Rekabites, "This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'You have obeyed the command of your forefather Jehonadab and have followed all his instructions and have done everything he ordered.' Therefore this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Jehonadab son of Rekab will never fail to have a descendant to serve me.' " Je 35:1-19

Does it matter which religion we follow?

Yes.

God is Truth and we can only worship in spirit and truth:

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." Jn 4:23-24

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Jn 14:6

There is only one way to God

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." Ac 4:12

This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. 1Ti 2:3-6

Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge." Ro 3:4

14/10/2026

Questions

What did Jesus mean by *"this is My body which is broken for you;"*?
How did God show His anger with sin?
Why are there still differences and divisions within the Church?
Who should decide what differences are acceptable or unacceptable?
Should we place any restrictions on divisive people?
Is there a difference between forgiveness and restoration?

What did Jesus mean by *"this is My body which is broken for you;"*?

Jesus meant that the broken bread represented His broken body (not that the bread became flesh). By sharing the bread, Jesus showed that His Body was also to be shared (i.e. the benefits of His broken Body was to be shared and participated in—forgiveness of sins, peace with God, wholeness, unity, etc.).

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.1Cor.10:16-17

Although Jesus' body was broken, it was raised a whole body—an immortal body, never to experience pain, death or decay. And we are now part of Jesus' Body

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 1Cor.12:27
So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.Rom.12:5
After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body.Eph.5:29-30

How did God show His anger with sin?

God cannot look upon sin and when Jesus became sin for us, the sun was darkened, showing figuratively that God had forsaken Jesus.

Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing.Hab.1:17
From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").Matt.27:45-46

Why are there still differences and divisions within the Church?

We are individuals and have our own personality and preferences

We need to be different is some are wrong!

In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. 1Co 11:17-19
Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. 1Jn 2:18-23

We live in a sin environment and we "get dirty" from the world

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. Jas 1:27
He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole

body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. Jn 13:6-11

We are holy but are still being sanctified—

Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary. Heb 10:11-18

we are not yet perfect

I *want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Phl 3:10-14*

Who should decide what is an acceptable difference and what is an unacceptable difference (either doctrine or moral)?

Depends on each situation but generally, the "*yard-stick*" for doctrine would be the *Apostles' Creed* or the *Nicene Creed*

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth;
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God the Father, the Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, and of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father (and the Son). With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Moral distinction would be dependent upon what position they have in the Church
The guides for Leadership are found in 1Timothy and Titus

Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money...1Tim.3:1f

In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons…1Tim.3:8f*

Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth… 1Tim.3:14f

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.Tit.1:5-9

Those who are not in a public office are not held to the same standard as those who hold a public office in the Church

Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.Jas.3:1-2

But we should be in no doubt what God has done for us and live accordingly

Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.1Cor.6:9-11

Should we place any conditions on divisive people if they want to return?

But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned. Tit 3:9-11

Repentance is essential (together with a renouncing of sin

c.f. CofE "*baptism*" liturgy:

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light. To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him. Therefore I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

I reject them.

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

I renounce them.

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

I repent of them.

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

I turn to Christ.

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

I submit to Christ.

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

I come to Christ.

Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them.Lk.17:4

But even with repentance, it might be necessary to impose some conditions so people are protected—the returning repentant so they don't return to their sins and others so they are protected should the person fall back again.

So watch yourselves. "If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them." The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you. Lk 17:3-6

What is the difference between forgiveness and restoration?

Forgiveness is unconditional; restoration is conditional on repentance—which involves at least a determination to change

Forgiveness is a clean slate; restoration is keeping the slate clean.

Forgiveness is mending what was broken; Restoration is making it work again.

However, although forgiveness is unconditional (that what Grace is), restoration is conditional on repentance.

But now God commands all people everywhere to repent.[Acts.17:30]

But unless you repent, you too will all perish.[Lk.13:5]

Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them.[Lk.17:4] *Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.*[Matt.3:8]

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret.[2Cor.7:10]

Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.[Rev.3:19-20]

Repentance will always include these 5 A's

1 **Acknowledgement** of the wrong
2 **Apology** for the wrong
3 **Action** of determination to change
4 **Appreciation** of God's forgiveness
5 **Attitude** of grace, gratitude and gentleness towards God and people

An awareness of forgiveness will prompt great love

"Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."Lk.7:41-50

07/10/2026

Psalm 48

Video: What Should Christians Be Looking for in a Church (GK)

What's your normal? *At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed.*[Acts.14:1]

Questions

What is a habit?
What godly habits should we form?
What is the Church?
What should Church be like?
What are Biblical essentials for Church?
What can we do to meet those Biblical essentials for Church?

Comments

What is a habit?

A habit is something you do without having to think about it—an established custom, a usual practice. We should promote habits of faith-full ideals, wholesome practices and godly values—and these will sustain us in times of trouble.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. Phl 4:8-9

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Jos 1:8-9

Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him." Selah But you are a shield around me, O LORD; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head. To the LORD I cry aloud, and he answers me from his holy hill. Selah Ps 3:2-4

What godly habits should we form?

Meeting together as Christians (Church)

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.Heb.10:25

Love and hospitality

Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.Heb.13:1-2

Giving praise to God and sharing with others

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.Heb.13:15-16

Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God. Lk 24:52-53

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Ac 2:42

Remembering others in prayer

We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 1Th 1:2-3

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe. 1Th 2:13

What is the Church?

Church is Christ's Body

And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. Col 1:18

Church is God's Temple (the place where God is present)

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ep 2:19-22

Church is God's Household

Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. 1Ti 3:14-15

Church is always an activity with purpose.

In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. 1Co 11:17-18

We don't come together casually but determine to give our best to God because He deserves it. Worship means worth-ship; what God is worth to me.

Church is a fellowship—a common-union, partnership and a participation (not an agitation)

The word **Church** is from the Greek ἐκκλησία (Eklesia) meaning **a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place for the purpose of deliberating** (deliberating = discourse or debate with action taken after careful consideration).

- ***Gathering:*** Church is always a *gathering* of people never just 1 or 2 people in their home.
- ***Citizens:*** Christians are *citizens* of heaven. This has nothing to do with our natural or first birth but solely to do with our second birth from above:

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household.Eph.2:19

But our citizenship is in heaven. Phil.3:20

- ***Called:*** We have responded to God's call and are doing something about it. Church is when we leave our home thinking - lunch, business, family, friends, leisure etc. to worship God with a single mind:

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 2Pet.1:3

- ***Public:*** Church meets in *public* not in private. We are not a secret society or cult. We are transparent and accountable.

Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace. For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand. And I hope that, as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus.2Cor.1:12-14

Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God. 2Cor.2:17

- ***Purpose:*** Our meetings are deliberate, we intend to take action after hearing the facts:

they received the message with great eagerness and studied the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.Acts 17:11

We are *Church* when we come together in public to make quality decisions to change after spending time in God's presence.

What should the Church be like?

Happy, joyful, reverent, orderly, accountable, safe, secure.

Church should be a place where God's glory is tangible.

Glory belongs to God, whose power is at work in us. By this power he can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory belongs to God in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time and eternity! Amen.[Eph.3:20-21]

We should always honour God and give Him the glory:

Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory![Rev.19:6-7]

Church should be a place where God displays His Wisdom:

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.[Eph.3:10-12]

The Holy Spirit imparts God's wisdom to us:

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit… All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.[1Cor.12:7-11]

Church should be a place where God's Word is preached with prayerful and careful preparation.

Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.[2Tim.2:15]

They read from the Book of the Law of God and clearly explained the meaning of what was being read, helping the people understand each passage.[Neh.8:8]

Church should be a place where true prophecy is promoted.

Although Prophesy may foretell, its main purpose is to forthtell—it is about promoting Jesus not predicting the future. True prophecy will always promote Jesus and Jesus' values:

Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.[Rev.3:10]

Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy… But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort... He who prophesies is.. so that the church may be edified.[1Cor.14:1-5]

Church should be a place where we are committed to one another.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.[Acts.2:42-47]

Speak to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort… so that the church may be edified.[1Cor.14:3-5]

Church should be a joyful place where we find spiritual and emotion strength. *I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the LORD." Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem! Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together, where the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, to the Testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD.*[Ps.122:1-4]

The Church described as Jerusalem (Mt. Zion): *These two women serve as an illustration of God's two covenants. The first woman, Hagar, represents Mount Sinai where people received the law that enslaved them. And now Jerusalem is just like Mount Sinai in Arabia, because she and her children live in slavery to the law. But the other woman, Sarah, represents the heavenly Jerusalem. She is the free woman, and she is our mother… And you, dear brothers and sisters, are children of the promise, just like Isaac. But you are now being persecuted by those who want you to keep the law, just as Ishmael, the child born by human effort, persecuted Isaac, the child born by the power of the Spirit. But what do the Scriptures say about that? "Get rid of the slave and her son, for the son of the slave woman will not share the inheritance with the free woman's son." So, dear brothers and sisters, we are not children of*

the slave woman; we are children of the free woman.[Gal.4:24-31]
I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."[Rev.21:2-5]

Church should be a place where we encourage and are encouraged—
Church attendance should not be a formal ritual but a forum to encourage one another:
And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.[Heb.10:24-25]

Where we are blessed and are a blessing—Abraham is our faither in the faith
"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. Ge 12:2
And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. And he is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. Ro 4:11-12
"Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was only one man, and I blessed him and made him many. Isa 51:1-2

If we don't encourage others when we meet together, we are not Church—even if we call it a "Church Service"!
That's why we should always bring something to give:
So here's what I want you to do. When you gather for worship, each one of you be prepared with something that will be useful for all: Sing a hymn, teach a lesson, tell a story, lead a prayer, provide an insight.[1Cor.14:23]

What are Biblical essentials for Church?
Honour—especially in honouring Jesus. Church must honour Jesus' eternal identity as well as His human identity. Jesus is co-eternal with the Father, He was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered, died and rose again, ascended to heaven in glory where He reigns and will return in bodily form.
(Jesus is the Word of God and Church must honour the Written Word of God as well as the Living Word of God)
Credibility, accountability, responsibility. Church has the responsibility to disciple people. A disciple is a follower or an apprentice—and so a Christian disciple is a follower of Christ. To disciple someone is to train them in righteousness but it reserves the right to bring discipline, in order to protect them and others from wrong doctrine and wrong lifestyle.
Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. 1Tim.4:7
Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarrelling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. 2Tim.2:14-16
"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it

produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.Heb.12:5-11
For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in love and with a gentle spirit?1Cor.4:20-21

What can we do to meet those Biblical essentials for Church?
Keep our love for God alive and passionate (love is a commitment not just an emotion).
Stay focused on the Word of God—the Written Word of God as well as the Living Word of God
Belong to an organisation that is credible and larger than the local congregation.
Keep Jesus' commands—especially His last ones:
When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."Matt.28:17-20*
He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name… Mk.16:15-17
Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."Lk.24:45-49
You must follow me."Jn.21:22
The Anabaptists.
The Reformation was not pre-planned with a strategy and purpose in view. Rather it evolved because of frustrations with the religious, political and social constraints of the time. What started with an objection to the practice of indulgences, became a fully-fledged 'Freedom Movement', with the belief in the importance of Scripture and the doctrine of '*Justification by Faith Alone'*, as core values. When Zwingli, let the town council have the final say on the disposition of the Mass and the use of images, rather than Scripture, some objected. They felt that Zwingli had "abandoned his avowed position of no compromise where the Word of God had spoken."
With their appetite for change whetted, this group in Zürich was determined to restore the church to N.T. principles. The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren records their actions:
After the prayer, Georg Blaurock stood up and asked Conrad Grebel in the name of God to baptize him with true Christian baptism on his faith and recognition of the truth. With this request he knelt down, and Conrad baptized him, since at that time there was no appointed servant of the Word. Then the others turned to Georg in their turn, asking him to baptize them, which he did. And so, in great fear of God, together they surrendered themselves to the Lord. They confirmed one another for the service of the Gospel and began to teach the faith and to keep it. This was the beginning of separation from the world and its evil ways.
This group was nicknamed '*Anabaptists'* meaning '*rebaptized*', though the label was never used by the Anabaptists themselves and was often vigorously objected to by them because "*of the opprobrium and criminal character attached to the name. [Since] Justinian's time (A.D. 529) rebaptism [was] one of the two heresies penalized by death.*"
Greg Koukl
Church should be Objective:
Have a high view of Scripture *i.e.*, be careful in the use of Scripture. Don't try to find secret information there, or read between the lines, or make metaphors out of historical events. Church should practice their high view of Scripture, not just declare it and a place where you are spiritually fed from the Word of God.
Church should be Accountable:

Be a place where you can be useful. Every Christian has been gifted by the Holy Spirit and there must be opportunities to exercise your spiritual gifts—but with accountability. We must use our gifting to build up the community

Church should be Subjective:

Be a place to call home because you "feel" at home. There must a "feel-good" factor for you.

Also it must be a place where the Leadership is respected. If you lose respect for the leadership it is difficult to be part of it. (Respect is linked to credibility and is earned not imposed.)

29/09/2026

Psalm 47

Video: Why Is Jesus the Only Means of Salvation (GK)

Questions

What is God's glory?
In what ways are we now like God?
What is God's purpose for our life.
Can we reject God's purposes for us?
How can we fulfil God's purpose for us?

Comments

What is God's glory?

God's glory is His presence, which is spiritual yet tangible. Words used to describe God's glory are: light, awesome, purity, holiness, splendour, beauty, etc.
The Greek word for *glory* is "*doxa*" (from where we get doxology) and means to think or recognize—the glory of God is what He is essentially. To give glory is to give honour, *i.e.*, praise, applause.
Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?Ex.15:11
LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger [You have taught children and infants to tell of your strength, silencing your enemies and all who oppose you]. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! Ps 8:1-9
God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen.1Tim.6:15-16
I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there.Rev.21:22-25

God is covered in glory like clothes

The LORD wraps himself in light as with a garment;Ps.104:2
Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm: "Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself? Do you have an arm like God's, and can your voice thunder like his? Then adorn yourself with glory and splendour, and clothe yourself in honour and majesty.Job.40:6-10
There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.Matt.17:2

Glory is also angels' clothes:

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.Acts,1:9-10

In what ways are we now like God?

We are "**persons**" (i.e. have a personality)
We are **Spiritual** (i.e. eternal), and Christians are spiritually alive (i.e. in relation with God)
Religious—humans are fundamentally religious
Rational—humans have the mental capacities to will, think, reason, reflect, and/or to recall.
Reflective—humans reflect God's moral attributes and virtuous character.
Responsible— humans **f**ulfil certain socio-economic responsibilities to be productive, to be creative (artistically), and to exercise creation care through stewardship.

Resemblance—humans resemble God by means of analogy and the exercise of free choice. (To image something, or to be in something's likeness, is to represent, resemble, copy, or picture it in some way—a flag represents a country but does not resemble it.)

What is God's purpose for our life.

To glorify God—and enjoy Him

The Westminster Shorter Catechism consist of 107 questions about Christian Doctrine together with answers from Scripture. It was completed in 1647 by the Westminster Assembly and continues to serve as part of the doctrinal standards of many Presbyterian churches.

Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, [a] and to enjoy him for ever. [b]

[a]. Ps. 86:9; Isa. 60:21; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; Rev.4:11

[b]. Ps. 16:5-11; 144:15; Isa. 12:2; Luke 2:10; Phil. 4:4; Rev.21:3-4

Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, [a] is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him. [b]

[a]. Matt. 19:4-5 with Gen. 2:24; Luke 24:27, 44; 1 Cor. 2:13; 14:37; 2 Pet.1:20-21; 3:2, 15-16

[b]. Deut. 4:2; Ps. 19:7-11; Isa. 8:20; John 15:11; 20:30-31; Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 John 1:4

Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, [a] and what duty God requires of man [b].

[a]. Gen. 1:1; John 5:39; 20:31; Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 3:15

[b]. Deut. 10:12-13; Josh. 1:8; Ps. 119:105; Mic. 6:8; 2 Tim.3:16-17

To share in God's glory.

He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2Thes.2:14

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. Jn 17:20-24

For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 2Cor.5:4-5

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. Phil.3:20-21

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ") Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. Jn 1:14-18

And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name." Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When

my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen." Ex 33:17-23

But in order to share in God's glory we must be saved

This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. 1Ti 2:3-6

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.2Pet.3:9

That transformation into God's glory started at conversion and continues as contemplate (literally: *mirror*) God's glory:

*And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, **are** being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*[2Cor.3:18]

But we shall be perfectly changed into His image and glory when we see Him when He appears

But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.1Jn.3:2-3

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.1Pet.4:12-14

Can we reject God's purposes for us?

NO and Yes!

No, we can't stop God's purposes because He is Sovereign and greater than any opposition

Then Job replied to the LORD: "I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42:1-6

Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the LORD in the front of the new courtyard and said: "LORD, the God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you. 2Ch 20:5-6

Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Ac 4:27-28

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. Ep 1:11-12

If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.1Jn.3:20

Yes, we can reject God's purposes for our own life if we intentionally oppose God

Do not be afraid," Samuel replied. "You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless. For the sake of his great name the LORD will not reject his people, because the LORD was pleased to make you his own. As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right. But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will perish."1Sam.12:20-25

(All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.)Lk.7:29-30

If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.Heb.10:26-31*

How can we fulfil God's purpose for us?

Believe God

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." Jn 6:26-29

When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son. "I am about to go the way of all the earth," he said. "So be strong, act like a man, and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations, as written in the Law of Moses. Do this so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go and that the LORD may keep his promise to me: 'If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel.' 1Ki 2:1-4

Stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people

Keep in step with the Holy Spirit

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.Gal5:25

Fix our eyes on Jesus

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.Heb.12:1-3

Set our minds on heavenly things

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.Col.3:1-4

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.Phil.4:8-9

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect [or contemplate] the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.2Cor.3:18

23/09/2026

Psalm 46

Video: Choosing a Bible_ What Pastors and Scholars Recommend (Formats, Translations & More)

How to Pray

Questions

What is "prayer"?
Can anyone pray?
Is there a difference between talking to God and praying to God? Explain!
How can we pray an "effective prayer"?
What is the difference between "wishing" and "believing"?
Does God answer us if we doubt when we pray?
How should we pray for our political leaders?
Give some examples of prayers in the New Testament

Comments

What is "prayer"?

Prayer from Latin *prex* meaning: *an entreaty*. To pray is to address a deity or an object of worship; also to ask or beseech someone (in general conversation). Thus, to address God is prayer—but Christian prayer (which is now the only true prayer) is communicating with God through Jesus Christ

There are many sorts of prayer

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, Ep 6:18-19

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 1Ti 2:1-4

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Phl 4:4-7

In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, Phl 1:4-5

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Heb 5:7

Can anyone pray?

Anyone can talk to God, but prayer is different from merely talking to God—it is connecting with God. Unbelievers do not have an open line of communication with God.

The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.[Prov.15:29]

The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.[Prov.15:8]

And so before we became a Christian our talking to God could not really be called prayer because we were not righteous—we had no faith in God:

Without faith it is impossible to please God.[Heb.11:6]

Abraham believed God [had faith] and it was credited to him as righteousness.[Rom.4:3]

It is through prayer that we communicate with God—and the hymn puts it this way:

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air…

Our first real prayer to God was to call on Him to save us:

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice, returning from his ways.

Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced. Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."

But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?[Rom.10:11-14]

And now after conversion, prayer is a way of life—we relate to God through prayer:

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.[1Thess.5:16-18]

Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.[1Tim.2:8]

However, to pray effectively we need to keep in faith and keep away from sin:

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me![Ps.66:18-20]

But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.[Matt.6:15]

Anyone can talk to God but only Believers can talk to God and be confident that He hears them.

But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do. [People who "worry their prayers" are like wind-whipped waves. Don't think you're going to get anything from the Master that way, adrift at sea, keeping all your options open.]Jas.1:6-8

The only way to come to God is through Jesus, and so the only way we can communicate with God is in the name of Jesus. We should not get involved with "*inter-faith*" worship or prayers because they are treating other deities as objects of worship—c.f. the 1st and 2nd Commandments.

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them;Ex.20:3-5

"See now that I myself am he! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand. Dt 32:39

"How great you are, Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears. 2Sa 7:22

I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting people may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. Isa 45:5-6

So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that "An idol is nothing at all in the world" and that "There is no God but one." For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. 1Co 8:4-6

Is there a difference between talking to God and praying to God? Explain!

Yes! Anyone can talk to God but only Believers can pray—

But God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman… Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live.[Gen.20:3-7]

Eliphaz also talked to God but job prayed to God: After had said these things to Job, he the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has… My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has." …and the LORD accepted Job's prayer.[Job 42:7-9]

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' Mt 7:21-23

Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul

I know about, but who are you?" Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. Ac 19:13-16
but even New Covenant Believers can end up talking <u>to</u> God rather than talking <u>with</u> God!

Prayer should be a dialogue where we respond to God speaking to us through His Word
We learn to speak to God because God has spoken to us and speaks to us… God's speech in Jesus Christ meets us in the Holy Scriptures. If we wish to pray with confidence and gladness, then the words of Holy Scripture will have to be the solid basis of our prayer. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible"*
On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: " 'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.' Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. Ac 4:23-31
God's Name, God's Kingdom and God's Will must be the primary object of Christian prayer. Of course it is not as if God needed our prayers, but they are the means by which the disciples become partakers in the heavenly treasure for which they pray. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost Of Discipleship*
Prayer is not a formula for getting what we want but the expression of the soul's sincere desire. However, God does hear our prayers and He does answer our prayers. Maturity is trusting God with His answers!
Before they call, I will answer.[Is.65:24]
Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.[Matt.6:8]
God can't answer our prayers if we haven't prayed them! But God does answer prayers when we ask according to His will!
This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.[1Jn.5:14-15]
How can God hear all our prayers at once? This is what children ask, but the question comes up with adults, too. The answer is easy, though. God doesn't learn our requests by listening to them. Since God is omniscient—He knows everything, including our prayers before we pray them—He gains no information when we pray. He has always known what our prayer would be. Having always known, He's also always known how He would respond. The purposes of His will regarding the prayer have been eternally established.
Prayer is not just an empty ceremony, though. God's knowledge of our prayer depends on the fact that we pray. If we don't pray, then there is no prayer for God to have known in advance. He only knows our prayers beforehand because we actually choose to pray them in the future. That's why, even with a God who knows everything—including our prayers in advance—prayer still matters. *Greg Koukl*
You think like a man instead of thinking like God. Your thoughts concerning God are too human! …When we pray, we must hold fast and believe that God has heard our prayer. It was for this reason that the ancients defined prayer as an *Ascensus mentis ad Deum*, "a climbing up of the heart unto God." *Martin Luther*

Remorse before Calvary is of God; remorse after you have been to Calvary is of the devil. Repent of your sin, yes; but do not make your sin a subject for long and melancholy meditation. Why should I cheat God by spending my time and energy on remorse? I am greater than my sins. *Martin Luther*
Religion is following a set of rules; Christianity is following Jesus Christ. Religion always spiritualises God; Jesus humanises God. Religion keeps people away from God; Christianity unites people with God through Jesus. Religion is man's attempt to get to God; Christianity is God coming to the people in Jesus. Religion is a ritual, a dogma, a ceremony; Christianity is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Prayer is communion with the Father; it is pondering what His Word says about our ideas and conforming our concepts to His. Never contemplate that sacred season with demons on your mind. Never project a war with darkness or anticipate a battle with evil forces. *Christ did all of that for us, in our name.*[Col.1:13; 2:15] *T.L.Osborn*

How can we pray an "effective prayer"?

We must be counted "*righteous*" by God and pray "*in faith*", *i.e.* we must be a Believer and we must have confidence in God
And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.Jas.5:15-16

What is the difference between "wishing" or "hoping" and "believing"?

We can be totally convinced that God will give us what we ask for, but **prayer only works if God answers**! If God doesn't answer our prayer, no matter what we hope for or wish in prayer, it won't happen!
Faith is believing but it's irrelevant what you believe if God hasn't said it! Faith is staying in fellowship with God and enjoying Him—even when you are sick and everything seems to be going wrong. *Andrew Corbett*
Our spirit and soul have many similar attributes and are often confused but they are distinct
For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Heb 4:12
May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1Th 5:23
Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. Ps 42:11

Does God answer us if we doubt when we pray?

God may answer us, but it will be no credit to us.
Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed at that moment.Matt.9:22
He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."Mk.5:32
"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.Mk.10:51-52
Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."Lk.17:17-19
But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.Jas.1:6-8

How should we pray for our political leaders?

We can and should work and pray for the peace and prosperity of our community because

when our community prospers, we too will prosper

Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.Jer.29:7

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.1Tim.2:1-4

so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his sons.Ezra.6:10

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.Rom.13:1-2

Give some examples of prayers in the New Testament

The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.Matt.15:25

"Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:" 'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.' Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."Acts.4:24-30

constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.Rom.1:9-10

Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favourably received by the Lord's people there, so that I may come to you with joy, by God's will, and in your company be refreshed. The God of peace be with you all. Amen.Rom.15:31-33

In their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.2Cor.9:14

Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong—not so that people will see that we have stood the test but so that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is that you may be fully restored.2Cor.13:7-9

I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.Eph.1:16-19

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, *may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.Eph.3:16-19*

Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.Eph.6:19-20

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.Phil.1:9-11

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,Col.1:3

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation

be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.Col.4:2-6
We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers.1Thess.1:2
Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.1Thess.3:10
With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.2Thess.1:11-12
As for other matters, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured, just as it was with you. And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil people, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.2Thess.3:1-5
The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help.1Tim.5:5
I constantly remember you in my prayers.2Tim.1:3
I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ.Phile.1:6
Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honourably in every way. I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.Heb.13:18-19
Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.Jas.5:14-16
If you see any brother or sister commit a sin that does not lead to death, you should pray and God will give them life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that you should pray about that. All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.1Jn.5:16-17
I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.3Jn.2

16/09/2026

Psalm 45

Video: THE IMAGO DEI REVEALED THROUGH GENESIS, Part 2 9

Imago Dei —God's Image

How is God imaged in the first place?

What is God like?

How is God understood?

Imago Dei's 3 categories:

(i) Substantial — *with unique capacities including bipedalism, superior intelligence, use of language, and self-consciousness;*

(ii) Functional — *as representatives of God to steward creation; and,*

(iii) Relational — *with an inherent capacity for relationship with God, with other human beings, and with creation, including flora and fauna.*

Over time these three Imago Dei categories were further distinguished as:

(i) The Religious View — also listed in the Functional, and also referred to as the Vocational, or, Priestly view. Humankind is fundamentally religious — *homo religiosus*. John T. Swann is a major prominent proponent of this view.

(ii) The Rational View —also listed in the Substantialist or as the Noetic view. Humankind as the imago Dei is distinguished from other animals because humans have the mental capacities to will, think, reason, reflect, and/or to recall. Proponents of this view include: Irenaeus (c. 130 — c. 202), Athanasius (c. 296 — 373), and Thomas Aquinas (1225 — 1274).

(iii) The Reflective View — when we say humankind is created in God's image we mean that humans reflect God's moral attributes and virtuous character. This view is grounded in the idea of imago Dei *as imitatio Christi* (the imitation of Christ). Proponents of this view include Phillip Edgcumbe Hughes (1915—1990).

iv) The Responsible View — this is also known as the Representational view. Humankind is to image God by fulfilling certain socio-economic responsibilities to be productive, to be creative (artistically), and to exercise creation care through stewardship. Proponents of this view include Sandra L. Richter and Richard Bauckham.

(**v) The Resemblance View** — this is also known as the Mimetic view. Humankind resembles God by means of analogy and the exercise of free choice. Proponent, Chad McIntosh acknowledges that "To image something, or to be in something's likeness, is to represent, resemble, copy, or picture it in some way." ... A flag represents a country but does not resemble it." While the Reflective view is about reflecting God's moral character, the Resemblance view is broader and focuses on resembling certain of God's capacities such as Proponents of this view include Augustine (354-430), Martin Luther (1483—1546), and Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906 — 1945).

What has the grace of God done for you? *When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.*[Acts.11:23]

Questions

What is "grace"?

What difference has grace made to your life?

What is worship?

How can we worship if we are beset with problems?

How can we set our hearts at rest if we have fear, worry or anxiety?

How can we stay gentle, grateful and graceful?

Comments

What is "grace"?

The Greek word for "*grace*" in the Bible is "*charis*"—from where we get "*charismatic*". Grace is defined as "*that which causes joy or pleasure for a kindness granted, a benefit, thanks, gratitude; a favour done without expectation of return; the absolutely free expression of the loving kindness of God to us.*"
Grace also refers to our manner—gracefulness or elegance.

We need grace to be saved

No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are." Ac 15:11
for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Ro 3:23-24
For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! Ro 5:17

We need grace to worship God:

If then, we have a kingdom which will never be moved, let us have grace, so that we may give God such worship as is pleasing to him with fear and respect.[Heb.12:28]

We need grace to mature

"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. Ac 20:32

Grace comes through Jesus Christ

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ") Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. Jn 1:14-18
For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. 2Co 8:9
May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 2Co 13:14

Grace come thorough knowing God—the Father and Jesus

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 2Pe 1:2

What difference has grace made to your life?

God's Grace has made us spiritually rich and graceful for which we are grateful

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.2Cor.8:9
One who loves a pure heart and who speaks with grace will have the king for a friend. Pr 22:11

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1Pe 4:10-11

Grace imparts God's glory.

But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.Heb.2:9-11
Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. Ac 6:8

God will not share his glory with another

I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.Is.42:8

But in Christ, we are not "another," we are one with Him.

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. Jn.17:22

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.Rom.8:29-30

What is worship?

The word **"worship"** comes from the old English word "*weorscipe*" meaning "**worth-ship**" and so worship is basically **expressing what God is worth to us.**

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

Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.Rev.14:7

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.Ps.95:6-7

We are to only worship God

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'Lk.4:8

Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.Ex.34:14

At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus."Rev.19:10

As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."Acts.10:25

Worship of God has to be spiritual and honest (as well as doctrinally correct)

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.Jn.4:23-24

For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God [we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus], who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: Phl 3:3-4

And so our conversation and our songs must agree with God's testimony

Sanctify ["set apart for sacred use" or "make holy"] them by the truth; your word is truth. John 17:17

Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 1John 5:10-11

There should be order in worship

Brothers and sisters, what should we say then? When you come together, every one of you brings something. You bring a hymn or a teaching or a word from God. You bring a message in another language or explain what was said. All of those things must be done to make the church strong. No more than two or three people should speak in another language. And they should speak one at a time. Then someone must explain what was said. If there is no one to explain, the speakers should keep quiet in the church. They can speak to themselves and to God. Only two or three prophets are supposed to speak. Others should decide if what is being said is true. What if a message from God comes to someone else who is sitting there? Then the one who is speaking should stop. Those who prophesy can all take turns. In that way, everyone can be taught and be given hope. Those who prophesy should control their speaking. God is not a God of disorder. He is a God of peace.1Cor.14:26-33

Worship is giving ourself to God

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.Rom.12:1

In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. 2Co 8:2-5

Worship may involve our singing

Hezekiah gave the order to sacrifice the burnt offering on the altar. As the offering began, singing to the LORD began also, accompanied by trumpets and the instruments of David king of Israel. The whole assembly bowed in worship, while the singers sang and the trumpeters played. All this continued until the sacrifice of the burnt offering was completed.2Chron.29:27-28

Worship the LORD with joy! Enter his presence with joyful singing! Acknowledge that the LORD is God!Ps.100:2

However, worship is much more than singing songs—it is obedience—doing what God requires willingly and cheerfully:

Abraham said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."… "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."Gen.22:5-18

How can we worship if we are beset with problems?

Worship is a heart response not a head response—it is a spirit not a soul activity. Thus non-Christians can only praise (say good things about God) but cannot worship. Worship is yielding to God, it is harmonising with God and so need to be like with like

Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." Jn 3:6-8

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 1Co 15:50

Put your trust (faith and confidence) in God

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God.Ps.43:5

Stay intimate with God

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."Ps.91:1-2

How can we set our hearts at rest if we have fear, worry or anxiety?

Faith. Faith is trust and trust is peaceable

slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone. Tit 3:2

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. Jas 3:17-18

If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Ro 12:18-19

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. We love Him because He first loved us. 1Jn 4:18-19

Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God1Jn.3:18-21

I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure,Ps.16:8-9

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."Matt.11:29-30

How can we stay gentle, grateful and graceful?

Gentleness, gratefulness and gracefulness are fruit of the Spirit

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Ga 5:22-23

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Col 3:12

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. Ep 5:8-11

And so we need to produce fruit

"This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop. Lk 8:11-15

By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Mt 7:16-20

Stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people

Fix your eyes on Jesus

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.2Cor.4:18

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls Heb.12:1-3

Remember that we have been forgiven all our sins

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. 2Pe 1:5-9

Keep focussed on what is pure

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.Phil.4:8-9

Live grateful and graceful lives

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.Heb.12:14-15

How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?Heb.10:29

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.Heb.4:16

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.Eph.2:8-9

Christ's love makes the church whole. His words evoke her beauty. Everything he does and says is designed to bring the best out of her, dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness.Eph.5:26-27

09/09/2026

Psalm 44:1-8

Video: THE IMAGO DEI REVEALED THROUGH GENESIS, Part 2

New Creation Realities

Questions

What makes us more than the physical components of our body?
Describe what happens to us at conversion
How does the Bible say we should deal with guilt, stress and anxiety?
What is the new life that we have after we are converted?
How does the new life affect our daily life?
Are we responsible for being holy (or unholy)?

Comments

What makes us more than the physical components of our body?

99% of the human body is made up of these six elements—oxygen, carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, calcium, and phosphorus. But of course we are much more than mere chemicals. Along with other sentient creatures, we have feelings, thoughts, emotions which are the product of God's creative life.
In Genesis "living creatures" describes both animals and Adam (they are the same 2 words)

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Ge 1:20-25

Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Ge 2:5-7

But humans are the peak of God's creation and only humans have a spirit that relates to God.

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Ge 1:26-27

Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Ge 2:7

What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! Ps 8:4-9

God breathed His life/spirit into Adam and this image of God (*Imago Dei*) or "*God-life*" is in all of Adam's descendants (which is why creation and evolution are incompatible).

From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' Ac 17:26-28

But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. Ro 5:15-19

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Jas 3:9

and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Col 3:10

A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. 1Co 11:7

However, because Adam sinned and died spiritually, this "*God-life*" is now "*God-dead*"! That is why none of us can live up to the image of God that we were created in because we are all born separated from God and dead to God.

As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." Ro 3:10-12

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. Ep 2:1-3

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Col 2:13-15

This is why we must be born again!

Describe what happens to us at conversion

If you only knew!!

Conversion is not the same as joining a club—it is a re-birth into God's family.

At conversion, we were born-again of an incorruptible seed

Jesus replied, "What I'm about to tell you is true. No one can see God's kingdom without being born again." "How can I be born when I am old?" Nicodemus asked. "I can't go back inside my mother! I can't be born a second time!" Jesus answered, "What I'm about to tell you is true. No one can enter God's kingdom without being born through water and the Holy Spirit. People give birth to people. But the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised when I say, 'You must all be born again.' Jn.3:3-7

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable [or incorruptible], through the living and enduring word of God. 1Pet.1:23

Conversion is a supernatural event where God intervenes deep within the human spirit—it is **a spiritual event that produces a spiritual experience**.

When someone acknowledges Jesus as their Lord and Saviour by repenting of their sins and turning their life over to Jesus' rule and control, they are re-born into a new species of being that the Bible calls a '*new creation*' (actually there are only 2 types of human beings—Believers and unbelievers!).

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.2Cor.5:17-18

Our spirit is re-created to have a new configuration and different characteristics.

The nature of sin in the human spirit is destroyed and the nature of righteousness is implanted in the place of sin nature:

For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.[Rom.6:6-7]

At conversion God takes out our old spirit (heart) and gives us new spirit (heart):

And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.[Ez.36:26-27]

The spirit that we were born with, was dead to God and separated from Him—but our new spirit is alive to God and joined to Him. This new spirit or "*heart*" animates our soul (personality) in the same way that our physical heart animates our physical body.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. Heb.10:19-23

At our conversion, our old order of life passed away and we began a new order of life. The old pattern of life—the way we used to think, see, talk, act, behave and react, went out and a new pattern of life took its place.

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun![2Cor.5:17]

At conversion our past was forgiven and we were cleansed from our sin

"Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land;Is.1:18-19

Our conscience was washed and cleaned

this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.1Pet.3:21-22*

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!Heb.9:14*

Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day."Acts.23:1

We are to keep a good conscience after conversion

command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.1Tim.1:3-7

We keep our conscience clear by confessing our sin

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.1Jn.1:8-2:2

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you."Jn.13:8-10

How does the Bible say we should deal with guilt, stress or anxiety?

Take God's Word seriously and apply them to yourself

When anxiety was great within me, your consolation [comfort; assuring words] brought joy to my soul.Ps.94:19

Make our soul submit to our spirit and praise God (say good and glory things about God and to God)

My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?" Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. Ps 42:10-11

So then, banish anxiety from your heart and cast off the troubles of your body,Eccl.11:10

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert.1Pet.5:6-8

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?Matt.6:24-27

Praising God will lift heaviness and oppression

and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendour. Isa 61:3

Then I will go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God. Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God. Ps 43:4-5

What is the new life that we have after we are converted?

It is abundant life

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.Jn.10:10

It is righteousness, peace and joy

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.Rom.14:17-18

It is light and life

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.[1Pet.2:9]

God has called us into His marvellous light and so our lives should also be marvellous! God's marvellous light (glory) should surround our life with its magnificence and make us magnificent.

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.1Jn.1:5-7

Whoever is a believer in Christ is a new creation. The old way of living has disappeared. A new way of living has come into existence. God has done all this. He has restored our relationship with him through Christ, and has given us this ministry of restoring relationships.[2Cor.5:17-18]

The governing principles for our lives have changed and our behavioural pattern has changed—the way we act and react has changed.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."Eph.5:8-14

God's plan is for us to be governed by new spiritual principles which cover every area of life—and so we should know these new spiritual principles, get used to them, adopt them and adjust

our life to run in line with them. These new spiritual principles also include our conversation and vocabulary. Like Peter, we must not call something unclean if God has made it clean

Do not say anything is not pure that God has made 'clean'… But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. *Acts.10:15;28*

How does the new life affect our daily life?

We are already clean because of God's Word:

Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. Jn 13:10-11

You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. *Jn.15:3-4*

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.Jn.17:17-19

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.Eph.5:25-27

Because we are clean, we should live clean lives

Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. 1Pe 2:11-12

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 1Pe 3:15-17

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. Tit 2:11-14

In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Tit 2:7-8

We are children of light

Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. Phl 2:14-16

You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. 1Th 5:5-6

"The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. Lk 16:8-9

We have an obligation to honour God

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your

adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. Ro 8:9-17

We now have a desire to honour God

Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honourably in every way. I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon. Heb 13:18-19

Yes, LORD, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you; your name and renown are the desire of our hearts. Isa 26:8

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Eze 36:26-27

This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. Heb 8:10

Are we responsible for being holy (or unholy)?

God has made us holy (sanctified)

"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. Ac 20:32

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1Th 5:23

Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. Heb 2:11

But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." Heb 10:12-17

Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Heb 10:9-10

but we still need to live holy lives

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance. 1Pe 1:1-2

The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! Heb 9:13-14

But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 2Th 2:13

How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? Heb 10:29

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honourable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit. 1Th 4:3-8

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. Tit 2:11-14

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Ga 5:25-26

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Ep 5:8-10

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ep 5:15-20

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Col 2:6-7

Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience. Heb 4:11

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Heb 4:14-16

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? Heb 10:19-29

02/09/2026

Psalm 43

Video: THE IMAGO DEI REVEALED THROUGH GENESIS, Part 1 – INTRODUCTION

What's your Testimony?

Questions

What are the advantages of being brought up in a Christian family?
How are the eyes of our heart enlightened? *(Eph.1:17-21)*
How can we open people's eyes to see God? *(Acts.26:17-18)*
How do we set apart Christ as Lord in our heart? *(1Pet.3:15)*
Why should we present our testimony with *gentleness and respect*? *(1Pet.3:15)*
How can we keep our conscience clear? *(1Pet.3:15-16)*
What is the most memorable encounter with God that still brings you joy when you recall it? *(Make that your main testimony!)*

God smiles on us

Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love. Ps 31:16
The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace. So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them. Nu 6:24-27
Make your face shine on your servant and teach me your decrees. Ps 119:135
You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." Heb 1:9
You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. Ps 16:11
Surely you have granted him unending blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence. Ps 21:6
Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them. Ps 126:5-6

Comments

What are the advantages of being brought up in a Christian family?

A Christian heritage gives a foundation to moral and godly values but we each have to come to a personal faith

What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God. What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge." Ro 3:1-4

The natural advantages are physical but spiritual advantages come from the Holy Spirit

We don't place any confidence in physical things, although I could have confidence in my physical qualifications. If anyone else thinks that he can trust in something physical, I can claim even more. I was circumcised on the eighth day. I'm a descendant of Israel. I'm from the tribe of Benjamin. I'm a pure-blooded Hebrew. When it comes to living up to standards, I was a Pharisee. When it comes to being enthusiastic, I was a persecutor of the church. When it comes to winning God's approval by keeping Jewish laws, I was perfect. These things that I once considered valuable, I now consider worthless for Christ. It's far more than that! I consider everything else worthless because I'm much better off knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. It's because of him that I think of everything as worthless. I threw it all away in order to gain Christ and to have a relationship with him.Phil.3:3-9
Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." Jn 3:5-8

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 1Co 15:50 I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 1Co 15:50

And yet God can and does use our natural abilities and giftings! Paul had good academic training which enabled him to write clear, credible and logical doctrinal documents

Then Paul said: I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today.Acts.22:3

But Peter also wrote clear, credible and logical doctrinal documents without any academic training!

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.Acts.4:13

How are the eyes of our heart enlightened? *(Eph.1:17-21)*

I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

The *"eyes of our heart"* **are our spiritual eyes and it is the Holy Spirit who opens them**

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, 1Co 2:10-15

The human spirit is the lamp of the LORD that sheds light on one's inmost being. Pr 20:27

We are to share the good news and God will do the rest. The famer sows the seed but "nature" does the rest. So in God's Kingdom—we sow and God does the rest!

He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come." Mk 4:26-29

Revelation means "unveiling" thus spiritual revelation is spiritual understanding

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. Mt 16:16-17

The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" He replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. Mt 13:10-13

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel." Lk 2:29-32

Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. Ro 16:25-27

Revelation comes from meditation! We should prayerfully consider the Scriptures and apply Biblical principles to our life

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. 2Tim 2:7

How can we open people's eyes to see God? *(Acts.26:17-18)*

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

God's Word is a lamp

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. Ps 119:105

The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. Ps 119:130

For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life, Pr 6:23

We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2Pe 1:19-21

It is as we share God's Word, that people "see" and "hear" but it still takes the Holy Spirit to enable people to perceive and understand

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. 2Co 4:6

In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: " 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. Mt 13:14-17

How do we set apart Christ as Lord in our heart? *(1Pet.3:15)*

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Jesus is Lord must be a personal statement not just a factual statement.

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Col 2:6-7

Be genuine in our faith. We must do more than speak religious words—we must live them as well**.** Hypocrites are not blessed!

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are. Mt 23:13-15

He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice." Lk 8:21

He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." Lk 11:28

Why should we present our testimony with gentleness and respect? *(1Pet.3:15)*

Honour God and good (never the devil or bad)

Honour other people (including their privacy and their reputation). If you can't say anything good, don't say anything at all!

Apply credible sense and common sense to our testimony

for I am your servant; therefore give me common sense to apply your rules to everything I do.Ps.119:125

O Lord, listen to my prayers; give me the common sense you promised.Ps.119:169

Don't exaggerate and don't embellish—if we exaggerate our experience and someone know what actually happened, we will lose credibility

I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit— Ro 9:1
I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie. Ga 1:20
who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles. 1Ti 2:6-7

Keep our doctrine within recognised orthodoxy

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. Jude 3-4
Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. Ep 2:19-20

Don't emphasise un-provable events (including visions, dreams, spiritual encounters)

Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. Col 2:18-19

Angels are real and are an integral part of God's Kingdom

Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." He then added, "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on' *the Son of Man." Jn 1:50-51*

Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen." Ac 12:7-11
Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island." Ac 27:23-26

But the unseen, spiritual world is not our focus

Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God." At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus." Rev 19:9-10
I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!" Rev 22:8-9

Note, John would not have worshiped the angel as God but reverence or honour him as here:

"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they

are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. Rev 3:7-10

How can we keep our conscience clear? *(1Pet.3:15-16)*

Keeping our conscience clear takes effort—we are in a spiritual battle and we must learn to overcome the guilt of our past because of the power of the cross

So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man. Ac 24:16

This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. 1Jn 3:19-20

Be honest and truthful and live a honourable life

Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the emperor. 1Pe 2:11-17

Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. Phl 2:14-16

In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Tit 2:7-8

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 1Pe 3:15-17

Be open to the Holy Spirit

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. Ga 5:16

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Ga 5:25-26

Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil. 1Th 5:19-22

Keep our conscience clean/clear

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.1Tim.4:1-5

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm. 1Ti 1:3-7

Baptism

let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Heb 10:22-25
You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.' Ac 22:15-16
to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him. 1Pe 3:20-22
Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. Mk 16:16
Be Bible literate (so we know what the Bible actually says and not just what other people have said)
Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 2Ti 2:15
Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. Mt 22:29
Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Jn 20:8-9
He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Lk 24:25-27

What is the most memorable encounter with God that still brings you joy when you recall it? Make that your main testimony!

23/08/2026

Psalm 42

Video: THE IMAGO DEI REVEALED THROUGH GENESIS, Part 1 - INTRODUCTION

Questions

What does it mean to "*draw near to God*"? (*Heb.10:22; Jas.4:8*)
How do we approach God?
How does God speak to us today?
How can we know if God is speaking to us?
What should we do when we hear from God?
What are "*paths of righteousness*"*Ps.23* and how to do we stay on them?

Comments

What does it mean to "*draw near to God*"**?** (*Heb.10:22; Jas.4:8*)

Jesus brought God near to us

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). Mt 1:22-23
Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? 2Co 13:5
For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Ep 3:14-19

But Jesus is now in heaven and it is the Holy Spirit who is within us

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. Ro 8:9-11

However, we still need to "*connect*" with God—we need to relate to God, interact with Him and fellowship with Him

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Jas 4:6-8
Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. Heb 10:19-23
The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God. Heb 7:18-19

How do we approach God?

We approach God through (in the Name of) Jesus God's Son

Jesus told him: I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.Jn.14:6
Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.Acts.4:12
Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.Matt.18:19-20
And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.Jn.14:13-14

speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.Eph.5:19-20
Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.Jas.5:14

Anyone can call on the Name of Jesus

"Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."Rom.10:11-13
'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'Lk.13:5
But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.Jn.20:31
And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.Matt.18:5-6

But not all who use Jesus' Name are truly His

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'Matt.7:21-23
Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" Acts.19:13-15
Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.Matt.24:4-5
Surely they intend to topple me from my lofty place; they take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse. Ps 62:4

There is a protocol in approaching God—we come to God through prayer, praise and worship

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.Ps.100:4
The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Heb 10:1
My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you. But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds. Ps 73:26-28
Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.Phil.4:6
For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.Tim.1:4-5

Praise, thanksgiving, salvation, righteousness are the "*clothes*" we wear to approach God

I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. Isa 61:10

How does God speak to us today?

By Jesus (this also means that God speaks in complete harmony with His Son)

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,Heb.1:1-2

Through the Scriptures

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. [Follow what

the LORD taught you and said to you through me. People who don't speak in keeping with those words won't have any hope in the morning. Tell them, "No, we're going to study the Scriptures." People who try the other ways get nowhere—they are completely in the dark!]Is.8:20

from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.2Tim.3:15-17

Through people, creation and circumstances—even sickness—but God will always speak in harmony with what He has revealed about Jesus as recorded in Scripture

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. Ro 1:20

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. Ps 19:1-4

"But I tell you, in this you are not right, for God is greater than any mortal. Why do you complain to him that he responds to no one's words? For God does speak—now one way, now another— though no one perceives it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn them from wrongdoing and keep them from pride, to preserve them from the pit, their lives from perishing by the sword. Or someone may be chastened on a bed of pain with constant distress in their bones, so that their body finds food repulsive and their soul loathes the choicest meal. Their flesh wastes away to nothing, and their bones, once hidden, now stick out. They draw near to the pit, and their life to the messengers of death. Job 33:12-22

Through the Holy Spirit

No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: " 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. Ac 2:16-18

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.Rom.8:16

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.2Cor.1:21-22

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.Eph.1:13-14

Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: Ac 15:27-28

The Holy Spirit gives us peace when we are in agreement with the principles of Scriptures

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.Col.3:15-17

However, we **MUST** stay in fellowship with other **gathered Believers** (that's what the Church is) or we can easily be deceived

let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.Heb.10:22-25

A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment [defies all sound judgment].Prov.18:1

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Ac 2:42

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.1Jn.1:7

How can we know if God is speaking to us?

Know the Bible. Being sure that what think might be God speaking/prompting/nudging us is in agreement the Scriptures

Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. Mt 22:29

The proverbs of Solomon, David's son who was king of Israel, given to grasp wisdom and discipline, to understand deep thoughts, to acquire the discipline of wise behaviour—righteousness and justice and fairness—to give insight to gullible people, to give knowledge and foresight to the young—a wise person will listen and continue to learn, and an understanding person will gain direction—to understand a proverb and a clever saying, the words of wise people and their riddles. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. Stubborn fools despise wisdom and discipline.Prov.1:1-7

Ask God

You know that such testing of your faith produces endurance. Endure until your testing is over. Then you will be mature and complete, and you won't need anything. If any of you needs wisdom to know what you should do, you should ask God, and he will give it to you. God is generous to everyone and doesn't find fault with them. When you ask for something, don't have any doubts. A person who has doubts is like a wave that is blown by the wind and tossed by the sea. A person who has doubts shouldn't expect to receive anything from the Lord. A person who has doubts is thinking about two different things at the same time and can't make up his mind about anything.Jas.1:3-8

Get to know Jesus better

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."1Cor.1:30-31

What should we do when we hear from God?

Obey!

Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey." Ex 24:7

Walk in obedience to all that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess. Dt 5:33

Be careful to obey all these regulations I am giving you, so that it may always go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the LORD your God. Dt 12:28

Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. Dt 30:11-16

If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken. Isa 1:19-20

Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. Your commands are always with me and make me wiser than my enemies. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts. I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word. I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. Ps 119:97-102

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Mt 28:18-20

Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my

own; they belong to the Father who sent me. Jn 14:23-24
Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings! Ac 5:29
For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' " And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world. Heb 4:2-3
Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. 1Pe 1:22

However, if it is life changing we should take counsel from mature Believers who we trust

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. A person finds joy in giving an apt reply— and how good is a timely word! Pr 15:22-23
Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully [evaluate] what is said. 1Co 14:29

What are "*paths of righteousness*"[Ps.23] and how to do we stay on them?

"Paths of righteousness" is our walk with God—both spiritually and morally (they are connected)

My steps have held to your paths; my feet have not stumbled. Ps 17:5
My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside. I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread. Job 23:11-12
Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me. Redeem me from human oppression, that I may obey your precepts. Ps 119:133-134

"Paths of righteousness" is where God leads us

"Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.
Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. Jn 10:1-10
My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. Jn 10:27-28
For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. Ro 8:14
So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Ga 5:16-18

We stay on the "Paths of righteousness" by not being be frightened (fearful), especially by the devil

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.Jn.16:33
Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.Josh.1:9
Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning."Ex.20:20
But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend, I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, 'You are my servant'; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced;

those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish.Is.41:8-11
Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.Rev.1:17-18

We stay on "Paths of righteousness" by staying with the flock

Tell me, you whom I love, where you graze your flock and where you rest your sheep at midday. Why should I be like a veiled woman beside the flocks of your friends? If you do not know, most beautiful of women, follow the tracks of the sheep and graze your young goats by the tents of the shepherds.SofS.1:7-8
A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment. [The one who isolates himself pursues selfish desires; he rebels against all sound wisdom. An unfriendly man pursues selfish ends; he defies all sound judgment.]Pr 18:1
And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Heb 10:24-25
They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Ac 2:42

We stay on "Paths of righteousness" by feeding on God's Word and resting in the Holy Spirit
(*i.e.* relaxing, being comfortable with, staying in harmony with the Holy Spirit).
We need to "*lay down in green pastures*" *i.e.* "*chew the cud*" (meditate on good spiritual food) and follow Jesus' leading the "*by still waters*" by listening to the Shepherd's voice and obeying Him (live by the principles of God's Kingdom)

I am Peter, and this letter is from me. My other name is Simon. I work for Jesus Christ. I am one of his special workers. You people believe in Jesus Christ, just like I do, so I'm writing this letter to you. Jesus helps us trust him, and that is really special for us. Jesus Christ is God, and he saves us. He is always right, and he is always fair. You know, God is really powerful. He is very great, and very good too. He picked us out to be his own people, so we can get to know him properly. And he gives us everything we need to live the right way. And he promised us some very important things, and they are very special to us. He promised that we can think the way he thinks, so that we become really good people. He says that we can get away from bad things. We are not like the people that belong to this world. They want to do bad things, then they go and do those bad things, and they become bad people. But God says that we can get away from all that. So think about what I am saying, and you will know that you have to be as good as you can. You believe in Christ, and you have to keep trying to live his way all the time. This is what you have to do, – you always have to try to do what is right, and you have to try to know God better, – and you have to learn to control yourselves too, – and you have to learn to keep going strong, no matter what happens, – and you have to be good to each other too, so that you will make God happy, – and you have to love other Christians like they are your own brothers and sisters, and you have to love everybody else too. If you keep on living like that more and more, you will get to know our leader, Jesus Christ, better and better. And you will be a good worker that does a good job for him every time. But if you don't live like that, it shows that you don't understand God's message properly. You are like blind people that can't see anything properly. It's like you forget about what God did for you. You used to do wrong things before, but God made you free from all that, and he made you clean inside yourselves. So don't forget that. Don't do wrong things again. My Christian friends, try hard to do all those good things. God picked you to be his own people, and whenever you do those good things, you show everybody that you really are God's people. If you do those things, you will never turn away from God. Then God will be very happy with you, and he will make sure you live with him for ever. You will be in Jesus Christ's family. He is our leader, and he saves us. 2 Peter 1:1, 3-11 PEV

Our mouths are too often, more educated by our circumstances than by the Word of God. If we say with our mouth more about our circumstances than we say about Christ, our mouth serves circumstances rather than Christ and we honour the circumstances with abilities and powers that they certainly do not have. And we also dishonour Jesus because we don't affirm and glorify Him for the reality of what only He is able to do. We need to make up our minds who it is that we're actually ruled over by, who's really in charge! And I want you to know that it's not the devil, it's not your past, it's not how you feel, it's not your boss, it's not the person that's getting mad at you, it's Jesus who's in charge! We affirm Him and Him alone, and to Him alone be the glory. (M.P.)

19/08/2026

Psalm 41

Video: THE IMAGO DEI REVEALED THROUGH GENESIS, Part 1 - INTRODUCTION

Like Father, Like Son *You are just like your fathers.*[Acts.7:51]

Questions

Does God make any distinction between nations, families or gender?
Who belongs to God's family?
What happened to us when we were born-again?
What are the advantages of belonging to God's Family?
Name some spiritual family traits come from our Heavenly Father.
Are generational curses real?

Comments

Does God make any distinction between nations, families or gender?

God did make a distinction between nations, families or gender before the New Covenant:

Israel and other nations

Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." Ex 19:3-6

The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Ge 12:1-3

Within the three days, all the men of Judah and Benjamin had gathered in Jerusalem. And on the twentieth day of the ninth month, all the people were sitting in the square before the house of God, greatly distressed by the occasion and because of the rain. Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have been unfaithful; you have married foreign women, adding to Israel's guilt. Now honour the LORD, the God of your ancestors, and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives." The whole assembly responded with a loud voice: "You are right! We must do as you say. Ezr 10:9-12

(*No Ammonite or Moabite or any of their descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, not even in the tenth generation. Dt 23:3*

Grace trumps law—David was 3 generations from Ruth the Moabitess)

Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. The women living there said, "Naomi has a son!" And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. Ru 4:16-17

Priesthood

Make tunics, sashes and caps for Aaron's sons to give them dignity and honour. After you put these clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons, anoint and ordain them. Consecrate them so they may serve me as priests. "Make linen undergarments as a covering for the body, reaching from the waist to the thigh. Aaron and his sons must wear them whenever they enter the tent of meeting or approach the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they will not incur guilt and die. "This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants. Ex 28:40-43

The LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron: 'For the generations to come none of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer the food of his God. No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed; no man with a crippled foot or hand, or who is a hunchback or a dwarf, or who has any eye defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles. No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any defect is to come near to present the food offerings to the LORD. He has a defect; he must not come near to offer the food of his God. He may eat the most holy food of his God, as well as the holy food; yet because of his defect, he must not go near the curtain or approach the altar, and so desecrate my sanctuary. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.' " Lev 21:16-23

Under the New Covenant there is no spiritual distinctions between gender, age and race

This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.Rom.3:22-24

As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."Rom.10:11-13

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.Gal.3:28-29

remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Ep 2:12-13

'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.Acts.2:17-18

Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel. From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben 12,000, from the tribe of Gad 12,000, from the tribe of Asher 12,000, from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000, from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000, from the tribe of Simeon 12,000, from the tribe of Levi 12,000, from the tribe of Issachar 12,000, from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000, from the tribe of Joseph 12,000, from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000. After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." Rev 7:4-10

Today God deals with individuals not nations—there are only 2 nations in God's opinion—a holy nation (believers) and an unholy nation (unbelievers)!

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1Pe 2:9-10

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him." For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Jn 3:14-17

Whilst there is no spiritual distinctions between gender, age and race, there are still physical, emotional and cultural distinctions

"But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."Mk.10:6-9

But we must be careful to be first of all Kingdom people under the Lordship of Jesus

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Mt 6:33

Who belongs to God's family?

God's family are people who are born again (from above; from God)

Some people did accept him. They believed in his name. He gave them the right to become children of God. To be a child of God has nothing to do with human parents. Children of God are not born because of human choice or because a husband wants them to be born. They are born because of what God does.Jn.1:12-13

I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. [born from above].Jn.3:3

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will

reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'Matt.6:5-13

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God,1Jn.3:1-2

God's family are led by the Holy Spirit

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.Rom.8:14-17

What happens to us when we are born-again?

We are new creations

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 2Co 5:17-18

Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. Ga 6:15

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. Jn 1:12-13

He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. Jas 1:18

We become citizens of Heaven (God's Kingdom)

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."Jn.3:5-8

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, Phl 3:20

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, Ep 2:19

We begin to live spiritually and this life will never end

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable [incorruptible], through the living and enduring word of God.1Pet.1:23

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"Jn.11:25-26

We start to live righteously (our right relationship with God changes our day-to-day lifestyle).

And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him. 1Jn.2:28-29

No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.1Jn.3:9-10

We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them. We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him

who is true. And we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.1Jn.5:18-20

We have a love for God and His people

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 1Jn.4:7-8

God wrote His laws (rules) on our heart (conscience)

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.Ezek.36:26-27

You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.2Cor.3:3

What are the advantages of belonging to God's Family?

We belong to God and have a spiritual family

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.Jn.8:34-36

God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land. Ps 68:6

Who is like the LORD our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of his people. He settles the childless woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the LORD. Ps 113:5-9

We have a clear conscience.

The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!Heb.9:13-14

God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.1Pet.3:20-22

We are no longer a slave to the fear of death

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants.Heb.2:14-16

We have a pure love and enjoyment.

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,1Jn.5:1-3

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.1Tim.1:3-7

Name some spiritual family traits come from our Heavenly Father.

We have God's character

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.Gal.5:22-23

"The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.Ex.34:6-7

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.Ps.103:8
Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.Joel.2:13
I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.Jonah.4:2

We live in the light

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.Eph.5:8-10

Are generational curses real?

They can be real for the unbeliever but Jesus has redeemed us from any curse when He became a curse for us

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. Ga 3:13-14
Then Balaam spoke his message: "Balak brought me from Aram, the king of Moab from the eastern mountains. 'Come,' he said, 'curse Jacob for me; come, denounce Israel.' How can I curse those whom God has not cursed? How can I denounce those whom the LORD has not denounced? Nu 23:7-8
Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest. Pr 26:2

We no longer pay the price for our parents' sin. Genetic problems are not the same as spiritual problems. Parents impart emotional values and expectations to their children. These are not spiritual curses but learnt behaviour (albeit subconsciously).

"In those days people will no longer say, 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' Instead, everyone will die for their own sin; whoever eats sour grapes—their own teeth will be set on edge. Je 31:29-30
The word of the LORD came to me: "What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel: " 'The parents eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? "As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child—both alike belong to me. The one who sins is the one who will die. Eze 18:1-4

However, we do live with the consequences of our forefathers' rebellion/mistakes/poor choices and even the way that life worked out for them.

Remember, LORD, what has happened to us; look, and see our disgrace. Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our homes to foreigners. We have become fatherless, our mothers are widows. We must buy the water we drink; our wood can be had only at a price. Those who pursue us are at our heels; we are weary and find no rest. We submitted to Egypt and Assyria to get enough bread. Our ancestors sinned and are no more, and we bear their punishment. Slaves rule over us, and there is no one to free us from their hands. We get our bread at the risk of our lives because of the sword in the desert. Our skin is hot as an oven, feverish from hunger. La 5:1-10

Some countries, communities and areas do seem to have a mindset that controls/influences them—diet, sport, attitude, etc.

Perversion of the Gospel message puts people under a curse!

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse! Ga 1:6-9

Tithing is Old Covenant law and we are under New Covenant grace—but robbing God will never lead to blessing

"I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty. "But you ask, 'How are we to return?' "Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are

robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe," says the LORD Almighty. "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the LORD Almighty. "You have spoken arrogantly against me," says the LORD. "Yet you ask, 'What have we said against you?' "You have said, 'It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty? But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it.' " Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honoured his name. "On the day when I act," says the LORD Almighty, "they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not. Mal 3:6-18

12/08/2026

Psalm 40:10-17

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 14b

Questions

What are the main differences between the Old Covenant and New Covenant?
What is the difference between a priest and a pastor?
Who can be a minister (servant) in the New Covenant?
What are the Scriptural requirements to be a servant of Christ?
How can we become great in God's Kingdom?

Comments

What are the main differences between the Old Covenant and New Covenant?

Old Covenant	New Covenant
Conflict, struggle and unrest	Reconciliation, rest and peace: *Col.1:19-20; Eph.2:14-18*
Bondage and slavery	Freedom: *2Cor.3:17; Gal.4:21-5:1*
Law weak and useless	Better and permenant: *Heb.7:18-22*
Law of sin and death	Law of Spirit and Life: *Rom.8:2; 2Cor.3:6*
10 Commandments summarized as 2	1 Commandment—Royal law of love: *Jn.13:34-35; Gal.5:14; 1Cor.13:13*
Was an illustration, a type, a shadow	Is the substance and reality: *Col.2:14-17; Heb.10:1*
Was inferior and ineffective	The New Covenant is permenant and effective *Heb.8:6-7*
Was temporary until the New had come	The New Covenant has replaced the Old Covenant (which is now obsolete): *Heb.8:13; 10:9.*
Made people conscious of sin	Conscience is cleansed: *1Tim.1:5/19; Acts 23:1; Heb.9:14; 10:22; 13:18*
God's law written on stone	God's law written in our hearts: *Heb.8:10;10:16; 1Jn.5:10*
People's Responsibility. *If you fully obey… Deut.28*	God's Responsibility: *Heb.8:8-10; Eph.3:10*
People failed to be righteous *Ps.14:1-3;53:1-3*	Jesus is our Righteousness: *1Cor.1:30; 2Cor.5:21; Rom.3:21-22*
People provided animals for sacrifices	God provides His Son as the Sacrifice: *Jn.1:29; 1Cor.5:7; 1Jn.2:2*
People strived for victory	God gives the victory: *1Cor.15:57; 2Cor.2:14*
People separated from God	Nothing separating man from God: *Rom.8:39; Eph.2:7*
Priest was a man who was a descendant of Aaron	Priest is Jesus: *Heb.6:20; 8:1;.10:19-22*
Priest's ministry was limited by death	Jesus' ministry is unlimited by His Resurrection: *Heb.7:26f*
Confessed sin to approach God	Confess Jesus to approach God: *Rom.10:8-10; Heb.4:16;10:19-22*
Sacrifices were continually repeated	Christ' sacrifice was once: *1Pet.3:18; Heb.7:27; 9:26; 10:12*
Sin temporarily covered over *(atoned)*	Sin forgiven and taken away permanently: *Jn.1:29; Lk.24:45-49; Rom.11:27; 1Jn.3:5*
God dwelt in a place	God dwells in people: *Eph.2:22; 1Jn.4:12*
Worship was at Jerusalem	Worship is in spirit at the New Jerusalem: *Heb.12:22-24; Jn.4:23; Phil.3:3; Gal.4:24-26*

People were servants	We are sons and friends (albeit still servants): *2Cor.6:18; Rom.1:1; Jn.15:12-15; Gal.3:26; 4:6-7*

What is the difference between a priest and a pastor?

Priest come from *ἱερεύς hiereús* meaning sacred or holy. A priest is a sacred person serving at God's altar. The word does not have reference to priest's character but to his position.

Don't you know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple, and that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? 1Co 9:13

Priest is a mediator (a go-between) between God and people.

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram,[Gen.14:18-19]

The priest offers sacrifices and intercedes for others. OT priest had to be from the tribe of Levi AND a descendant Aaron (which is why Jesus could not be a priest under the Old Covenant and why Judaism is obsolete)

After you put these clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons, anoint and ordain them. Consecrate them so they may serve me as priests.[Ex.28:41]

The LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: 'A priest must not make himself ceremonially unclean…[Lev.21:1f]

Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. And no one takes this honour on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was.[Heb.5:1-4]

If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood—and indeed the law given to the people established that priesthood—why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? For when the priesthood is changed, the law must be changed also. He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.[Heb.7:11-16]

Christians are also called priests unto God as offering Him spiritual sacrifices

and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. Rev 1:6

You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign on the earth." Rev 5:10

Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. Rev 20:6

Pastor means Shepherd

I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. Jn 10:16

Pastor is a shepherd who cares for and feeds spiritual sheep by teaching and by example.

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.[1Pet.5:1-4]

Then the LORD said to me, "Take again the equipment of a foolish shepherd. For I am going to raise up a shepherd over the land who will not care for the lost, or seek the young, or heal the injured, or feed the healthy, but will eat the meat of the choice sheep, tearing off their hooves. "Woe to the worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock! May the sword strike his arm and his right eye! May his arm be completely withered,

his right eye totally blinded!" Zec 11:15-17

The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them. " 'Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them. " For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice. " 'As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet? " 'Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the LORD have spoken. " 'I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of savage beasts so that they may live in the wilderness and sleep in the forests in safety. I will make them and the places surrounding my hill a blessing. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing. The trees will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in their land. They will know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of those who enslaved them. They will no longer be plundered by the nations, nor will wild animals devour them. They will live in safety, and no one will make them afraid. Eze 34:1-28

Who can be a minister (servant) in the New Covenant?

Everyone who is part of the New Covenant is a servant of Jesus Christ, which makes them "ministers". All Believers have a calling to serve God and to serve in God's Kingdom—we are all sent by Jesus to go into all the world

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."Matt.28:18-20

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.Mk.16:15

Ministry is serving and we can all do something. We have a part to play, however, God has given some servants a specific work to do—and equipped them to serve.

Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.[Eph.4:11-13]
He has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.[2Tim.1:9]
for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.[Rom.11:29]
I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.[Rom.15:15-16]
Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.
Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. 1Co 12:1-11
For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. Ro 12:3-8

What are the Scriptural requirements to be a servant of Christ?

To be servant of Christ we must belong to Christ! However, those who have a more public role should have some experience or they may become conceited and they should credibility or they will bring the Faith into disrepute. Pastor, elder, overseer, bishop are different words but interchangeable.
Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.[1Tim.3:1-13]
The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must

hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.[Tit.1:5-9]

Those in leadership (public service) are held to a higher standard of accountability

Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. Jas 3:1

Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and boast in God; if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of little children, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law, do you dishonour God by breaking the law? As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." Ro 2:17-24

How can we become great in God's Kingdom?

To be great in God's Kingdom we must be the least and become a servant

"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.[Jn.13:13-17]

"Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all—he is the greatest."[Lk.19:48]

When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honour at the table, he told them this parable: "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honour, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honoured in the presence of all your fellow guests. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."[Lk.14:7-11]

They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all." He took a little child and had him stand among them." Taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."[Mk.9:33-37]

Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors [friends of the people]. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.[Lk.22:24-30]

But the very least of us in the New Covenant is greater than any of those under the Old Covenant:

I tell you, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of God is greater than he is![Lk.7:41]

We must be faithful

"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. Mt 24:45-47

"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' Mt 25:23

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? Lk 16:10-12

Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. 1Co 4:2

05/08/2026

Psalm 40:1-10

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 14

Questions

Define "*confidence*".
How did the OT portray the coming Messiah (Christ)?
How can we be confident in Jesus' claim to be the Messiah?
What is the basis for our confidence in God?
How can we be sure that our confidence is real?
Can we still be confident in God if our life appears a failure?

Define "*confidence*".

To be **Confident** is to be **sure** and **certain** about the truth of something.

Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident. One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. Ps 27:3-5

The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever. My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. Though hail flattens the forest and the city is levelled completely, how blessed you will be, sowing your seed by every stream, and letting your cattle and donkeys range free. Isa 32:17-20

being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Phil 1:6

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Heb 4:16

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. Heb 10:19-23

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. Heb 11:1-2

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." Lk 18:9-14

Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Phl 3:1-14

How did the OT portray the coming Messiah (Christ)?

Messiah (Christ) literally means "*Anointed One*" and the Messiah was portrayed as Someone who would come in power and authority to deliver God's people from slavery and oppression.

For the sake of your servant David, do not reject your anointed one. The LORD swore an oath to David, a sure oath he will not revoke: "One of your own descendants I will place on your throne. If your sons keep my covenant and the statutes I teach them, then their sons will sit on your throne for ever and ever." Ps 132:10-12

The first hint of the Messiah was right after the Fall when God told the devil:

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel. Gen.3:15

His Name: *Tell the people of Zion, 'Look! Your Saviour [Yeshua-Jesus] is coming!* Is.62:11

Descendant of Abraham: *The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ.Gal.3:16*

Descendant of Judah: *The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs* Gen.49:10

Descendant of David *'The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son.* 2Sam.7:11-14

Place of birth: *But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel.* Mic.5:2

Date of ministry: *From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.'* Dan9:26

(69 weeks = 69x7years = 483 years—the decree to rebuild Jerusalem = BC455 + 483years = 25AD);

His birth and childhood: *The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.* Is.7:4;9:6-7

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. Hos.11:1

His ministry: *Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honour Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan… For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.* Is.9:1-7

A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out… Is.42:1-4

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...Is.*61

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. Deut.18:15

His death: *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me. My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment. But you, LORD, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me. Ps* 22:14-19

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his

appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Isa 53:1-12

"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. Zec 12:10

His resurrection: *Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay. You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. Ps 16:9-11*

His ascension. *When you ascended on high, you took many captives; you received gifts from people.* [Ps.68:18]

there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; [Dan.7:13-14]

I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him. On that day there will be neither sunlight nor cold, frosty darkness. It will be a unique day—a day known only to the LORD—with no distinction between day and night. When evening comes, there will be light. On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half of it east to the Dead Sea and half of it west to the Mediterranean Sea, in summer and in winter. The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name. The whole land, from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, will become like the Arabah. But Jerusalem will be raised up high from the Benjamin Gate to the site of the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the royal winepresses, and will remain in its place. It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure. Zec 14:2-11

How can we be confident in Jesus' claim to be the Messiah?

Jesus fulfilled the Messianic prophecies.

Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.' Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham,

'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."Acts.3:17-26

The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.Jn.10:24-28

Jesus rose from the dead

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures… If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.[1Cor.15:3-14]

What is the basis for our confidence in God?

God's Name (His character—how He has behaved and what he has done) and **God's Word** (both the Word Incarnate—Jesus—and the Word Inspired—the Scriptures, what God has recorded for us to read and study)

I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.[Ps.138:2]

The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.[Rom.12:3]

How can we be sure that our confidence is real rather than just wishful thinking?

Everything hinges on Jesus' resurrection—it is Jesus' resurrection that validates Christianity.

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve… And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 1Cor.15:3-5;17-20

Once Jesus' resurrection is settled, we can trust the rest of what God says and does.

My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity... My son, do not let wisdom and understanding out of your sight, preserve sound judgment and discretion; they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck. Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.[Pron.3:1-2;21-24]

The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.[Is.32:17]

But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.[Jer.17:7-8]

You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.2Cor.3:3-6

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.Eph.3:10-12

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.Phil.1:3-6

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.Heb.4:14-16

And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.1Jn.2:28-29

Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.1Jn.3:21-23

In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.1Jn.4:17

Can we still be confident in God if our life appears a failure?

Yes! Our "*benchmark*" for success is our testimony of Jesus Christ, not what Church we belong to, how many people we have spoken to, or how many people like us, or support us or even how much influence we have. Our confidence is in God not in circumstances or how we feel.

Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.[1Cor.4:2-4]

But, "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord." For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.[2Cor.10:17-18]

Christian Faith is a spirit.

It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. 2Co 4:13-15

Faith, like hope, is about spiritual matters not temporal, visible matters (

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. Heb 11:1

For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. Ro 8:24-26

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2Co 4:18

What we believe about nature, science, history, politics, etc. is not what impresses God

A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save. Ps 33:17

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. Ps 20:7

The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom. Da 1:19-20

Then Pharaoh woke up; it had been a dream. In the morning his mind was troubled, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him. Ge 41:7-8

"At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for by his family. When he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action. Ac 7:20-22

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. Heb 11:24-27

Not even theology (the study of God) impresses God if we don't act on what we believe!
You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.Jas.2:19
Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. Mt 23:1-3
He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice." Lk 8:21
He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." Lk 11:28
Only what we believe about Jesus (and thus all things spiritual) impresses God.
"Who do people say the Son of Man is?" "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.[Matt.16:13-17]

God expects us to be faithful—in all of its meanings including committed, authentic and full of faith
"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' Mt 25:23
Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." Lk 9:62
Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment. Mt 15:28
Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. Mk 16:14
However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" Lk 18:8
These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. Heb 11:39-40

Because God is faithful, we can (and must) have confidence in Him
I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. Dt 32:3-4
The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in his sight. "To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, 2Sa 22:25-26
I the LORD do not change.Mal.3:6
God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?Nu.23:19
Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.Jas.1:16-18
being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.Phil.21:6

God has promised that nothing will turn out to be a disaster for those who make Him their dwelling:
If you make the Most High your dwelling— even the LORD, who is my refuge—then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent.Ps.91:9-10

For the Believer, ALL things work together for God's glory and their good
And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. [That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good. God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him. After God made that decision of what his

*children should be like, he followed it up by calling people by name. After he called them by name, he set them on a solid basis with himself. And then, after getting them established, he stayed with them to the end, gloriously completing what he had begun.]*R*om.8:28-30*

29/07/2026

Psalm 37:23f

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 13b

Questions

What does it mean to be a citizen of heaven?

How can we "*set our hearts on things above*"? *Col.3:1*

Why is it important to know the Bible?

How much attention should we give to "*prophecy*"?

What responsibilities come with belonging to God's Kingdom?

Comments

What does it mean to be a citizen of heaven?

We are part of God's Heavenly Kingdom (Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Heaven are the same)

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Mt 5:3-6

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. *Eph.2:19-22*

Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. *Phil.3:17-21*

But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. *1Thess.5:4-11*

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. *1Pet.2:9-10*

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. *Eph.2:1-5*

How can we "*set our hearts on things above*"? *Col.3:1*

Do what it says—

You have been raised up with Christ. So think about things that are in heaven. That is where Christ is. He is sitting at God's right hand. Think about things that are in heaven. Don't think about things that are on earth. [So if you're serious about living this new resurrection life with Christ, act like it. Pursue the things over which Christ presides. Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from his perspective.] Col 3:1-2

set your sights on the realities of heaven; focus on the things that are above; yearn for all that is above; give your attention to the things of heaven

Read, study and talk about God using the Bible as our hand-book

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Col 3:1-4

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Jos 1:8-9

"As for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD. "My Spirit, who is on you, will not depart from you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will always be on your lips, on the lips of your children and on the lips of their descendants—from this time on and forever," says the LORD. Isa 59:21

Remember what God has done:

So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things. 2Pe 1:12-15

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. 2Ti 2:7

Use your voice to say good things about God:

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God.[Ps.42:11]

Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is he, this King of glory? The LORD Almighty— he is the King of glory. Ps 24:7-10

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Isa 60:1-2

Why is it important to know the Bible?

The Bible is God's revelation to us about His plan

Consult God's instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn [Look to God's instructions and teachings! People who contradict his word are completely in the dark]. Isa 8:20

Not knowing the Scriptures leads us into error

Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. Mt 22:29

Reading and studying the Bible is not the same as believing:

And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. Jn 5:37-40

Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Jn 20:8-9

We need God to open our (spiritual) eyes to understand the Bible

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." Lk 24:44-49

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. Ep 1:17-21
these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. 1Co 2:10-16

How much attention should we give to "*prophecy*"?

Prophecy is as much forth-telling as fore-telling, however, we should not take what people say at face value but test it with Scripture

Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. Ac 17:11-12
Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1Jn 4:1
Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil. 1Th 5:19-22

There were false prophets in the early Church and so we should not be surprised if there are false prophets today

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. 2Pe 1:20-2:3
Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. 1Jn 4:1-3
Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 2Th 2:1-3
Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds. Rev 2:20-23

And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve. 2Co 11:12-15

True prophecy always honours Jesus

At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus." Rev 19:10

When I heard this, I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I serve God, just as you do. I am God's servant, just like other believers who hold firmly to what Jesus has taught. Worship God! What Jesus taught is the very heart of prophecy." NIrV

Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said, "No, don't worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers and sisters who testify about their faith in Jesus. Worship only God. For the essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus." NLT

I knelt at the feet of the angel and began to worship him. But the angel said, "Don't do that! I am a servant, just like you and everyone else who tells about Jesus. Don't worship anyone but God. Everyone who tells about Jesus does it by the power of the Spirit." CEV

And I went on my face before his feet to give him worship. And he said to me, See you do it not: I am a brother-servant with you and with your brothers who keep the witness of Jesus: give worship to God: for the witness of Jesus is the spirit of the prophet's word. BBE

Then I bent down low at the angel's feet to worship him. But he said to me, 'You must not do that! I am only a servant of God, the same as you are. I am a servant, like all believers who show clearly that they trust in Jesus. God is the one that you should worship! When God gave a message to his prophets, it was Jesus that they spoke about.'EasyEnglish

Do not humble yourself to me in this way," he said. "I am one who stands by your side to serve the Great Spirit. I stand with you and all the sacred family members who have stood firm as truth tellers for Creator Sets Free (Jesus). Give praise and honour only to the Great Spirit. For the spirit of prophecy is at work when the truth is told about Creator Sets Free (Jesus)." First Nations Version

At that, I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he refused my praise. Stop it. Don't you see? I am a servant like you and your brothers and sisters, all who hold fast to the testimony of Jesus. Address your worship to God, not to me! For the testimony about Jesus is essentially the prophetic spirit.The Voice

Prophecy is to edify, encourage and comfort Believers

Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified. 1Co 14:1-5

Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord's people. 1Co 14:29-33

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way. 1Co 14:39-40

What responsibilities come with belonging to God's Kingdom?

Belonging to God's Kingdom comes with an obligation to live as honourable citizens of God's Kingdom.

Friends, this world is not your home, so don't make yourselves cozy in it. Don't indulge your ego at the expense of your soul. Live an exemplary life among the natives so that your actions will refute their prejudices. Then they'll be won over to God's side and be there to join in the celebration when he arrives. Make the Master proud of you by being good citizens. Respect the authorities, whatever their level; they are God's emissaries for keeping order. It is God's will that by doing good, you might cure the ignorance of the fools who think you're a danger to society. Exercise your freedom by serving God, not by breaking the rules. Treat everyone you meet with dignity. Love your spiritual family. Revere God. Respect the government. 1Pe 2:11-17

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.[1Jn.2:15-17]

What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?[Matt.16:26]

We also have an obligation to obey the King! And Jesus' commission is to preach, heal and deliver:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Mt 28:19-20

I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.[Acts.26:17-18]

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."[Lk.4:18-21]

Salt in OT sacrifices represented obligation (it means to pay with salt, to supply one's needs)

Now since we are under obligation to the palace and it is not proper for us to see the king dishonored, we are sending this message to inform the king. [literally, "We are salted [paid] by the salt of the palace."]Ezr 4:14

" 'Every grain offering you bring to the LORD must be made without yeast, for you are not to burn any yeast or honey in a food offering presented to the LORD. You may bring them to the LORD as an offering of the firstfruits, but they are not to be offered on the altar as a pleasing aroma. Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings. Lev 2:11-13

"But you must not redeem the firstborn of an ox, a sheep or a goat; they are holy. Sprinkle their blood on the altar and burn their fat as an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. Their meat is to be yours, just as the breast of the wave offering and the right thigh are yours. Whatever is set aside from the holy offerings the Israelites present to the LORD I give to you and your sons and daughters as your regular share. It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the LORD for both you and your offspring." Nu 18:17-19

22/07/2026

Psalm 37:12-24

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 13

Questions

Define "*Christianity*" in your own words.
Explain what happens when someone is converted.
What does the Holy Spirit do for us after conversion?
What does this mean "*Peace I leave with you.*"? *(Jn14:27)*
Is God's peace guaranteed to all Christians?
How can we put our hearts at rest? (*1Jn.3:19*)
Explain what faith is.

Comments

Define "*Christianity*" in your own words.

A Christian is a follower of Christ—someone who has received mercy and now belongs to God.

Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.[1Pet.2:10]

A Christian has turned to God and demonstrated their repentance

I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds… King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do." Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" Acts 26:20-28

The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. 1Thess 1:8-10

Believers were first called Christians at Antioch

Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. Ac 11:25-26

Antioch Church had spiritual gifts and were a sending Church

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. Ac 13:1-3

They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. Ac 14:21-23

After spending some time there, they were sent off by the believers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord. Ac 15:33-35

As followers of Christ, we also follow Christ's example:

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.[Jn.13:12-17]

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth [not once said anything amiss]."[1Pet.2:21-22]
In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus [You should think in the same way Christ Jesus does; Let his mindset become your motivation; Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself; Live with His attitude in your hearts].[Phil.2:5]

Explain what happens when someone is converted.

At conversion a person is spiritually re-born

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." Jn 3:5-8
Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. Jn 1:12-13
For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 1Pe 1:23

Adam and Eve's disobedience resulted in spiritual death (separation from God):

God said, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' " "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.[Gen.3:3-6]
As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.[Eph.2:1-2]

Conversion makes us alive and restores us to fellowship with God and gives us a divine identity

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.[1Pet.2:9-10]
Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.[Eph.2:19-22]

Conversion is similar to Jesus' incarnation

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Lk 1:35

Conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit who challenges, converts and changes us

When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.[Jn.16:8-11]

Conversion happens when God's Spirit comes into us

Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Ge 2:7
On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. Jn 7:37-39
Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Jn 20:21-22

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." Ac 2:38-39

What does the Holy Spirit do for us after conversion?

After conversion the Holy Spirit conforms us to the image of Jesus

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. Ro 8:26-30

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2Co 3:17-18

This is called "*sanctification*" or "*maturity*"

to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Ro 15:16

But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2Th 2:13-14

who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance. 1Pe 1:2

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ep 4:11-16

He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me. Col 1:28-29

Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, Heb 5:13-6:1

What does this mean "*Peace I leave with you.*"? *(Jn.14:27)*

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. Jn 14:26-27

Jesus is the Prince of peace and true peace can only come from Him

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this. Isa 9:6-7

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you... LORD, you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us. Isa 26:3;12

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Phl 4:4-7

The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace." So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them." Nu 6:22-27

"A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." Jn 16:32-33

Is God's peace guaranteed to all Christians?

No!

I have seen their ways, but I will heal them; I will guide them and restore comfort to Israel's mourners, creating praise on their lips. Peace, peace, to those far and near," says the LORD. "And I will heal them." But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked." Isa 57:18-21

"There is no peace," says the LORD, "for the wicked." Isa 48:22

Only to those Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood. They pursue evil schemes; acts of violence mark their ways. The way of peace they do not know; there is no justice in their paths. They have turned them into crooked roads; no one who walks along them will know peace. Isa 59:7-8

God's promises are only guaranteed to Believers, to those who are "in Christ Jesus."

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. Ro 8:1-2

Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. Isa 54:10

However, peace comes from knowing God AND Jesus Christ

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 2Pe 1:2

How can we put our hearts at rest? *(1Jn.3:19)*

This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. 1Jn 3:19-24

Stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. Ps 42:11

I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. Lam 3:19-26

Know God and Jesus more

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, Ep 1:17-18

Explain what faith is.

Faith is simple (uncomplicated) trust in God based on His Word

They would not be like their ancestors—a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him. The men of Ephraim, though armed with bows, turned back on the day of battle; they did not keep God's covenant and refused to live by his law. They forgot what he had done, the wonders he had shown them. Ps 78:8-11

"Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall. With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility. But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the skies above, blessings of the deep springs below, blessings of the breast and womb. Your father's blessings are greater than the blessings of the ancient mountains, than the bounty of the age-old hills. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers. Ge 49:22-26

Faith is a spirit

To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 1Co 12:8-9

It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. 2Co 4:13-14

Faith is always linked with obedience

And when the LORD sent you out from Kadesh Barnea, he said, "Go up and take possession of the land I have given you." But you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God. You did not trust him or obey him. Dt 9:23

"Come now, let us settle the matter," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land; Isa 1:18-19

Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let the one who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on their God. Isa 50:10

15/07/2026

Psalm 37:1-11

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 12

Questions

What is integrity?
Can we have spiritual integrity without moral integrity?
How can we maintain integrity in our Faith?
How can we maintain integrity in our Finances?
How can we maintain integrity in our Friendships?

Comments

What is integrity?

Integrity is moral soundness; the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles that you refuse to change! Our character should be able to stand up to scrutiny.

I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. 1Chron 29:17

After the wall had been rebuilt and I had set the doors in place, the gatekeepers, the musicians and the Levites were appointed. I put in charge of Jerusalem my brother Hanani, along with Hananiah the commander of the citadel, because he was a man of integrity and feared God more than most people do. Neh 7:1-2

"Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one. Matt 5:33-37

Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple "Yes" or "No." Otherwise you will be condemned. Jas 5:12

The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin. Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out. Pr 10:8-9

Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God's grace. For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand. And I hope that, as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus. 2Co 1:12-14

Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Tit 2:6-8

Honesty was ingrained in the Old Covenant:

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.Ex.20:16

I am the LORD your God. Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another. Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD. Do not defraud your neighbour or rob him.Lev.19:10-13

Why do you boast of evil, you mighty hero? Why do you boast all day long, you who are a disgrace in the eyes of God? You who practice deceit, your tongue plots destruction; it is like a sharpened razor. You love evil rather than good, falsehood rather than speaking the truth. You love every harmful word, you deceitful tongue! Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin:Ps.52:1-5

I rejoice in your word like one who discovers a great treasure. I hate and abhor all falsehood, but I love your instructions.Ps.119:162-163

Honesty is an integral Christianity value and our civilisation depends on honesty (even though some countries have bribery and corruption embedded in their culture).

But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self,

which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.Col.3:8-10
Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.Eph.4:25-27
They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.Rev.14:4-5
Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.Rev.22:14-15

Peter explained that for Christians to lie to people is actually to lie to God

You have not lied to men but to God.Acts.5:4

Non-Christians sometimes are confused with what truth really is:

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." "What is truth?" retorted Pilate. Jn.18:37-38

Jesus is the embodiment of Truth:

Jesus answered: I am the way and the truth and the life.Jn.14:6
We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.1Jn.4:6

To deny Jesus is the Christ is biggest lie of all:

I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.1Jn.2:21-23

Sometimes Believers lie—either out of guilt, embarrassment, shame or fear—but there is a way back through repentance:

Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son." Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh." But he said, "Yes, you did laugh."Gen.18:14-15
When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, "This fellow is one of them." Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know this man you're talking about."Mk.14:69-71

However, sometimes lies are commended

Rahab

By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.Heb.11:31
But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them." (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.)Josh.2:4-6

Man of God

The old prophet answered, "I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the LORD: 'Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.' " (But he was lying to him.) So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.1Kgs.13:18-19

R.Wumbrand, *Sermons In Solitary Confinement.*

We must distinguish between the appearance and the substance, between what people call "facts" or "truth" and their spiritual significance. Who can work as a conspirator in the Underground church and always speak what is generally called "truth"? When I introduced myself, I did it under a cover-name. The one with whom I was speaking might be an informer. If asked by someone where I was yesterday, a factually correct answer might bring many people into great trouble. Today again the interrogator told me: "You are a Christian, and a pastor. Your religion obliges you to tell us the whole truth." I had my own thoughts about this. If I had complied with his demands, other brethren would have

been arrested. Nobody can be a leader in the Underground church without re-evaluating the notion of truth.

Can we have spiritual integrity without moral integrity?

Christianity is a heart-religion where God sees the intention of our heart

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider how handsome or tall he is. I have not chosen him. I do not look at the things people look at. Man looks at how someone appears on the outside. But I look at what is in the heart.1Sam.16:7

My son Solomon, always remember the God of your father. Serve him with all your heart. Do it with a mind that wants to obey him. The LORD looks deep down inside every heart. He understands the real reasons for everything you think. If you look to him, you will find him.1Chron.28:9

The way we handle our material wealth will determine how God will trust us with spiritual wealth! (Material wealth can be money, assets, work, our own personality—in fact anything that has a value on it).

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?Lk.16:10-12

If we don't live out our Christian life (our Christ-life) practically, our spiritual life has little meaning

We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.1Jn.4:19-21

You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But here is what I tell you. Do not even look at a woman in the wrong way. Anyone who does has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, poke it out and throw it away. Your eye is only one part of your body. It is better to lose it than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.Matt.5:27-29

I may speak in the languages of humans and of angels. But if I don't have love, I am a loud gong or a clashing cymbal. I may have the gift to speak what God has revealed, and I may understand all mysteries and have all knowledge. I even have enough faith to move mountains. But if I don't have love, I am nothing. I may even give away all that I have and give up my body to be burned. But if I don't have love, none of these things will help me.1Cor.13:1-3

But if we do live out our life practically, our spiritual life has great meaning

But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.Heb.3:6

Don't have anything to do with godless stories and silly tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come1Tim.4:7-8

We must keep a good reputation with God and also with outsiders

"To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.Rev.3:1-3

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach… He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.1Tim.3:1-7

How can we maintain integrity in our Faith?

We must build ourselves up in the faith

Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ said was going to happen. They told you, "In the last days, some people will make fun of the truth. They will follow their own ungodly longings." [They are the people

who separate you from one another. They do only what comes naturally. They are not led by the Holy Spirit. Dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Let the Holy Spirit guide and help you when you pray.Jude 17-20

We must "walk the talk" by living out our faith in practical ways and being ready to share the Good News as opportunities arise

Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.Col.4:4-6

We should always live as Believers in Christ—like Christ Himself

Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing… But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.1Pet.3:8-16

We must stay in fellowship with the Holy Spirit

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.Eph.4:29-30

Watch what we say and what we believe *(they are connected)*

Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1Tim. 4:16

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. 2Tim.4:1-5

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm. We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. 1Tim. 1:3-11

How can we maintain integrity in our Finances?

Recognise that all we have is from God

Our God, we thank you and praise your wonderful name. But who am I and who are my people that you enable us to give so generously? Everything comes from you. We give you only what has come from your hands.1Chron.29:13-14

But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth,Deut.8:18

Don't be manipulated in what you do but follow the Holy Spirit's leading along with your own conscience.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their

righteousness endures forever." Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.[2Cor.9:6-12]

How can we maintain integrity in our Friendships?

Choose your friends carefully

Bad company corrupts good character.[1Cor.15:33]

A righteous man is cautious in friendship, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.[Prov.12:26]

Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered.[Prov.22:24]

Don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred towards God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.[Jas.4:4-5]

Discern the difference between fellowship of the spirit (*fellow Believers*) **and fellowship of the soul** *(acquaintances).* Our closest friends should be people who will have a spiritually good influence on us

One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.Prov.18:24

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.Jn.15:9-17

But we should still make friends (acquaintances) with others whilst still maintaining our integrity:

I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. [Lk.16:9]

Jesus mixed with unbelievers and even ungodly people:

Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Lk.5:29-30

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.'Lk.7:34

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."Lk.19:5-7

And we too should mix with unbelievers

If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience.1Cor.10:27

But we should be careful to maintain a standard of holiness. We minister to darkness but fellowship with light.

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God. Jn 3:19-21

Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light." When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself

from them. Jn 12:35-36

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1Jn 1:5-7

How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light. Ps 36:7-9

If **our Christian friends don't live up to God's expectation of moral holiness, we should part company** before we are dragged down with their unbelief:

I wrote a letter to you to tell you to stay away from people who commit sexual sins. I didn't mean the people of this world who sin that way or who always want more and more. I didn't mean those who cheat or who worship statues of gods. In that case you would have to leave this world! But here is what I am writing to you. You must stay away from anyone who claims to be a believer but who does those things. Stay away from anyone who commits sexual sins or who always wants more and more things. Stay away from a person who worships statues of gods or who tells lies about others. Stay away from anyone who gets drunk or who cheats. Don't even eat with a person like that. Is it my business to judge those outside the church? Aren't you supposed to judge those inside the church? God will judge those outside. Scripture says, "Get rid of that evil person!"1Cor.5:9-13

08/07/2026

Psalm 36

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 11f

Questions

Are we responsible for other people's actions?

Can we repent on behalf of someone else?

Explain: *I can guarantee that on judgment day people will have to give an account of every careless word they say.*[Matt.12:36]

Explain *Do not take revenge.*[Rom.12:17]

What does "*filled with the Holy Spirit*" mean?

What does spiritual maturity mean?

Comments

Are we responsible for other people's actions?

No! We are not responsible for other people's actions

The word of the LORD came to me: "What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel: 'The parents eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child—both alike belong to me. The one who sins is the one who will die.[Ezek.18:1-4]

But we are responsible for our own actions and how we respond to others.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.[2Cor.5:10]

We are also responsible for what we say: *Good people do the good things that are in them. But evil people do the evil things that are in them. I can guarantee that on judgment day people will have to give an account of every careless word they say. By your words you will be declared innocent, or by your words you will be declared guilty.*[Matt.12:35-37]

Can we repent on behalf of someone else?

Repentance means "*change your mind*" (Gk) or "*return*" (Heb.) and **is a personal action**.

Although we can apologise on behalf of other people, we cannot repent on behalf of someone else because we they are responsible for their own mind.

Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, [Or "from useless rituals"] and of faith in God, instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.Heb.6:1-3

There is a movement called "*Identificational Repentance*" (IR) which promotes repentance on behalf of countries and people groups. Although it appears to be godly, it is actually in opposition to the New Covenant and shows an ignorance of the Gospel. The aim of IR is to disarm satan by "*removing the legal-spiritual basis*" through which people are blinded to the gospel. This is ignores the evidence that Jesus disarmed the devil at Calvary.

But God gave you new life together with Christ. He forgave us all of our sins. He wiped out the written Law with its rules. The Law was against us. It opposed us. He took it away and nailed it to the cross. He took away the weapons of the powers and authorities. He made a public show of them. He won the battle over them by dying on the cross.[Col.2.13-15]

Weeds and wheat grow together

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' " 'An enemy did this,' he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' " 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.' " Mt 13:24-30

The Bible teaches that in the days which proceed the return of Christ there will be world-wide difficulties and the Church will be increasing marginalised. However, this is not a mistake on God's part or ours, but through it He is preparing a people for eternity. We look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness will dwell.

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. 2Pe 3:8-15

By contrast, IR teaches that "*the task of the Church is to clean up this planet, environmentally as well as morally and spiritually, so that it can become Christ's eternal home"* (Roger Forster, Whose Earth, Manchester, 1993)

The other major error with IR is the failure to understand that God does not deal with nations now (although God did deal with nations before Pentecost—see Daniel). Everyone has to make their own repentance before God and there is now no distinction between any race, gender or status:

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.[Gal.3:26-29]

The only distinction now is between belief and unbelief in Jesus:

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.Jn.3:18

The greatest sin of all is unbelief and what we generally call "sins" are manifestations of unbelief.

"Are you still so dull?" Jesus asked them. "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. or out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them."[Matt.15:16-20]

Unbelief is actually the unforgiveable sin because without faith (belief) we cannot please God or have any victory in our life:

This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

[For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.[NLT]*]*[1Jn.5:4-5]

True repentance brings restoration but false repentance only brings condemnation.

Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done.[2Cor.7:8-11]

Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God "will repay each person according to what they have done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and

immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.[Rom.2:4-8]

Explain what Jesus meant by: *I can guarantee that on judgment day people will have to give an account of every careless word they say. By your words you will be declared innocent, or by your words you will be declared guilty.*[Matt.12:36-37]

All our sins are forgiven and God will never count them against us:

However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them."[Rom.4:5-8]

as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.[Ps.3:12]

"Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth." Hos 6:1-3

Sadly people forget that God has forgiven all our sins:

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2Pe 1:3-11

However, we will still have to give an account for our life. At the Judgement Day, our entrance into heaven will be based on what Jesus has done but we will still be judged for what we have done

Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. 1Pe 1:17

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.Rev.20:11-15

Explain what Paul meant by *Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.*[Rom.12:17-19]

We should let God deal with our personal problems but that does not remove our obligation to support the Government's (and also the Church's) Law and Order system as they are God's delegated authority.

Every person should obey the government in power. No government would exist if it hadn't been established by God. The governments which exist have been put in place by God. Therefore, whoever resists the government opposes what God has established. Those who resist will bring punishment on themselves… The government is God's servant working for your good… People in the government are God's servants while they do the work he has given them.[Rom.13:1-6]

Make the Master proud of you by being good citizens. Respect the authorities, whatever their level; they are God's emissaries for keeping order. It is God's will that by doing good, you might cure the ignorance of the fools who think you're a danger to society. Exercise your freedom by serving God, not by breaking the rules. Treat everyone you meet with dignity. Love your spiritual family. Revere God. Respect the government.[2Pet.2:13-17]

We should not hold any grudges against anyone. Vendettas, retaliation, grudges, etc. are not godly and are in direct opposition to God and His Kingdom

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.[Rom.12:17-19]

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.[Matt.6:14-15]

But we can and should allow the Law to protect us

As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"[Acts.22:25]

Paul answered: "I am now standing before Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"[Acts.25:10-11]

Forgiveness is unconditional but restoration is conditional upon true repentance.

What does "*filled with the Holy Spirit*" mean?

Filled means just that—to be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be filled with the Holy Spirit!

We are converted when the Holy Spirit "*births*" us into God's family by taking out our heart of stone and giving us a heart of flesh. At conversion, the Holy Spirit indwells the Believer (actually, the complete Trinity dwells within us:

"If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them." Jn 14:15-21

Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. Jn 14:23-24

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Col 1:27

But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. Ro 8:10-11

However, there is a filling (baptism) of the Holy Spirit which is an experience of the Holy Spirit that is separate from conversion—it is also called "*receiving the Holy Spirit*" or "*the Holy Spirit coming on someone*":

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all. Ac 19:1-7

Baptism means *saturation*, *washing* or *immersion*. The *Baptism of the Holy Spirit* literally means the immersion or saturation of the Holy Spirit. This is a filling to overflowing.

"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.[Jn.7:37-39]

The filling of the Holy Spirit is not a single experience but an ongoing relationship (however, there has to be a first time). We should be continually filled with the Holy Spirit and overflowing

Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ep 5:17-20

But the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not just an experience but a relationship with the Holy Spirit.

At conversion the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us

Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.[1Cor.12:3]

For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction.[1Thess.1:4-5]

At the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, He flows out of us

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.[Acts.2:4]

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.[Acts.4:31]

And the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit is much more than speaking boldly or even speaking in tongues. The early British Pentecostals made a Declaration in 1909 that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit included these seven results:

1. The Consciousness of the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ;
2. The Consciousness of our "Dwelling in Him";
3. Divine Illumination concerning His Word and Will;
4. The Testimony of Jesus;
5. The Three-fold Conviction of the World by the Spirit in us (*He reproves the World of Sin, of Righteousness and of Judgment*);
6. Our continual guidance into the deep things of God;
7. The continual glorification of Christ (*to the exclusion of self*).

What does spiritual maturity mean?

Maturity means *complete, full, wanting in nothing*. Of course, none of us will reach the state of perfection here on earth but we can all aspire to it and work towards maturity. We can only mature as we fellowship with other Believers— as we take our place in with the Body of Christ (the gathering of Believers) and so Christians who isolate themselves will never become mature.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread [that is, enjoying the company of other Believers] and to prayer.[Acts.2:42]

Maturity is standing firm in our faith, not blown around by fads or novelties.

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.[Eph.4:11-16]

Maturity understands that Christ is in us.

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.[Col.1:27-28]

We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.[1Cor.3:6-7]

Maturity is knowing God and being completely sure about what He wants from us.

Epaphras sends greetings. He is one of you. He serves Christ Jesus. He is always praying hard for you. He prays that you will stand firm in holding to all that God has in mind for us. He prays that you will continue to grow in your knowledge of what God wants you to do. He also prays that you will be completely sure about it.[Col.4:12]

Maturity understands the teaching about righteousness and has a good working knowledge of the basic Christian doctrines.

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.[Heb.5:11-6:3]

01/07/2026

Psalm 35:1-10

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 11

Questions

What has God given for us: 1) to keep; 2) to share?
What is the difference between ownership and stewardship?
What is the greatest gift we can receive?
What is the greatest gift we can give to others?
Do the principles of God's Kingdom only work for Believers or do they work for unbelievers too?
Can non-Christians give anything of spiritual value?
Can we give as a Believer if we don't have a generous attitude?

Comments

What has God given for us:

1) to keep; 2) to share?

God gives us both bread to eat and seed to sow—we need to keep our bread for ourselves and sow our seed (give to others)

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. [11] You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.2Cor.9:10-11

1) Keep

Keep the Faith

They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve1Tim.3:9-10

What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.2Tim.1:13

Keep God's Commands

In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands.

Keep our Spiritual fervour

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.Rom.12:11-12

Keep the Unity of the Spirit

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.Eph.4:1-3

2) Share

Share the Gospel

We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well,1Thess.2:8

Share Encouragement

After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak."Acts.13:15

I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— [12] that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.Rom.1:11

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.1Thes.5:11

Share Practical support

Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.Rom.12:13

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.1Tim.6:18-19

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.Eph.4:28

What is the difference between ownership and stewardship? *(or Is there a difference between ownership and stewardship?)*

Ownership is what belongs to us—we can do what we like with our possessions;

Stewardship is what we are looking after for others—we are held accountable because it is in our trust.

We recognize that all we own has been given to us in trust. To become a Christian, we must confess that Jesus is Lord—we acknowledge that He is our Owner and Master.

Our God, we thank you and praise your wonderful name. But who am I and who are my people that you enable us to give so generously? Everything comes from you. We give you only what has come from your hands.[1Chron.29:13-14]

You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.Deut.8:17-18

Stewards should be faithful:

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.[1Cor.4:1-2]

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.2Pet.4:10

What is the greatest gift we can receive?

Eternal life—eternal life is God's life in us and it comes as a package which includes His characteristics and especially love

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.Gal.5:22-23

And yet I will show you the most excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails… And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.1Cor.13:1-13

What is the greatest gift we can give to others?

We can't give eternal life but we can give the **message of eternal life**—but it must be packaged in the fruit of the Spirit (God's personality) and especially love.

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.1Jn.4:14-21

Do the principles of God's Kingdom only work for Believers or do they work for unbelievers?

God's principles (such as gravity and seasons) **are universal**

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.Matt.5:44-45

But without faith nothing has any spiritual value.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. Heb.11:6

Many organisations and individuals give generously to good causes and to those in need—but that does not give them any spiritual credit with God

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches [the Philippians]. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. 2Cor.8:1-5

Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account.Phil.4:14-17

Can non-Christians give anything of spiritual value?

No, not until they give their heart to God!

The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.1Cor.2:14

We are born spiritually dead

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. Ep 2:1f

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. Col 2:13-14

Can we give as a Believer if we don't have a generous attitude?

Yes and No! Believers can give stingily but that is not the giving of a mature Believer.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.2Cor.9:6-8

We should aim to live as a mature Believer—which is having the mind of Christ

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Phil 2:5

for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. 1Co 2:16

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Mt 11:29-30

A mature Believer is victorious—an overcomer. Jesus asked John to write to the 7 Churches in Asia to about maturity—overcoming

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.Rev.2:7

This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.1Jn.5:3-5

However, we are not called to be a "*soft touch*"— we are stewards and we should look after our resources not squander them.

Better think this one through from the beginning. God is kind, but he's not soft.Rom.2:4

For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, labouring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to

make ourselves a model for you to follow. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."2Thess.3:7-10

As Believers we should give in a considered way, not under compulsion but as an appreciation of what God has done for us—Christian giving is an act of worship

24/06/2026

Questions

Were there any Believers before the Church began at Pentecost?
Is there a difference between the OT saints and the NT saints?
If Jesus is building His Church, why are there so many divisions and disputes in the Church?
What should Christian songs and hymns be about?
How important are the Psalms in the Church?
If the Church is the gathering of believers, should we allow unbelievers to take part in Church activities?
How can we deliberate at Church? (*Deliberate* means *discourse or debate with action taken after careful consideration.)*

Comments

Were there any Believers before the Church began at Pentecost?

Yes! God only has ONE people

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.[Eph.4:4-6]

The OT Believers were called "*saints*" (or *faithful people)* and "*people of God*".

May your priests, LORD God, be clothed with salvation, may your faithful people rejoice in your goodness.[2Chron.6:41]
May your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, may your saints rejoice in your goodness.[2Chron.6:41]
For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God;[Heb.4:8-9]
Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for… These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb. 11:1-2;39-12:2
And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people. And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. Rev 5:8-11

Is there a difference between the OT saints and the NT saints?

Yes and No!

Yes, there is a difference because they were not born-again—the new birth was introduced by Jesus
Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.[Jn.3:3]

No, there is no difference because all are saved by faith not by the law or works

Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."[Acts.15:10-11]

*These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that **only together with us** would they be made perfect.*[Heb.11:39-40]

In Christ, all people groups are citizens of heaven because Jesus has become our Peace.

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope

and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.[Eph.2:11-18]

If Jesus is building His Church, why are there so many divisions and disputes in the Church?

Because we are human—with our own distinct personalities.

The early Church had disagreements:

In those days the number of believers was growing. The Jews who followed Greek practices complained against the Jews who followed only Jewish practices. They said that the widows of men who followed Greek practices were not being taken care of. They weren't getting their fair share of food each day.[Acts.6:1]

Even Paul and Barnabas had disagreements:

Barnabas and Paul strongly disagreed with each other. So they went their separate ways.[Acts.15:39]

Doctrinal divisions have been around from the beginning

I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.[1Cor.1:10]

First, I hear that there are divisions among you when you meet as a church, and to some extent I believe it. But, of course, there must be divisions among you so that you who have God's approval will be recognized![1Cor.11:18-19]

We are not yet completely sanctified

*For by one sacrifice he has **made perfect** forever those who **are being made holy**.*[Heb.10:14]

*You also, like living stones, **are being built** into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*[1Pet.2:5]

We only know in part this side of eternity

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.[1Cor.13:12]

We can disagree without being divisive. A divisive person is self-condemned:

But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.[Tit.3:9-11]

I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.[Rom.16:17-19]

What should Christian songs and hymns be about?

God is a Trinity and all 3 Persons of the Godhead are to be revered in worship but Christian songs should be predominately about Christ.

Christian worship extols what Jesus was, what Jesus is, what Jesus did, and what Jesus does. Jesus is the reason we worship and so we should direct our attention to the person and work of Jesus Christ! Like Isaac Watts (1674–1748) when we sing Psalms, we should make "*David speak like a Christian*", *i.e.* we should interpret the OT in the light of the NT and focus on the New Covenant, on our new-birth, our redemption, the forgiveness of sins (rather than just atonement—which means "covering"). Jesus has alreadycome, He has already died "once for all" .

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that

since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. Rom.6:4-10

Our hymns and worship songs should be of a "*manly faith, where dogma, prayer, and praise are interwoven with much skill… the key-note of which is Hope.*"

"An Open Letter to Praise Bands":

1. If we, the congregation, can't hear ourselves, it's not worship. Christian worship is not a concert. In a concert (a particular "form of performance"), we often expect to be overwhelmed by sound, particularly in certain styles of music. In a concert, we come to expect that weird sort of sensory deprivation that happens from sensory overload, when the pounding of the bass on our chest and the wash of music over the crowd leaves us with the rush of a certain aural vertigo. And there's nothing wrong with concerts! It's just that Christian worship is not a concert. Christian worship is a collective, communal, congregational practice--and the gathered sound and harmony of a congregation singing as one is integral to the practice of worship. It is a way of "performing" the reality that, in Christ, we are one body. But that requires that we actually be able to hear ourselves, and hear our sisters and brothers singing alongside us. When the amped sound of the praise band overwhelms congregational voices, we can't hear ourselves sing--so we lose that communal aspect of the congregation and are encouraged to effectively become "private," passive worshipers.

2. If we, the congregation, can't sing along, it's not worship. In other forms of musical performance, musicians and bands will want to improvise and "be creative," offering new renditions and exhibiting their virtuosity with all sorts of different trills and pauses and improvisations on the received tune. Again, that can be a delightful aspect of a concert, but in Christian worship it just means that we, the congregation, can't sing along. And so your virtuosity gives rise to our passivity; your creativity simply encourages our silence. And while you may be worshiping with your creativity, the same creativity actually shuts down congregational song.

Worship leaders, if you look out over the congregation and you see that we are not singing with you, something has gone wrong. Are you jamming alone up there for extended periods of time? Are you changing well-known melodies just enough to surprise us and make us hesitant to sing out, and/or adding flair that we can't follow? Are you choosing soloistic songs with complicated melodies rather than musically simple ones designed for group singing?

The best thing you can do is to consider carefully the purpose of your role as you make your decisions for each service. You have the noble position of enabling all of us to draw together as one before God to express our love and honour through a powerful medium. If you can keep that goal in mind—the goal of enabling the congregation to worship—and ruthlessly shed anything, however musically tempting, that doesn't advance that goal, we will thank you.

True Worship: Acknowledging Authority and Power

Martin Luther (taken from Treasury of Daily Prayer):

[Worship] is not a function of the mouth but of the whole body. It is to bow the head, bend the body, fall on the knees, prostrate one's self, and so forth, and to do such things as a sign and acknowledgment of an authority and power greater than self. Just as people bow in one form or another in silence before secular princes and lords, and just as popes, bishops, abbots, and people generally, have themselves honoured and adored by bowing and kneeling, and so forth. Such outward adoration of the bending of the body is what the Scriptures really mean by worship. We read in the Scriptures that worship or adoration is rendered outwardly both to God and to kings without distinction, just as bowing and kneeling are still rendered outwardly both to God and to men.

From this understanding of outward worship you will also understand what Christ meant by true spiritual worship. It is the adoration or bowing of the heart, so that from the bottom of your heart you are to thereby show and confess yourself to be God's subordinate creature who owes all to Him. For from this you see that true worship can only arise from faith; it is faith's sublime activity with respect to God. For no one is able to offer such heartfelt confession, adoration, bending, and bowing

of the heart (or whatever you want to call it) before God in his heart, unless he unwaveringly believes and holds God Almighty to be his Lord and Father, from whom he receives and will receive all good things, and through whom, without any merit or worthiness on his part, he is redeemed and preserved from all sins and evil.

How important are the Psalms in the Church?

Psalms are important because they are Scripture and Psalms were used by the early Church—BUT they are not NT (even though some Psalms foretell NT truths in prophesy). So we need to balance the majesty of the Psalms' description of God with the wonder of redemption in Christ.

All Scripture is God-breathed *and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*[2Tim.3:16-17]

But David and the other Psalmists of the OT only knew by experience the Old Covenant (they saw the New Covenant in their spirit and prophesied about it but they never actually experienced it).

Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." "You are not yet fifty years old," they said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"[Jn.8:54-58]

Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.*[Jn.12:41]

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.[Heb.11:24-26]

But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.[Matt.16:16-17]

If the Church is the gathering of believers, should we allow unbelievers to take part in Church activities?

Non-Christians cannot worship God because they do not have the Spirit of God.

Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again… Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.[Jn.3:3-5]

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.[Jn.4:23-24]

The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.[1Cor.2:14]

However, non-Christians can praise God—they can say good words about Him even if they don't believe in Him

The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man."[Lk.23:47]

We should discern but we are not called to judge

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them.[Matt.7:15-16]

Do not judge, and you will not be judged.[Lk.6:37]

However, we will judge after the resurrection

Do you not know that we will judge angels?[1Cor.6:3]

Actually we don't really know who is a genuine Christian, who is an almost Christian or who is a pretend Christian!

The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied. The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together

until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'[Matt.13:27-30]

God's Word is not bound or limited and so I have no problem with asking people who are borderline Believers or even un-believers to participate in public worship services but I wouldn't let people without accepted Christian credentials to take a lead in public Worship.

"Master," said John, "we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us." "Do not stop him," Jesus said, "for whoever is not against you is for you." Lk 9:49-50

But God's word is not chained.[2Tim.2:9]

How can we deliberate at Church? (*Deliberate* means *discourse or debate with action taken after careful consideration.)*

Our Sunday services are not set up for interactive deliberations but we can still deliberate by listening and deciding to change by putting God's Word into practice. Pre-lockdown we had refreshments afterwards to facilitate interactive fellowship and discussions. Our Bible Studies are set up for interactive deliberations, where we can discuss, question and share together.

17/06/2026

Psalm 34

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 10b

Questions

How can we keep a balanced understanding of life?
How can we keep a balanced understanding of Scripture?
What are the basic facts of Jesus' return?
What will heaven be like?
How can we stay both spiritual and sensible?

Comments

How can we keep a balanced understanding of life?

Remember that we are spiritual beings created God's image and so we will never be complete until we are in fellowship with God

St. Augustine once said, *"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."* These powerful words resonate in a world where people are always searching for purpose and peace. Augustine reminds us that only God can fill the deepest longings of our hearts.

Why We Feel Restless

We live in a society that often defines success as constant progress, achievement, and accumulation. But even with all these things, many of us feel an unexplainable restlessness. This is because, as Augustine points out, our hearts are made to seek God. Only when we place Him at the center do we find lasting peace and satisfaction.

Practical Steps for Finding Rest in God

Daily Time with God: Set aside a few minutes each day for prayer or reflection. This creates space for God's peace to fill you.
Release Control: Trusting God with your worries allows you to rest in His presence instead of trying to control everything.
Seek His Guidance: Ask God for direction in your life. When we let Him lead, we find comfort, knowing He's guiding us toward what's best.

Conclusion

Our hearts long for a peace that only God can give. In Him, we find true rest, a rest that doesn't come from achievements or things but from a relationship with our Creator.
https://inspiredcatholics.com/st-augustine-how-to-find-true-rest-in-god/

Maintain a balanced lifestyle. Take an interest in all aspects of life—especially creation and current affairs.

God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt... He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. He described plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.1Kg.4:29-34

Learn from history and try not to make same mistakes.

Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. Heb 3:16-4:2

Be quick to listen and slow to speak! Learn to be a good listener—*i.e.* don't over-react when you hear things that are different from your own views and opinions.

A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered. Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue.Prov.17:27-28

We should be heavenly minded but still be of earthly good!

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.Col.3:1-4

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.Rom.12:1-2

We should include God and His kingdom values in everything we do, everything we say and every decision we make—our minds should be influenced by God's values.

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline [sound mind—lit. salvation mind].2Tim.1:7

Read books and listen to people who have different values from yourself.

I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. I devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under heaven.Eccl.1:12-13

The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one Shepherd. Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body. Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.Eccl.12:11-14

I wonder what books Paul read?

Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.2Tim.4:9-13

How can we keep a balanced understanding of Scripture?

Recognise the purpose of Scripture and don't get distracted with side issues—remember, the Bible does not contain hidden messages or secret interpretation

However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"—the things God has prepared for those who love him—these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us… But we have the mind of Christ. 1Co 2:9-16

"So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.Matt.24:15-16

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll.Rev.22:18-19

our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. 2Pet.3:15-16

The Bible is our source of wisdom and our spiritual food but its purpose is to explain God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ.

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.[Rom.15:4]

The words "God accepted Abraham's faith" were written not only for Abraham. They were written also for us. We believe in the God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. So God will accept our faith and make us right with himself. Jesus was handed over to die for our sins. He was raised to life in order to make us right with God.[Rom.4:23-25]

The Scriptures all point to Jesus Christ and testify that He is God's Son and our Saviour:

You study the Scriptures carefully. You study them because you think they will give you eternal life. The Scriptures you study give witness about me.[Jn.5:39]

Jesus explained to them what was said about himself in all the Scriptures. He began with Moses and all the Prophets… They said to each other, "He talked with us on the road. He opened the Scriptures to us. Weren't our hearts burning inside us during that time?" …He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them: This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.[Lk.24:27-47]

Jesus says that to experience the Holy Spirit is like to be born again. It's a new birth in the sense that everything comes alive. The Holy Spirit doesn't change anything and He changes everything. He doesn't add anything to what Jesus has already said and instituted but he makes all Jesus has said and done alive, today. *Raniero Cantalamessa*

What are the basic facts of Jesus' return?

We are in the last days—but remember, the last days began on the Day of Pentecost:

No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: " 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.Acts.2:16-17

The return of Jesus is nearer now that when we first believed—that's about as near as we will get to knowing when Jesus will return!

When you do those things, keep in mind the times we are living in. The hour has come for you to wake up from your sleep. Our full salvation is closer now than it was when we first believed in Christ. The dark night of evil is nearly over. The day of Christ's return is almost here. So let us get rid of the works of darkness. Let us put on the armour of light.[Rom.13:11-12]

Jesus' return will be unexpected:

the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.[Lk.12:40]

Jesus' return will be certain, audible, visible and final. It will not be a secret affair—and for the Christian, it will not be a scarry affair. Jesus' return is something we should encourage each about.

For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.[1Thess.4:14-18]

It will be glorious and is our blessed hope

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ,Tit.2:11-13

We will be changed from mortal to immortal

I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The

sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.1Cor.15:50-58

"Death has been swallowed up. It has lost the battle." "Death, where is the battle you thought you were winning? Death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin. And the power of sin is the law. But let us give thanks to God! He wins the battle for us because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done.NIrV

We shall see Him and be like Him

"Look, he is coming with the clouds," and "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him"; and all peoples on earth "will mourn because of him." So shall it be! Amen.Rev.1:7

I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!Job.19:25

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.1Jn.3:2-3

What will heaven be like?

Holy, happy and glorious

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits thick. The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.

I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. Rev 21:9-27

"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.Dan.12:1-3

Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will enter heaven

He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."Lk.10:18-20

Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.Phil.4:3

Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.Rev.3:4-6

The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because it once was, now is not, and yet will come. This calls for a mind with wisdom. Rev.17:8-9

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.Rev.20:11-15

So Moses went back to the LORD and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written." The LORD replied to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book. Now go, lead the people to the place I spoke of, and my angel will go before you. However, when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin." And the LORD struck the people with a plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.Ex.32:31-35

How can we stay both spiritual and sensible?

Some people can be summarised as "*so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good*".

Actually, you cannot be too heavenly minded but what is meant is that they are so religious that they are disconnected with normal everyday life—in other words, plain weird!

Be a worshipper in the Spirit, by the Spirit and from your spirit

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." Jn 4:23-24

For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— Phil 3:3

Stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1Jn 1:3-7

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 2Co 13:14

He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1Co 1:8-9

Stay humble

Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Jas 4:5-7

Keep the faith

They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. 1Tim.3:9

Open the gates that the righteous nation may enter, the nation that keeps faith. You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal. Isa 26:2-4

10/06/2026

Psalm 33

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 10

Questions

Who do you think gave this article above? (*It was the first part of an exhortation given in 2013*)
Should we try to learn from people who have different doctrines from us?
What is the joy of the Gospel?
What is "*the world*" that we are not to love? (*1Jn.2:15-17)*
How can we live a dignified and fulfilled life?
Why is the Gospel always new?
What does it mean to be "*God's faithful people*"?

Comments

Who do you think gave this article above? *(It was the first part of an exhortation given in 2013)*

Pope Francis gave this Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium (Joy of the Gospel)* on 24 November 2013 at Saint Peter's in Rome to "*The Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons And The Lay Faithful On The Proclamation Of The Gospel In Today's World*" at the end of his first year as pope.

Can we learn from people who have different doctrines from us?

Yes and No!

None of us have complete understanding

Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that "We all possess knowledge." But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know [Those who think they know something still have a lot to learn]. 1Co 8:1-2

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. 1Cor.13:9-12

but some people are too far from the Truth to trust. However, we can learn from them—as per the Apocrypha in the *39 Articles* of the CofE

Of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation

Holy Scriptures containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of Holy Scripture, we do understand those Canonical books of the Old and New testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

And the other books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine;

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them canonical.

Sometimes the world is more astute than Believers!

"The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light [Worldly people are more clever than spiritually-minded people when it comes to dealing with others]. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. Lk 16:8-9

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. "Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honour at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called 'Rabbi' by others. "But you are not to be called

'Rabbi,' for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. Mt 23:1-12

At the end of Francis' sermon he makes some heretical statements and seems to deny the very essence of the Gospel, (which is "**you must be born-again**")!

Jesus replied, "Very truly [amen] I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." Jn 3:3
Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." Ac 4:12
This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. 1Tim.2:3-6

The devil may flood our minds with truth in order to float one lie!

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. Col 2:6-10
Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. 2Ti 2:23

Below is from the end of Francis' address:

In this dialogue, ever friendly and sincere, attention must always be paid to the essential bond between dialogue and proclamation, which leads the Church to maintain and intensify her relationship with non-Christians. A facile syncretism would ultimately be a totalitarian gesture on the part of those who would ignore greater values of which they are not the masters. True openness involves remaining steadfast in one's deepest convictions, clear and joyful in one's own identity, while at the same time being "open to understanding those of the other party" and "knowing that dialogue can enrich each side". What is not helpful is a diplomatic openness which says "yes" to everything in order to avoid problems, for this would be a way of deceiving others and denying them the good which we have been given to share generously with others. Evangelization and interreligious dialogue, far from being opposed, mutually support and nourish one another.

Our relationship with the followers of Islam has taken on great importance, since they are now significantly present in many traditionally Christian countries, where they can freely worship and become fully a part of society. We must never forget that they "profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, who will judge humanity on the last day". The sacred writings of Islam have retained **some** Christian teachings; Jesus and Mary receive profound veneration and it is admirable to see how Muslims both young and old, men and women, make time for daily prayer and faithfully take part in religious services. Many of them also have a deep conviction that their life, in its entirety, is from God and for God. They also acknowledge the need to respond to God with an ethical commitment and with mercy towards those most in need.

In order to sustain dialogue with Islam, suitable training is essential for all involved, not only so that they can be solidly and joyfully grounded in their own identity, but so that they can also acknowledge the values of others, appreciate the concerns underlying their demands and shed light on shared beliefs. We Christians should embrace with affection and respect Muslim immigrants to our countries in the same way that we hope and ask to be received and respected in countries of Islamic tradition. I ask and I humbly entreat those countries to grant Christians freedom to worship and to practice their faith, in light of the freedom which followers of Islam

enjoy in Western countries! Faced with disconcerting episodes of violent fundamentalism, our respect for true followers of Islam should lead us to avoid hateful generalisations, for authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Koran are opposed to every form of violence.

Non-Christians, by God's gracious initiative, when they are f**aithful to their own consciences, can live "justified by the grace of God**", and thus be "associated to the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ". But due to the sacramental dimension of sanctifying grace, God's working in them tends to produce signs and rites, sacred expressions which in turn bring others to a communitarian experience of journeying towards God. While these lack the meaning and efficacy of the sacraments instituted by Christ, they can be channels which the Holy Spirit raises up in order to liberate non-Christians from atheistic immanentism or from purely individual religious experiences. The same Spirit everywhere brings forth various forms of practical wisdom which help people to bear suffering and to live in greater peace and harmony. As Christians, we can also benefit from these treasures built up over many centuries, which can help us better to live our own beliefs.

We should watch our life and doctrine closely

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. That is why we labour and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1Tim 4:1-16

What is the joy of the Gospel?

Gospel is "good news" and the joy of the gospel is sharing the good news that we can have peace with God though Jesus Christ. This joy is interwoven with the Gospel all through the Bible—including the OT prophecies

You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy" Is.9:3

Shout aloud and sing for joy! Is.12:6

Get you up to a high mountain, O herald of good tidings to Zion; lift up your voice with strength, O herald of good tidings to Jerusalem. Is.40:9

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth! Break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the Lord has comforted his people, and will have compassion on his suffering ones. Is49:13

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he.Zech.9:9

The Lord, your God is in your midst, a warrior who gives you the victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing, as on a day of festival.Zeph.3:17

What is "*the world*" that we are not to love? *(1Jn.2:15-17)*

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. 1Jn.2:15-17

"World" can be geography—the globe;

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. Ps 19:1-4

"World" can be people—the inhabitants of the globe;

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Jn 3:16-17

"World" can be the system/thought pattern/values/ethics of unbelievers *i.e.* who are still under the influence of the "*god of this world*"

The god of this age [world] has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2Co 4:4

Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. Jn 12:31

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. Ep 2:1-7

We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. 1Jn 5:19

How can we live a dignified and fulfilled life?

If we wish to lead a dignified and fulfilling life, we have to reach out to others and seek their good.

In this regard, several sayings of Saint Paul will not surprise us:

"*The love of Christ urges us on" (2Cor.5:14*);

"*Woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel" (1Cor.9:16).*

The Gospel offers us the chance to live life on a higher plane, but with no less intensity: "*Life grows by being given away, and it weakens in isolation and comfort. Indeed, those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others".*

When the Church summons Christians to take up the task of evangelization, she is simply pointing to the source of authentic personal fulfilment. For "*here we discover a profound law of reality: that life is attained and matures in the measure that it is offered up in order to give life to others. This is certainly what mission means*". Consequently, an evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral!

We can we live a dignified and fulfilled life by being and living as God intended us to be

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Gen 1:28

This is the written account of Adam's family line. When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them "Mankind" when they were created. Gen 5:1-2

Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the LORD: Ps 102:18

This only have I found: God created mankind upright, but they have gone in search of many schemes." Eccl 7:29

But now, this is what the LORD says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with

you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. Isa 43:1-2
For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph 2:10
You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.
Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Eph 4:22-32
"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being [and for your pleasure they were created and exist]." Rev 4:11

Why is the Gospel always new?

God is always "new" *i.e.* He is fresh, vibrant, and effective and never out-dated or irrelevant
Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. Lam 3:22-23
The LORD within her is righteous; he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail, yet the unrighteous know no shame. Zeph 3:5
Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. 1Jn 2:7-8
The old, old story is always new because it is living and always fresh, vibrant, and effective—it always works and is never "broken"
Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples. For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. Ps 96:1-4
The Gospel is never outdated or obsolete (whereas the Old Covenant is outdated and obsolete)
But God found fault with the people and said: "The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear. Heb 8:8-13
With this newness he is always able to renew our lives and our communities, and even if the Christian message has known periods of darkness and ecclesial weakness, it will never grow old.
We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Ro 6:4
But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code. Ro 7:6

A renewal of preaching can offer believers, as well as the lukewarm and the non-practising, new joy in the faith and fruitfulness in the work of evangelization. The heart of its message will always be the same: the God who revealed his immense love in the crucified and risen Christ. God constantly renews his faithful ones, whatever their age:
"*They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not be faint" (Is.40:31*).
Christ is the "*eternal Gospel" (Rev.14:6*); he "*is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb.13:8),* yet his riches and beauty are inexhaustible. He is for ever young and a constant source of newness.
The Church never fails to be amazed at *"the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God" (Rom.11:33).*
With this newness he is always able to renew our lives and our communities, and even if the Christian message has known periods of darkness and ecclesial weakness, it will never grow old. Jesus can also break through the dull categories with which we would enclose him and he constantly amazes us by his divine creativity. Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today's world. Every form of authentic evangelization is always "*new*". Though it is true that this mission demands great generosity on our part, it would be wrong to see it as a heroic individual undertaking, for it is first and foremost the Lord's work, surpassing anything which we can see and understand.

What does it mean to be "God's faithful people"?

God's faithful people are those who are continuing faithfully in obeying God's commands—persistent

"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' Mt 25:21
Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Ga 6:7-10
Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Heb 12:3
Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death. Rev 2:10-11
They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Rev 12:11
Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them. Ps 126:5-6

and also those who are full of faith

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. Heb 11:1-2
Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up… However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" Lk 18:1-8

03/06/2026

Psalm 32

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 9

Questions

Why did Jesus teach His disciples how to pray?
Why can we trust God?
Should we take everything in the Bible as literally true?
How important is it to understand what we are praying?
How can we pray confidently when facing difficult situations?
Does it matter if we do (or don't!) say "*amen*" to a prayer?

Comments

Why did Jesus teach His disciples how to pray?

Jesus taught His disciples how to pray because one of them asked Him to:

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say: " Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Lk 11:1-2

However, because this event is in Scripture, Jesus also taught us how to pray:

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom.15:4-6

Why can we trust God?

We can trust God because He is trustworthy

Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your covenant is trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. 2Sam 7:28

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does. Ps 145:13

"Who are you?" they asked.

"Just what I have been telling you from the beginning," Jesus replied. "I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world." Jn 8:25-26

I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. Dt 32:3-4

The statutes you have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy. Ps 119:138

God doesn't change

"I the LORD do not change. Mal 3:6

Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. Jas 1:16-18

He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a human being, that he should change his mind." 1Sa 15:29

God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? Nu 23:19

in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, Tit 1:2

Should we take everything in the Bible as literally true?

Not everything in the Bible to be taken literally—there are similes, metaphors, allegories, parables, prophesies as well as literal descriptions

Literal vs. Lateral — Just because a biblical command is intended to be understood *literally*, does not mean it is intended to be applied *laterally*, that is, universally across the board to all peoples at all times in all places.

For instance, Jesus told Peter to cast his net in deep water (Luke 5:4). That's exactly what Peter did because he took Jesus' command literally, in its ordinary sense. However, because Jesus' command to Peter was *literal* does not mean the same command applies *laterally* to everyone else. We're not obliged to cast nets into deep water just because Peter was.

We should take the Bible in its ordinary sense, that is, take the things recorded there with the precision the writer intended. We should ask "*What is this writer trying to communicate*?"

The *New Oxford American Dictionary* defines metaphor as "*a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable…a thing regarded as representative or symbolic of something else*." So, metaphors take one meaning of a word and then creatively leverage it into another meaning to make an impact on a reader.

All metaphors (or other forms of figurative writing) rely *first* on literal definitions *before* they can be of any use as figures of speech.

All words must <u>first</u> be understood in their "*usual or most basic sense*" <u>before</u> they can be used metaphorically. We find, for example, the word "*shepherd*" prominently featured in the 23rd Psalm. Do you see that we must first understand the literal meaning of "*shepherd*" before the phrase "*the Lord is my shepherd*" has any figurative power?

This point is critical for accurate biblical interpretation. Here's why.

Sometimes we attempt to solve interpretive problems by digging through a Bible dictionary. This can be a helpful place to start, but since all figurative language trades in some way on dictionary definitions, the dictionary is not the final word. It can never tell you what *use* a specific writer is *making* of any particular word or phrase.

Strictly speaking, since no word is a metaphor in itself, words cannot be used metaphorically unless they're embedded in a context. Therefore, it makes no sense to ask of a solitary word, "*Is the word meant literally*?" because the word standing on its own gives no indication.

Dictionaries by definition can only deal with words in isolation. Other things—context, genre, flow of thought, etc.—determine if the word's literal sense is being applied in a non-literal way, symbolically "*regarded as representative*" of something else.

Take two sentences, "*The sunshine streamed through my window*," and, "*Sweetheart, you're a ray of sunshine to me this morning*." *Sunshine's* <u>literal meaning</u> is the same in each case. However, it is used *literally* in the first sentence, but *metaphorically* in the second. Further, unless my wife understands the literal meaning of "*sunshine*," she will never understand the compliment I'm offering her in a poetic sort of way.

So first, literal definitions must be in place first before a word can be used figuratively. Second, metaphors are always meant to *clarify*, not *obscure*.[1]

Figurative speech communicates literal truth in a more precise and powerful way than ordinary language can on its own. The strictly literal comment, "*Honey, your presence makes me feel good today*" doesn't pack the punch that the "*sunshine*" figure provides. The metaphor makes my precise point more powerfully than "*words in their usual or most basic sense*" could accomplish.

Remember, even when metaphor is in play, **some literal message is always intended**. Hell may not have literal flames,[2] but the reality is at least as gruesome, ergo the figure.

Once again, it's always right to ask, "*What is the precise meaning the writer is trying to communicate with his colourful language*?" But how do we do that? Here I have a suggestion.

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[1] The exception to the generalization would be the parables Jesus told His disciples so that they would understand the meaning, but the crowds listening in would not. Mark 4:10

[2] In more than one instance, Jesus described Hell as "outer darkness" (e.g., Matt. 8:12) and literal flames give light.

The Most Important Thing

If there was one bit of wisdom, one rule of thumb, one useful tip I could offer to help you solve the riddle of Scriptural meaning, it's this: **Never read a Bible verse**. That's right, *never read a Bible verse*. **Instead, always read a paragraph**—at least.

On the radio I use this simple rule to help me answer the majority of Bible questions I'm asked, even when I'm not familiar with the particular passage. When I quickly survey the paragraph containing the verse in question, the larger context almost always provides the information I need to help me understand what's going on.

This works because of a basic rule of all communication: Meaning flows from the top down, from the larger units to the smaller units. The key to the meaning of any verse comes from the paragraph, not just from the individual words.

Here's how it works. First, get the big picture. Look at the broader context of the book. What type of writing is it—history, poetry, proverb, letter? Different genres have different rules for reading them.

Next, stand back from the verse and look for breaks in the passage that identify major units of thought. Then ask yourself, "*What in this paragraph or group of paragraphs gives any clue to the meaning of the verse in question*? *In general, what idea is being developed*? ***What is the flow of thought***? "

With the larger context now in view, you can narrow your focus and speculate on the meaning of the verse itself. When you come up with something that seems right, sum it up in your own words. Finally—and this step is critical— see if your paraphrase—your summary—makes sense when inserted in place of the verse in the passage.

I call this "*the paraphrase principle*." Replace the text in question with your paraphrase and see if the passage still makes sense in light of the larger context. Is it intelligible when inserted back into the paragraph? Does it dovetail naturally with the bigger picture? If it doesn't, you know you're on the wrong track.

How important is it to understand what we are praying?

God doesn't respond to prayer but to faith—Jesus taught that it is not how long or how loud we pray that impresses God:

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Mt 6:6-8

If we are to pray in faith, we have to believe what we are saying and that God will/can answer our prayers. For us to believe what we are praying we need to understand what we are praying about (and to Whom we are praying too!)

For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified. *1Cor.14:13-17*

How can we pray confidently when facing difficult situations?

Keep our prayers simple and remember that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are interceding on our behalf

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Ro 8:26-28

Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Isa 53:12

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Ro 8:33-34

Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Heb 7:23-26

But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. Heb 9:11-15

to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. Heb 12:23-24

Does it matter if we do (or don't!) say "*amen*" to a prayer?

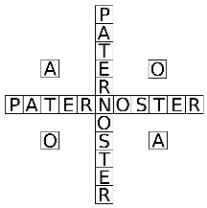
Saying the word "amen" doesn't matter <u>but meaning the word does matter</u>. Our faith is personal not proxy— we cannot worship God or fellowship with God on behalf of someone else—and neither can we repent on behalf of someone else!

When we pray, we must pray from our heart and so the meaning of "amen" is very important:

And he said: "<u>Truly</u> I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.[Matt.18:3] *"verily I say unto you," "assuredly," "I tell you the truth," "I can guarantee this truth."*

Although it is a useful (and subtle) way to let people know that we have finished praying, saying "*amen*" should primarily be an affirmation that we have truly meant the words used in the prayer—by saying "*amen*" we are saying "*assuredly, I tell you the truth this prayer is from my heart and I mean what I have said (or heard someone else pray)*".

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! ***<u>Amen</u>***.[Eph.3:20-21] *For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. <u>And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.</u>*[2Cor.1:20]



The sator square is an acrostic palindrome—the earliest one discovered is from Pompeii (and dating from before the earthquake of AD 62). **AREPO** is taken to be a proper name; **SATOR** (the gardener/ sower); **TENET** (holds); **OPERA** (works); **ROTAS** (the wheels/plough)—which means something like: '*The sower Arepo guides the plough with care*'—or "*you reap what you sow*". But the letters also form: **PATER NOSTER**—Latin for '*Our Father*'—plus a spare *A* and *O*, which can refer to *Jesus, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.*

However intriguing the SATOR SQUARE may be, it only causes speculation and controversy—however, faith is spiritual and does not come from human reasoning but from hearing the Word of God. *Abraham answered, "Your brothers can read what Moses and the prophets wrote. They should pay attention to that." Then the rich man said, "No, that's not enough! If only someone from the dead would go to them, they would listen and turn to God." So Abraham said, "If they won't pay attention to Moses and the prophets, they won't listen even to someone who comes back from the dead." Lk.16:29-31*

27/05/2026

Psalm 31:13f

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 9

Questions

Is there a difference between God's Kingdom and God's Church?
How much influence does the devil have today?
Why are people deceived?
How can we ensure that we are not deceived?
Why is faith described as a "spirit"? *(2Cor.4:13)*
Why can we be at peace when everything around us is not at peace?

Comments

What is the difference between God's Kingdom and God's Church?

God's Kingdom is Jesus' dominion:

Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst." Lk.17:20-21

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this. Isa 9:6-7

The Kingdom of God is the rule of Christ within people—it is the spiritual domain of Jesus within people who submit to His authority (*i.e.* confess that Jesus is Lord):

But what does [Scripture] say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Rom.10:8-13

The Kingdom of God is spiritual not political or geographical

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place." Jn 18:36

Even though the Kingdom of God is spiritual, it is very tangible

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval. Ro 14:17-18

Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1Co 6:9-11

But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. 1Co 4:19-20

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. Rev 12:10

The Church is people—people who are Believers in Jesus Christ; people who are **righteous**, **redeemed, reconciled**, who have **repented** and are being **refined**.

The word **Church** in Greek is **ἐκκλησία** (Ekklesia) meaning **a <u>gathering</u> of <u>citizens</u> who are <u>called out</u> from their homes into some <u>public place</u> for the <u>purpose</u> of <u>deliberating</u>** (deliberating = discourse or debate with action taken after careful consideration).

- ***Gathering:*** Church is always a *gathering* of people never just 1 or 2 people in their home.
- ***Citizens:*** Christians are *citizens* of heaven. This has nothing to do with our natural or first birth but solely to do with our second birth from above:

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ep 2:19-22

But our citizenship is in heaven Phil.3:20

- ***Called:*** We have responded to God's call and are doing something about it. Church is when we leave our home thinking - lunch, business, family, friends, leisure etc. to worship God with a single mind:

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 2Pet.1:3

- ***Public:*** Church meets in *public* not in private. We are not a secret society or cult. We are transparent and accountable.

Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God's grace. For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand. And I hope that, as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus. 2Co 1:12-14

Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God. 2Cor.2:17

- ***Purpose:*** Our meetings are deliberate, we intend to take action after hearing the facts:

Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. Ac 17:11-12

Church is also translated "***assembly***":

"This is the Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your own people.' He was in the assembly in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors; and he received living words to pass on to us. Ac 7:37-38

The Church has no ethnic, social or gender distinctions—if you belong to Christ, you belong to the Church: *So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*[Gal.3:26-29]

And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God and they will reign on the earth."[Rev.5:9-10]

How much influence does the devil have today?

As much as he is given!

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Jas 4:7

and do not give the devil a foothold. Ep 4:27

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 1Pe 5:8-9

Why are people deceived?

We were born separated from God and under the devil's influence

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. Ep 2:1-2

Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."[Gen.3:13]

Non-believers are spiritually blinded and deceived

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.[2Cor.4:4]

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.[Jn.8:44]

Believers can be spiritually ignorant and deceived

Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become "fools" so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." 1Co 3:18-20

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Ep 5:6-10

But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.[2Cor.11:3-4]

At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you ahead of time. Mt 24:23-25

How can we ensure that we are not deceived?

Know the Scriptures (not just as head knowledge but especially heart knowledge

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. [Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, dividing the word of truth aright.]2Ti 2:15

Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. Mt 22:29

You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. Jn 5:39-40

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2Ti 3:14-17

We should use our mind and our spirit

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an

inquirer, say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified. 1Co 14:14-17
The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behaviour, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young— let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance— for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Pr 1:1-7

Why is faith described as a "spirit"? *(2Cor.4:13)*

God is Spirit

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." Jn 4:23-24

God created everything—including spirits

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. Jn 1:1-3
The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Col 1:15-17

There are spiritual "beings" or angels. It appears that some angels rebelled against God—we call these "demons" or "devils"
The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: " 'You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendour. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. Eze 28:11-17
A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born. She gave birth to a son, a male child, who "will rule all the nations with an iron sceptre." And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.
Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Rev 12:1-11
Scripture implies that angels (and demons) can influence people in particular ways—hence "***spirit of…***".

Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the LORD had commanded Moses. Dt 34:9
The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire. Is 4:4
The LORD has poured into them a spirit of dizziness; they make Egypt stagger in all that she does, as a drunkard staggers around in his vomit. Isa 19:14
He will be a spirit of justice to the one who sits in judgment, a source of strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate. Is 28:6
and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendour. Is 61:3
This is what the LORD says: "See, I will stir up the spirit of a destroyer against Babylon and the people of Leb Kamai. Jer 51:1
"Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God. A spirit of prostitution is in their heart; they do not acknowledge the LORD. Hos 5:4
"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. Zec 12:10
as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear, to this very day." Rom 11:8
but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. 1Jn 4:3-6

Some of these "spirits" are descriptions of God's character

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the centre of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Rev 5:6 (4 mentions of 7 spirits of God in Revelation)
A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; Isa 11:1-3
"When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. Jn 15:26
Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. Ro 1:1-4
I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. Ep 1:17
How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? Heb 10:29

At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus." Rev 19:10

Why can we be at peace when everything around us is not at peace?

When God is with us all will be well:

And for the tender love that our good Lord hath to all that shall be saved, He comforteth readily and sweetly, signifying thus: It is sooth (true) that sin is cause of all this pain; but all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner [of] thing shall be well.

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?" Heb 13:5-6

But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die." So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD Is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. Jdg 6:23-24

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Ep 2:14-18

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Ro 5:1-2

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace." ' Nu 6:24-26

The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace. Ps 29:11

After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 2Sa 7:1

"All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. Jn 14:25-27

"A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." Jn 16:32-33

Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous laws. Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble. I wait for your salvation, LORD, and I follow your commands. I obey your statutes, for I love them greatly. I obey your precepts and your statutes, for all my ways are known to you. Ps 119:164-168

But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy peace and prosperity. Ps 37:11

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal. Isa 26:3-4

"Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to you. Accept instruction from his mouth and lay up his words in your heart. Job 22:21-22

20/05/2026

Psalm 31:1-15

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 8

Questions

How does God lead us?
Where does God lead us?
How can we overcome temptations?
What is the difference between tempting and testing?
How does God refine us?
How important is it to become spiritually maturity?

Comments

How does God lead us?

God leads His sheep with His voice (Scripture and Spirit)

"Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them. Jn 10:1-6

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one." Jn 10:25-30

God leads us with His Word

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws. I have suffered much; preserve my life, LORD, according to your word. Ps 119:105-107

God leads us by His Spirit through our spirit and conscience

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. Ro 8:14

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Ga 5:24-26

So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man. Ac 24:16

I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit— Rom 9:1

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm. 1Tim 1:3-7

To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good. Tit 1:15-16

God leads us by His righteousness

Lead me, LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies—make your way straight before me. Ps 5:8

But although God leads, we must follow!

May I wholeheartedly follow your decrees, that I may not be put to shame. Ps 119:80

I wait for your salvation, LORD, and I follow your commands. I obey your statutes, for I love them greatly. I obey your precepts and your statutes, for all my ways are known to you. Ps 119:166-168

When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have

nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead." Mt 8:18-22
Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it. Mt 10:38-39
Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." Jn 21:22
Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings? 1Co 3:1-4
Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 1Co 11:1

There many who hear God's Word (voice) but choose not to follow

He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, " 'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!'" Mk 4:11-12 (Mt 13:15; Lk 8:10; Is.6:9-10 Ac 28:26,27; Ro 11:8; Dt 29:4; Eze 12:2; Jer 5:21;

Where does God lead us?

God leads us to the land of Promise which was prefigured in the OT by the Promised land

God leads us through life—including the Valley of the Shadow of death

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Ps 23:1-4

Life is a journey *c.f.* prosper— easy to travel through; to lead in a good way, to prosper one's journey

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well [Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.]. It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. 3Jn 2-3

How can we overcome temptations?

We overcome temptations by faith

for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. 1Jn 5:4-5

We overcome temptations by Christ who is in us

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. 1Jn 4:1-6

We overcome temptations by the Word of God

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" … Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. Mt 4:1-11

I write to you, dear children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one. 1Jn 2:14

We overcome temptations by our testimony

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Rev 12:10-11

We overcome temptation by saying "no"

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, Tit 2:11-13

We overcome temptation by staying humble and resisting the devil:

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1Pe 5:6-11

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Jas 4:6-8

"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Ep 4:26-27

Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Ep 6:11-13

What is the difference between tempting and testing?

God won't (can't) tempt us to sin but He does test us through circumstances (tempting and testing is the same word in Greek—the difference is intent)

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.Jas.1:12-18

How does God refine us?

God refines us through difficult circumstances

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Jas 1:2-4

See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.Is.48:10

I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.'Zech.13:9

Although God won't tempt us to sin. He will test us for purity!

But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.Job 23:10

And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times. You, LORD, will keep the needy safe and will protect us forever from the wicked.[Ps.12:6-7]

God will allow us to go through difficult situations—not for His benefit so He can see how well we are doing, but for our benefit, so that we can know how well we are doing.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.[1Pet.1:3-9]

How important is it to become spiritually maturity?

Spiritual maturity is staying true to God and His values regardless of the situations we face

After Job heard all of those reports, he got up and tore his robe. He shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground and worshiped the LORD. He said, "I was born naked. And I'll leave here naked. You have given, and you have taken away. May your name be praised." In spite of everything, Job didn't sin by blaming God for doing anything wrong.[Job.1:20-22]

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.[Phil.4:11-13]

Spiritual maturity is standing firm

If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.' " Isa 7:9

Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ep 6:13-17

Spiritual maturity is the development of our personality (soul) and this can only happen before we die

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1Pe 1:8-9

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Ro 6:22-23

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.[Heb.5:11-14]

have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil;
have their perceptions trained by practice to discern both good and evil;
have trained themselves with a lot of practice... to tell the difference between good and evil;
have through training the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong;
have their minds trained by practice to know the difference between good and evil;
have some practice in telling right from wrong;

have, by using their senses, been trained to distinguish between good and evil.

Maturity comes through functioning in the Body of Christ—the Church

(What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Eph.4:9-16

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. Ep 5:25-27

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. Col 1:27-28

13/05/2026

Psalm 30

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 8

Questions

What does it mean to be righteous
What does it mean to be redeemed?
What does it mean to be reconciled to God?
Why did Jesus die on the cross?
When did God forgive our sins?
What difference does forgiveness make?

Comments

What does it mean to be righteous

To be righteous in the Christian sense is to be in right standing before God—but this excludes everyone because no one is right before God (righteous) by nature

As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."[Rom.3:10]

The only way for us to be counted righteous before God is for God to give us that status

What should we say about those things? What did our father Abraham discover about being right with God? Did he become right with God because of something he did? If so, he could brag about it. But he couldn't brag to God. What do we find in Scripture? It says, "Abraham believed God. God accepted Abraham's faith, and so his faith made him right with God." When a man works, his pay is not considered a gift. It is owed to him. But things are different with God. He makes evil people right with himself. If people trust in him, their faith is accepted even though they do not work. Their faith makes them right with God. King David says the same thing. He tells us how blessed some people are. God makes those people right with himself. But they don't have to do anything in return. David says, "Blessed are those whose lawless acts are forgiven. Blessed are those whose sins are taken away. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord never counts against him." Rom 4:1-8

The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.[Rom.4:23-25]

Because no one is able to make themselves righteous, God became a human being and exchanged His righteousness of our sin and our sin for His righteousness

The LORD watches and is displeased, for there is no justice. He sees there is no advocate; he is shocked that no one intervenes. So he takes matters into his own hands, his desire for justice drives him on. He wears his desire for justice like body armour, and his desire to deliver is like a helmet on his head. He puts on the garments of vengeance and wears zeal like a robe.[Is.59:15-17]

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.[1Pet.3:18]

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.[Rom.5:8]

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2Co 5:21

But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. 1Jn 3:5

What does it mean to be redeemed?

Redeem means to buy back or act as kinsman (c.f. Naomi— where Boaz the nearest eligible relative redeemed her property)

"Who are you?" he asked. "I am your servant Ruth," she said. "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer of our family." "The LORD bless you, my daughter," he replied. "This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character. Although it is true that I am a kinsman-redeemer of our family, there is another who is more closely related than I. Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to do his duty as your kinsman-redeemer, good;

let him redeem you. But if he is not willing, as surely as the LORD lives I will do it. Lie here until morning." Ruth 3:9-13

Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat there. When the kinsman-redeemer he had mentioned came along, Boaz said, "Come over here, my friend, and sit down." So he went over and sat down.

Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, "Sit here," and they did so. Then he said to the kinsman-redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our brother Elimelech. I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line."

"I will redeem it," he said.

Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi and from Ruth the Moabitess, you acquire the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property."

At this, the kinsman-redeemer said, "Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it."

(Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.)

So the kinsman-redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it yourself." And he removed his sandal.

Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, "Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion and Mahlon. I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from the town records. Today you are witnesses!" Ru 4:1-10

Jesus became a human being in order to be able to redeem us

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.[Col.1:13-14]

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. Ro 3:21-26

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. 1Co 1:30

Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins. Ps 130:7-8 (note – this is not natural Israel but spiritual Israel)

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace Ep 1:4-7

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Col 1:13-14

" 'If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to you, do not make them work as slaves. They are to be treated as hired workers or temporary residents among you; they are to work for you until the Year of Jubilee. Then they and their children are to be released, and they will go back to their own clans and to the property of their ancestors. Because the Israelites are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt, they must not be sold as slaves. Do not rule over them ruthlessly, but fear your God.

" 'Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves. You may also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of their clans born in your country, and they will

become your property. You can bequeath them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly.
" If a foreigner residing among you becomes rich and any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to the foreigner or to a member of the foreigner's clan, they retain the right of redemption after they have sold themselves. One of their relatives may redeem them: An uncle or a cousin or any blood relative in their clan may redeem them. Or if they prosper, they may redeem themselves. They and their buyer are to count the time from the year they sold themselves up to the Year of Jubilee. The price for their release is to be based on the rate paid to a hired worker for that number of years. If many years remain, they must pay for their redemption a larger share of the price paid for them. If only a few years remain until the Year of Jubilee, they are to compute that and pay for their redemption accordingly. They are to be treated as workers hired from year to year; you must see to it that those to whom they owe service do not rule over them ruthlessly.
" Even if someone is not redeemed in any of these ways, they and their children are to be released in the Year of Jubilee, for the Israelites belong to me as servants. They are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God. Lev 25:39-55

Note, God's promises are fulfilled in the Child not the city and the Lord not the land. The Year of the Lord's Favour (Year of Jubilee) was fulfilled by Jesus and is no longer a year of 52 weeks but a status. It has been fulfilled and there is no going back

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Lk 4:16-21

What does it mean to be reconciled to God?

Reconcile— to set up a relationship of peace not existing before

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation Col 1:21-22

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. Ro 5:9-11

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2Co 5:18-21]

Why did Jesus die on the cross?

He died to expunge/forgive/remiss/remove our sins

and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. [And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem] Lk 24:47

Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings! The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." Ac 5:29-32

And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Col 1:18-20

He died on a cross to fulfill the Scriptures: no bones broken and becoming a curse

Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." Jn 19:31-37

The righteous person may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken. Ps 34:19-20

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. Ga 3:13-14

"He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed." 1Pe 2:24

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Col 2:13-15

When did God forgive our sins?

The decision to forgive our sins was made before God created the world

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. Ep 1:4

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, Mt 25:34-35

But the act of forgiveness was completed on the cross when Jesus cried "It is finished"

Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Jn 19:28-30

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. 1Pe 1:18-21

That is why the OT saints had to wait until Jesus died

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. Heb 11:13-16

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. Heb 11:39-40

Now the penalty of sin has been paid in full, there is no more price to pay for them

It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. Heb 9:23-28

What difference does forgiveness make?

Everything!

We have all of God's promises made available to us

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 2Co 1:20-22

God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Ep 1:3

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2Pe 1:3-4

We have peace with God

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Ro 5:1-2

We have eternal salvation

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek. Heb 5:7-10

We have fellowship with God and God's family

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1Jn 1:1-7

We have a better, happier life now—blessed are the…

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Mt 5:3

Although a wicked person who commits a hundred crimes may live a long time, I know that it will go better with those who fear God, who are reverent before him. Ec 8:12

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. 3Jn 2

06/05/2026

Psalm 29

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 7

Questions

Why should we ask God for our daily bread when He has given us everything we need?
How does physical food affect our spiritual life?
How does spiritual food affect our physical life?
What does "*Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost*" mean?
How do we access God's blessings?

Comments

Why should we ask God for our daily bread when He has given us everything we need?

We ask God for our daily bread to acknowledge our gratitude to God
Jesus gave thanks to God for His food:
And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.[Matt.14:19]
Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.[Matt.26:27]
When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.[Lk.24:30]
Paul gave public thanks for food:
After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. Altogether there were 276 of us on board.[Acts.27:35-37]
And we too, are told to give thanks for our food: *For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.*[1Tim.4:4-5] *Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.*[Rom.14:6]
We ask God for our daily bread to acknowledge our dependency upon God
When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.[Deut.8:10-18]

How does physical food affect our spiritual life?

Physical food (or lack of it) does not make us more or less spiritual. Flesh is temporal but spirit is eternal.
I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything. You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both."[1Cor.6:12-13]
But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.[1Cor.8:8]
Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as

though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. Col 2:16-23

After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. "Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.) He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person." Mk 7:17-23

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. That is why we labour and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.

Command and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1Tim 4:1-16

I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval. Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall. Ro 14:14-21

We worship (and connect/commune with) God from our spirit not with our body—however we must honour God with whole person—spirit, soul and body

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." Jn 4:23-24

How does spiritual food affect our physical life?

Our spiritual food nourishes our spirit but also affects our whole person of spirit, soul and body.

Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men. They eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence… The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body. Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Prov.4:14-24

Our mental health and physical health is dominated by our spiritual health

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you [you may prosper], even as your soul is getting along well [prospers]. It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. 3Jn 2-4 (prosper [εὐοδόω] = good journey

Although a wicked person who commits a hundred crimes may live a long time, I know that it will go better with those who fear God, who are reverent before him. Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them, and their days will not lengthen like a shadow. Eccl 8:12-13

Be careful to obey all these regulations I am giving you, so that it may always go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the LORD your God. Dt 12:28

"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Jos 1:7-9

What does *"Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost"* mean?

Spiritual benefits can only be acquired by faith not be bought with money

"Come now, let us settle the matter [let us reason together]," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land.[Is.1:18-19]

Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.[Is.55:1-3] God has already given us everything we need for our Chrisitan life: *Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*[2Pet.1:2-4] We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing and now it is up to us to participate in God's blessings: *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfilment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.*[Eph.1:3-10] We enjoy God's blessings by staying in harmony with Him—this is called "*fellowship*": *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*[2Cor.13:14] *We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.*[1Jn 1:3-4] *So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh… But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.*[Gal.5:16-26]

How do we access God's blessings?

There are universal blessings and believers' blessings.

The universal blessings are due to God's character

that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Matt 5:45

Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. Lam 3:22-23

The LORD within her is righteous; he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail, yet the unrighteous know no shame. Zeph 3:5

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation." Ex 34:6-7

God has paid the price for everyone's sin

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. 1Jn 2:1-2

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Jn 3:17

We access believers' blessings through conversion. At conversion God gave us everything we need for life and godliness

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. Eph 1:3-6

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2Pet 1:3-4

And we utilise them through faith—that simple trust in God and in what Jesus accomplished on the cross

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 1Pet 1:3-6

Maturity is living in the Kingdom values (blessings) of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval. Rom 14:17-18

The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever. My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. Though hail flattens the forest and the city is levelled completely, how blessed you will be, sowing your seed by every stream, and letting your cattle and donkeys range free. Isa 32:17-20

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength. Phil 4:12-13

This is an on-going process and so we can never reach absolute perfection until we see Jesus face to face and the last enemy (death) is destroyed

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1Pet 1:8-9

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But

one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Phil 3:12-14

29/04/2026

Psalm 28

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 7:8

Questions

What is God's Kingdom?
Why are there so many views about God's Kingdom?
Why did John need to prepare people for the coming Kingdom?
Can this earth be like heaven?
Do we have a role in bringing heaven to earth?
When will God's Kingdom be complete?

Comments

What is God's Kingdom?

God's Kingdom is the will of God being done on earth as it is in heaven—the rule of God in people's hearts

your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.[Matt.6:10]

God's Kingdom is not political or geographical but spiritual

My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place." "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."[Jn.18:36-37]

Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."[Lk.17:20-21]

God's Kingdom is the fulfilment of God's prophecies in the OT—it is the reign of Jesus who is King David's greater Son

This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: Matt 1:1

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, "What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?" "The son of David," they replied. He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says, " 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet." ' If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?" No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions. Mt 22:41-46

Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.[Is.9:7]

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. 1Cor 15:20-28

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" Isa 52:7

Why are there so many views about God's Kingdom?

The main reason there is so much diversity of views about God's Kingdon is because people do not understand the Bible

Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. Mt 22:29

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2Tim.3:14-17

Someone may say to you, "Let's ask the mediums and those who consult the spirits of the dead. With their whisperings and mutterings, they will tell us what to do." But shouldn't people ask God for guidance? Should the living seek guidance from the dead? Look to God's instructions and teachings! People who contradict his word are completely in the dark. They will go from one place to another, weary and hungry. And because they are hungry, they will rage and curse their king and their God. They will look up to heaven and down at the earth, but wherever they look, there will be trouble and anguish and dark despair. They will be thrown out into the darkness. Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory. The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. Isa 8:19-9:2

However, until we receive our immortal body, we only see and understand in part

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. 1Jn 3:2-3

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. 1Cor. 13:9-12

We know that "We all possess knowledge." But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. 1Co 8:1-2

Diverse Millennial Positions of Revelation 20-22

Although there are slight variations of these views these descriptions are generally accurate.

Pre-Millennialism

This view generally regards the 1,000-year period as a literal one thousand years of the earthly reign of Christ on David's throne from Jerusalem.

Post-Millennialism

This view generally does not regard the 1,000-year as a literal one thousand years but as the period of time in which the Church successfully fulfils the Great Commission and disciples the nations which precedes Christ's return.

Amillennialism

This view generally considers the 1,000-year period to be symbolic of the spiritual Kingdom of God on earth which was established by Christ on the Cross.

However, one of the greatest implications of how we regard chapters 20 to 22 is not about the millennium, but about our understanding of the place of the devil today. Based on this passage, some claim that the devil is an entirely spent force and all evil today is the result of human sinfulness. Others claim that the devil's ultimate fate is still in the future and that he currently wreaks havoc on planet earth.

He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. Revelation 20:2-3

Revelation 20 deals with the demise of satan. Depending on which School of interpretation one holds to, determines just when we are to regard the time of this demise.

Pre -Millennialism's devil

If you regard the Book of Revelation from a "Pre-millennial" position then chances are that you see the devil as being highly active, almost instrumental throughout the Book, culminating in an ultimate cosmic clash between Christ and satan. Prior to satan's future demise, he is vigorously working to oppose God's people, wreak havoc, and thwart the purposes of God on earth. Today, the believer must consistently battle with satan in order to maintain their walk with Christ. Thus there is a strong emphasis on "*spiritual warfare*" in modern pre-millennialism.

Post Millennialism's devil

The Post Millennialist sees the Devil as having been bound with the close of the Old Covenant. The Devil is "*bound*" in the sense that he is restricted. Due to Christ's victory on the cross the devil has been defeated and bound.

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. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. Col.2:14-15

Satan is crediting as interfering in the mission of the early Church -

Therefore we wanted to come to you; even I, Paul, time and again; but Satan hindered us. 1 Thessalonians 2:18

But the Church ultimately triumphs as it carries out its mission -

Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 2Cor.2:14

The Post-Millennial view regards the Devil as having been expelled from the direct presence of God with the finalising of the Old Covenant-

She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. Revelation 12:5-8

This expulsion has bound Satan and restricted his authority over the earth. Post-Millennialism foresees the ultimate demise of the devil at the culmination of time.

Amillennialism's devil

Similar to the Post-Millennial view, Amillennialism however regards that the devil was bound at the Cross. He and his demonic forces are active in the world, but will eventually be eternally judged.

Revelation's demise of the devil

Every millennial view acknowledges the demise of the devil. The pre, post, and amillennial views regard his just demise at the end of time. Post-millennialism and Amillennialism acknowledge that the devil was defeated at the Cross and expelled from the immediate presence of God when Christ ascended.

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Revelation 12:9

The Pre-millennial view of the devil's destiny is perhaps more fanciful than Biblical. It strikes me as rather illogical apart from being Biblically flawed. It generally disregards the power of the Cross and its relationship to the devil's past demise. It's claim that the devil will be released at the end of Christ's earthly rule lacks sense and raises more questions than providing answers.

The Post-millennial and Amillennial views are both plausible and worthy of further examination. As worthy as each view is, they can't all be right.

Why did John need to prepare people for the coming Kingdom?

John's message was "repent" — which means "change your mind"

during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way

for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all people will see God's salvation.' " Lk 3:2-6

John prepared people for Jesus who came to fulfill the Old Covenant and usher in the New Covenant

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel." Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One." The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Jn 1:29-37

John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, he sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?' " At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me." Lk 7:18-23

John's ministry was foretold to his father by the angel

When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Lk 1:12-17

John's ministry was prophesied by his father

And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace." And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel. Lk 1:76-80

John's ministry was prophesied by Malachi

"Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel. "See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction." Mal 4:4-6

The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?"

Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist. Mt 17:10-13

Can this earth be like heaven?

Yes and no! Heaven is where God is and God is within us—but we are clay vessels!

For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to

death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. 2Cor.4:5-15

Yes! We can experience heaven on earth in part when we live in harmony with God. The New Covenant unites us with God because our sins are forgiven and our guilt is removed

John experienced a bit of heaven

I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, Rev 1:9-10

After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. Rev 4:1-2

Paul experienced a bit of heaven

I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell. I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2Cor 12:1-10

No! We can't completely experience heaven on earth until Jesus returns and ushers in His completed Kingdom—but then it will be a new earth and not this existing earth. When the new earth comes, the devil will be completely excluded and have no influence at all

When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Rev 20:7-10

"See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. Isa 65:17-18

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." Rev 21:1-5

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the

heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. 2Pet 3:11-13

Do we have a role in bringing heaven to earth?

Yes. God has done His part, and now we have to do our part

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matt 28:18-20

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it. Mk 16:15-20

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." Lk 24:45-49

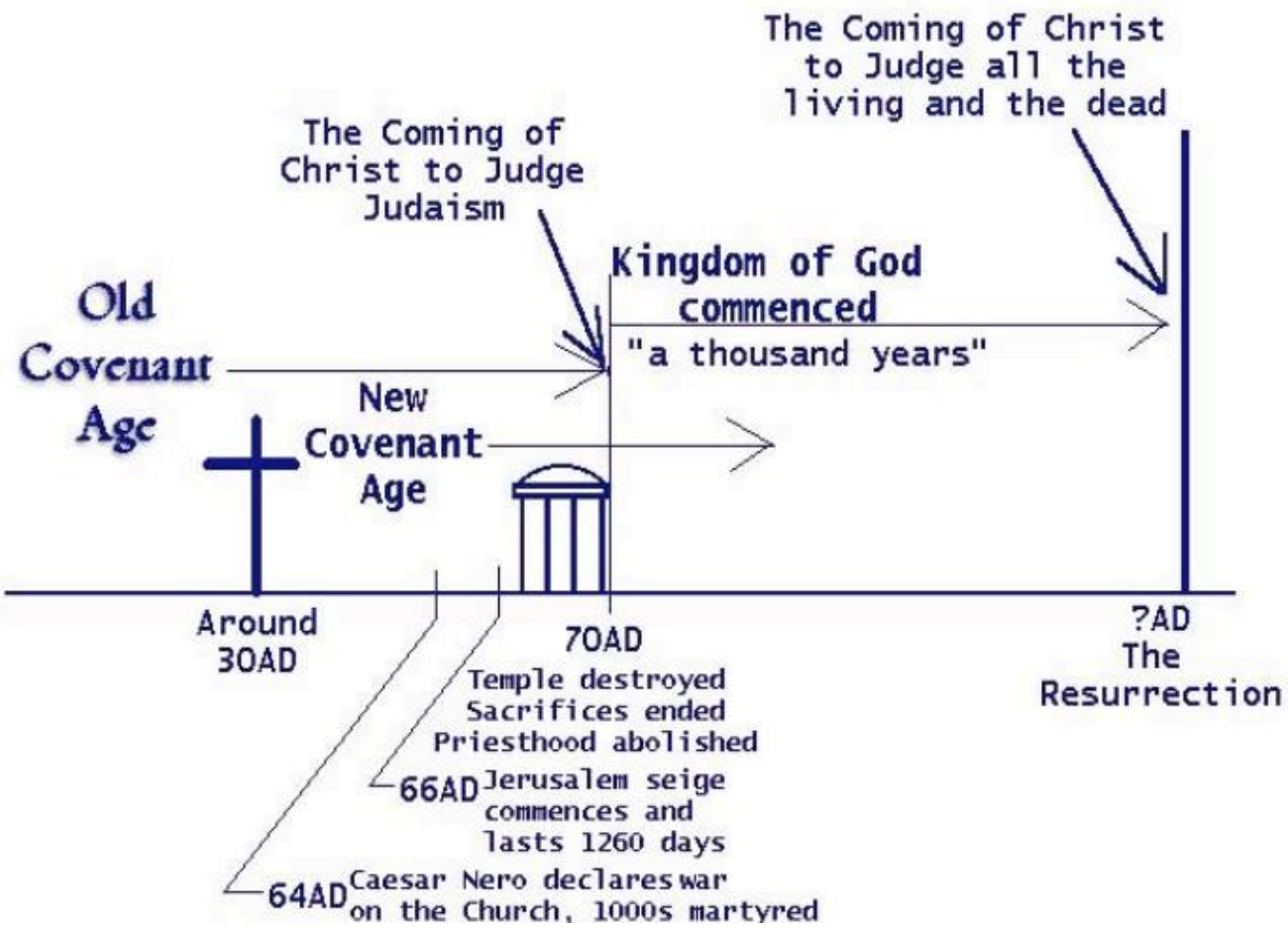
When will God's Kingdom be complete?

When Jesus hands the kingdom over to His Father

" 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet." ' Mt 22:44

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. 1Cor 15:22-28

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. Phil 3:20-21


The Coming of Christ to Judge all the living and the dead
The Coming of Christ to Judge Judaism
Kingdom of God commenced
"a thousand years"
Old Covenant Age
New Covenant Age
Around 30AD
70AD
?AD The Resurrection
Temple destroyed
Sacrifices ended
Priesthood abolished
66AD Jerusalem seige commences and lasts 1260 days
64AD Caesar Nero declares war on the Church, 1000s martyred

22/04/2026

Psalm 27

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 7

Questions

What does the title "*Christ*" mean?
How does Jesus fulfill the title of "*Christ*"?
How can one God be three distinct Persons (*Father, Son and Holy Spirit*)?
Why is it important to have a basic understanding about God?
Why did Jesus mean when He said that we should not judge? (*Luke 6:37*)
Why should we check what we hear about God and His Kingdom?

Comments

What does the title "*Christ*" mean?

Christ or Messiah literally means "*Anointed one*" and refers to God's Saviour who would deliver Israel.

The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the LORD and against his anointed,Ps.2:2
But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "God's Messiah [Christ]."Lk.9:20

Christ also means smeared with oil as in treating leather

They set the tables, they spread the rugs, they eat, they drink! Get up, you officers, oil the shields! Is.21:5

David's lament for Saul

Mountains of Gilboa, may you have neither dew nor rain, may no showers fall on your terraced fields. For there the shield of the mighty was despised, the shield of Saul—no longer rubbed with oil. 2Sam.1:21

Christ is a term applied to the priests who were anointed with the holy oil, particularly the high priest, e.g., The prophets are called "*anointed*".

"Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm." Ps.105:15

kings of Israel are called "*the anointed*".

He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.1Sam.2:10
This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him.Is.45:1

As followers of Christ, we have an anointing

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 2Cor.1:21-22
But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us—eternal life. I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him. 1Jn 2:20-27

The anointing sets us free

And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing. Is.10:27 KJV
In that day their burden will be lifted from your shoulders, their yoke from your neck; the yoke will be broken because you have grown so fat. Is.10:27 NIV

How does Jesus fulfill the title of "*Christ*"?

Jesus is the Anointed One—anointed with the oil of joy

But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." Heb 1:8-9

Jesus was anointed to preach

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, Isa 61:1-2

Jesus is the promised Saviour who was filled with the Holy Spirit

David said about him: "I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.' Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.' Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." Acts 2:25-39

In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the heart of Egypt, and a monument to the LORD at its border. It will be a sign and witness to the LORD Almighty in the land of Egypt. When they cry out to the LORD because of their oppressors, he will send them a saviour and defender, and he will rescue them. So the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will acknowledge the LORD. They will worship with sacrifices and grain offerings; they will make vows to the LORD and keep them. The LORD will strike Egypt with a plague; he will strike them and heal them. They will turn to the LORD, and he will respond to their pleas and heal them. Is.19:19-22

How can one God be three distinct Persons (*Father, Son and Holy Spirit*)?

God is a title rather than a name and a credible example of the Trinity is the joint Monarchy we had after the Glorious Revolution of 1688. King William and Queen Mary were both monarchs who reigned jointly.

We believe in one God:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.[Deut.6:4]

Many things in heaven and on earth are called gods and lords, but none of them really are gods or lords. We have only one God, and he is the Father. He created everything, and we live for him. Jesus Christ is our only Lord. Everything was made by him, and by him life was given to us.[1Cor.8:5-6]

But we also believe in the distinctness of each of three Persons of the Godhead—Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.[Gen.1:1-3]

You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." … The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.[Lk.1:31-35]

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."[Matt.3:16-17]

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.[Matt.28:19]

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.[2Cor.13:14]

Why is it important to have a sound understanding about God?

We need a basic understanding about God so that we are not deceived or led astray

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.[1Jn.4:1-3]

I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work.[2Jn.7-11]

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.[1Jn.4:1]

Some will abandon the faith and we don't want to be part of the deception

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. That is why we labour and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe. 1Tim.4:1-10

Why did Jesus mean when He said that we should not judge? (*Luke 6:37*)

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Lk 6:37-38

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. Matt.7:1-5

Hypocrisy

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of

God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God "will repay each person according to what they have done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. Rom.2:1-10

Discern

Let us discern for ourselves what is right; let us learn together what is good. Job 34:4

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. Phil.1:9-11

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, Heb 5:11-6:1

these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. 1Cor.2:10-16

So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.

So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together. Anyone who is hungry should eat something at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.

And when I come I will give further directions. 1Cor.11:27-34

Why should we check out what we hear about God and His Kingdom?

We should check out what we learn about God and His Kingdom because our eternal life depends on it—but we should compare what we hear with what God says. Scripture must be our point of reference:

Elim Statement of Faith — The Bible

We believe the Bible, as originally given, to be without error, the fully inspired and infallible Word of God and the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

AoG Statement of Faith— Inspired Word of God

We believe that the Bible (i.e. the Old and New Testaments excluding the Apocrypha), is the inspired Word of God, the infallible, all sufficient rule for faith and practice.

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association Statement of Faith

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God. *1Thessalonians 2:13; 2Timothy 3:15-17*

NGCC (New Glory Christian Centre Int'l Ministries) Strood, Rochester

Bible

We believe in the divine, verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures in the original manuscripts in the original languages and their consequent inerrancy and infallibility. We believe the Bible is the Word of God, and the ultimate authority not just in matters of doctrine, but in how we live our lives today. We believe where the clear statements of the Bible contradict tradition, circumstances or our senses, we can and should still believe and accept the Bible as truth.

The Old And New Testaments

We believe that although the entirety of the Bible is written for us, not all of it is written to us, and we must rightly divide the Word of God as Christians living under the New Covenant, and not under the Old and obsolete Testament.

"He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' " 'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' " Lk 16:27-31

Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.[Acts 17:11]

***Look to God's instructions and teachings!** People who contradict his word are completely in the dark. They will go from one place to another, weary and hungry. And because they are hungry, they will rage and curse their king and their God. They will look up to heaven and down at the earth, but wherever they look, there will be trouble and anguish and dark despair. They will be thrown out into the darkness. Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory. Isa 8:20-9:1*

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.[1Jn.5:1-5]

Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarrelling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have departed from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. 2Ti 2:14-18

15/04/2026

Psalm 26

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 6: 17

Questions

Why is loving God with all our heart, soul and mind the greatest of all the commandments?
How can we show our love for God?
How important are the words that we speak?
If God already owns everything, why do we "*give to God*"?
Explain: *Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.*[2Cor.9:10]
How can we feed Jesus' sheep?

Comments

Why is loving God with all our heart, soul and mind the greatest of all the commandments?

God deserves our all and not just a part. Being a servant of God is not a chore but a delight and it also means that God takes responsibility for us too!
Christianity is a marriage —God divorced Israel but in order to take a new Bride one of the parties had to die, Jesus died so He could legitimately marry the "new Israel" made of up of all Believers from all generations
Surely, as a treacherous wife leaves her husband, so have you been treacherous to me, O house of Israel, declares the LORD. Jeremiah 3:20
Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," it shall be said to them, "Children of the living God." And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel. Hosea 1:10-11
After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" Revelation 7:9-10

Love is commitment—love has emotion but is not emotion
Wedding vows: Will you respect her, love her, comfort her, honour and keep her, in sickness and in health and, forsaking all other, keep only unto her as long as you both shall live?

Love language for marriage

Words of affirmation

If your love language is words of affirmation, reassuring and encouraging words or compliments will communicate love really powerfully to you. An insult or unkind word will also have a greater effect on you than for someone who doesn't find words as important.

Receiving gifts

If your love language is gifts, you will tend to appreciate the thoughtfulness and effort behind a gift as much as the gift itself. The value of the gift isn't necessarily important to you – you will appreciate small, spontaneous gifts that show that you are cared for as much as you would appreciate expensive presents. A forgotten birthday or lack of thought in choosing a gift is likely to make you feel hurt or unappreciated.

Acts of service

If your love language is acts of service, you probably show your love for someone through the things that you do – things like offering to wash up for your partner after they've had a tiring day, even though it's not your turn. You will feel really loved and appreciated when your partner does things for you, and you may feel especially hurt by laziness or broken commitments from them.

Quality time

If your love language is quality time, you will feel particularly loved by periods your partner spends alone and uninterrupted with you. It won't necessarily matter to you if you go out for the day and it rains; the important thing is your time together. You are likely to find it particularly frustrating if you don't have your partner's undivided attention when you are together.

Physical touch

If your love language is physical touch, then holding hands, a hug, or a back rub will be particularly important to you. You will feel really special when your partner physically connects with you, but may feel hurt or neglected if they pull away from you or brush you off when you try to hug them.

How can we show our love for God?

We show our love to God by serving Him

Jesus asked a second time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you!" "Then take care of my sheep," Jesus told him. Jn 21:16

The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. Jn 21:17

How important are the words that we speak?

Words are important

"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." Mt 12:33-37

This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. 1Co 2:13-14

I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. 1Co 14:18-19

Therefore encourage one another with these words. 1Th 4:18

These are the things you are to teach and insist on. If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. 1Ti 6:2-5

Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarrelling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have departed from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. 2Ti 2:14-18

If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1Pe 4:11

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form

of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ep 4:29-32

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them. Ep 5:3-7

Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Col 3:6-10

Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from common human burdens; they are not plagued by human ills. Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. From their callous hearts comes iniquity; their evil imaginations have no limits. They scoff, and speak with malice; with arrogance they threaten oppression. Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. Therefore their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance. They say, "How would God know? Does the Most High know anything?" This is what the wicked are like— always free of care, they go on amassing wealth. Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments. If I had spoken out like that, I would have betrayed your children. Ps 73:1-15

At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;
may the name of the LORD be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing. Job 1:20-22

The LORD said to Job: "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!" Then Job answered the LORD: "I am unworthy—how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer— twice, but I will say no more." Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm: "Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself? Job 40:1-8

I said, "I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth while in the presence of the wicked." Ps 39:1

If God already owns everything, why do we "*give to God*"?

We give to God as an expression of gratitude and as an act of worship

We give to God as a reminder that we are dependant on Him and everything we have received comes from Him

When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today. Dt 8:10-18

So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey; and now I bring

the firstfruits of the soil that you, LORD, have given me." Place the basket before the LORD your God and bow down before him. Then you and the Levites and the foreigners residing among you shall rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your household. When you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. Dt 26:8-12

Explain: *Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.*[2Cor.9:10]

God always puts seed in the fruit

Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.[Gen.1:11-12]

God has already given us so much:

From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. John 1:16

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Rom.8:32

God knows what we have need of :

"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Mt 6:28-34

God is able to supply our needs:

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever." 2Co 9:8-9.

God will meet all our needs:

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Phil.4:19

Giving shows our appreciation of God:

Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. Prov.3:9-10

Giving is to be proportional to our income:

Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. 1Co 16:1-2

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. Mal.3:10

Giving is for everyone:

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. 2Co 8:1-5

As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on." Luke 21:1-4

Giving is a privilege:

Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilage of sharing in this service to the saints. 2Cor.8:3-4

Giving is a partnership with God:

not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only Phil.4:15

Giving is sowing and we will reap what we sow:

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously 2Cor.9:6

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Ga 6:7-10

Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured unto to you." Luke 6:38

Giving cheerfully is God's way:

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2Cor.9:7

Giving freely produces more*:*

One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed. Pr 11:24-25

Giving to God puts credit in our heavenly account:

Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account Phil.4:17

Giving to the poor will receive a reward from God:

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done.Prov.19:17

Giving is God-like:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, so that we through his poverty might become rich2Cor.8:9

Giving is a blessing:

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35

God's blessings make us prosper:

The blessings of the LORD brings wealth, without painful toil for it [and he adds no trouble to it]. Prov.10:22

Trouble pursues the sinner, but the righteous are rewarded with good things.Prov.13:21

How can we feed Jesus' sheep?

Take care of the "flock"

The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? Eze 34:1-2

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. Ac 20:28-31

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe

yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 1Pe 5:2-9

We should care for everyone but our priority is for the household of God

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Gal.6:9-10

Father, in the Name of Jesus,
I confess that Your Word reigns over every area of my life.
You give me the ability to produce wealth
and so confirm Your covenant.*Deut.8:18*
I bring my whole tithe into the storehouse
that there may be food in my house.*Mal.3:10*
I am generous and freely give, knowing that I will prosper.*Prov.11:24-25*
I give generously, cheerfully and willingly,
knowing that You will make me rich in every way,
so I can be generous on every occasion.*2Cor.9:6-11*
I am a partner with You in giving and receiving,
confident of You crediting my account and supplying all my needs according to Your glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*Phil.4:15-19*
Because I obey You, I am blessed when I go out and when I come in.
You send a blessing on everything I put my hand to.*Deut.28:1-8*
Your blessing brings wealth and You add no trouble to it.*Prov.10:22*
Good health, full life and true prosperity is my inheritance in Jesus
and the reward of the righteous.*Ps.1:1-3; Prov.13:21; Jn.10:10; 3Jn.1:2*
Father, I thank You for true prosperity in Jesus Name.
AMEN—I make this prayer mine

08/04/2026

Psalm 25

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 6: 10

Questions

Why do bad things happen to good people?
Is every trouble a direct attack from the devil?
Why is it important to praise God?
What does it mean to "believe God"?
What does it mean to "confess Jesus"?
Why should we not get angry?
Why do some people blame God for their trouble?
Is it always wrong to complain?

Comments

Why do bad things happen to good people?

Death entered the world through sin and now there is a bias towards chaos and destruction

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come. Rom 5:12-14

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Jas 1:13-15

Even Christians are subject to the process of death

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. Ro 8:9-11

Is every trouble a direct attack from the devil?

No! Most troubles just happen—some call it fate or (bad)luck

I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favour to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all. Eccl 9:11

Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward. Job 5:7

Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. Ps 90:10

Some troubles are our own fault—either directly or indirectly

To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." Ge 3:17-19

Some troubles can be a blessing because they will grow our faith and bring us to maturity

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do. Jas 1:2-8

Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matt 5:12

and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. 1Pet 1:4-7

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 1Pet 4:12-17

For God does speak—now one way, now another— though no one perceives it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn them from wrongdoing and keep them from pride, to preserve them from the pit, their lives from perishing by the sword. "Or someone may be chastened on a bed of pain with constant distress in their bones, so that their body finds food repulsive and their soul loathes the choicest meal. Their flesh wastes away to nothing, and their bones, once hidden, now stick out. They draw near to the pit, and their life to the messengers of death. Yet if there is an angel at their side, a messenger, one out of a thousand, sent to tell them how to be upright, and he is gracious to that person and says to God, 'Spare them from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom for them— Job 33:14-24

Why is it important to praise God?

The Bible says we should

I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. I will glory in the LORD; let the afflicted hear and rejoice.Ps.34:1-2

Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise. Ps 51:15

May my lips overflow with praise, for you teach me your decrees. May my tongue sing of your word, for all your commands are righteous. Ps 119:171-172

God is worthy of praise

I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, Ps.18:3

*Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.*Ps.145:3

*I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise*2Sam.22:4

God has ordained praise

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.Ps.8:1-2

God formed us to praise Him

*the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.*Is.43:21

Praise is glorious

Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious! Ps.66:2

Praise is good

It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High Ps.92:1

Praise honours God

*He who sacrifices thank offerings honours me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God.*Ps.50:23

Praise prepares God's salvation

*He who sacrifices thank offerings honours me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God.*Ps.50:23

What does it mean to "*believe God*"?

To believe God means to trust God

For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 1Pe 2:6

We trust God for our eternal salvation and also for our day-to-day salvation

To believe Jesus is to trust Him. We trust God because we have total confidence in Him and that confidence is based on what we know of God. The more we know God, the easier it is to trust Him—and the more we know God, the harder it is to not trust Him! Trust is not passive but active and is the basis of a happy and contented life:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.[Rom.15:13]

God has never rescinded on any of His promises and so we can trust Him for our own situation today:

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.[Ps.23:1]

Not one of all the LORD's good promises to Israel failed; everyone was fulfilled.[Josh.21:45]

Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant.[1Kg.8:56]

What does it mean to "*confess Jesus*"?

To confess Jesus means to say the same as Jesus says. To do this we need to know what Jesus thinks and says—which is why it is important to study the Bible correctly

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 2Ti 2:15

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, dividing the word of truth aright.

We should make our lips do their duty by making them harmonize with the Word of God and not allowing them to say anything to the contrary! Some confess with their lips but deny in their heart—they say, "*Yes, the Word is true*," but in their heart they say, "*But it is not true in my case*."

You think like a man—you don't think like God![Mk.8:33]

Your thoughts concerning God are too human. *Martin Luther*

It is what we confess with our lips that really dominates our inner being. It is our privilege and duty to believe and say what we know God says about us in His Word. As we honour God by applying these principles, we will live above our circumstances instead of under them!

But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.[1Cor.15:57]

Why should we not get angry?

Anger can quickly lead to sin

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbour, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Ep 4:25-27

But not all anger is wrong—there is a righteous anger, which is an anger against evil

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Jas 1:19-22

Anger is an emotion and if it is not controlled, it will lead us into sin.

Anger is cruel, and wrath is like a flood, but jealousy is even more dangerous.[Prov.27:4]

There is an angry indignation that Jesus exhibited:

"Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent. Jesus looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.[Mk.3:4-5]

Why do some people blame God for their trouble?

People who blame God for their trouble don't really know God

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.
When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.
Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. Jas 1:12-18
He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. Dt 32:4
The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, "The LORD is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him." Ps 92:12-15
"Woe to those who quarrel with their Maker, those who are nothing but potsherds among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' Does your work say, 'The potter has no hands'? Isa 45:9
Distress and anguish fill him with terror; troubles overwhelm him, like a king poised to attack, because he shakes his fist at God and vaunts himself against the Almighty, defiantly charging against him with a thick, strong shield. Job 15:24-26
At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing. Job 1:20-22
His wife said to him, "Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!" He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said. Job 2:9-10
Consult God's instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. [People who don't speak in keeping with those words won't have any hope in the morning. Or Look to God's instructions and teachings! People who contradict his word are completely in the dark.] Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness. Isa 8:20-22

Is it always wrong to complain?

It is not always wrong to complain but we should not grumble

Don't grumble about each other, my brothers and sisters, or God will judge you. For look! The great Judge is coming. He is standing at the door! Jas. 5:9

Complaining and grumbling can easily lead to bitterness

Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labour for nothing. Phl 2:14-16
Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. 1Co 10:6-10
You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin." Ac 8:21-23

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ep 4:29-32

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness. Jas 3:13-18

We can groan but not moan

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 2Co 5:1-5

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. Ro 8:22-25

This moan is better translated lament

All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan. [lament] Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. Ps 90:9-10

01/04/2026

Psalm 24

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 6:

Questions

What is the "*new thing*" that Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied that God would do?
How do Old Covenant prophecies apply in the New Covenant?
What else does God do that is new?
Why did Solomon say that there nothing new? *(Eccl.1:9-11)*
Why doesn't the message of salvation ever change?
If the story of Jesus' love is old, how can we make it new?

Comments

What is the "*new thing*" that Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied that God would do?

The New Covenant

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing… I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. Review the past for me, let us argue the matter together; state the case for your innocence.Is.43:18-19;25-26

"How long will you wander, unfaithful Daughter Israel? The LORD will create a new thing on earth—the woman will return to the man… In those days people will no longer say, 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' Instead, everyone will die for their own sin; whoever eats sour grapes—their own teeth will be set on edge. The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."Jer.31:22-34

How do Old Covenant prophecies apply in the New Covenant?

Then Old Covenant prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus who has de-Zionised God's prophecies and promises

"Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.'

"They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols. I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God. Eze 11:17-20

The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning. This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order. Heb 9:8-10

Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, <u>standing on Mount Zion</u>, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a <u>new song before the throne</u> and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. Rev 14:1-4

Isaiah 60 is about Jerusalem but was fulfilled in Jesus—around the Child (not the city) with the light wisemen and shepherds

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. "Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the hip. Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD. All Kedar's flocks will be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth will serve you; they will be accepted as offerings on my altar, and I will adorn my glorious temple. "Who are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their nests? Surely the islands look to me; in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, bringing your children from afar, with their silver and gold, to the honour of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendour. ... I will make peace your governor and well-being your ruler. No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise. The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end. Then all your people will be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my splendour. The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the LORD; in its time I will do this swiftly." The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendour. Is. 60:1-61:3

What else does God do that is new?

God's mercies are new:

Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. [GOD's loyal love couldn't have run out, his merciful love couldn't have dried up. They're created new every morning. How great your faithfulness!] I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.[Lam.3:21-26]

Our praise is new because God creates the fruit of our lips as a sacrifice of praise to Him:

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.[Heb.13:15]

I create the fruit of the lips.[Is.57:19]

Conversion is a new creation

Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to the Israel of God. Gal 6:15-16

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.[2Cor.5:17-19]

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, 1Pet 1:3-4

We have a new self:

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the

cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.[Eph.2:14-18]
That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.[Eph.4:20-24]

We have a new life

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Rom 6:3-4
But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code. Rom 7:6

We have a new song

He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the LORD and put their trust in him. Ps 40:3
Sing to him a new song; play skilfully, and shout for joy. For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love. Ps 33:3-5
He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people. And they sang a new song, saying:
"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." Rev 5:7-10

The New Wine of the Holy Spirit

"No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins." Mk 2:21-22

A new command to love God (which is actually the old command — it doesn't change!

It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love. 2Jn 4-6

The future life with God

The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Rev 3:12-13
Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." Rev 21:1-5

Why did Solomon say that there nothing new? *(Eccl.1:9-11)*

History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new. Sometimes people say, "Here is something new!" But actually it is old; nothing is ever truly new. We don't remember what happened in the past, and in future generations, no one will remember what we are doing now.[Eccl.1:9-11]

The cycles of nature repeat regularly as God instructed. When God completed His creation on the 6th day, He had set in motion all the laws of nature and physics to make the universe function.
And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day. Ge 1:14-19
"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease." Ge 8:22

Not even our temptations are new
So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. 1Cor 10:12-13

Why doesn't the message of salvation ever change?

God's original message of salvation is His only message of salvation.
And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Ge 3:15

God has only had one plan of salvation—and that by faith:
For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." Rom.1:16-17
For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. Ep 2:8-9
What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness… We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them… It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith… The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. Rom 4:1-25

God conceived this plan before He even created the world—and He has no other plan of salvation:
For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. 1Pet.1:18-20
Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will. Eph.1:3-5
Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. Matt.25:34

God doesn't change and neither does His plans and purposes change
"I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Mal 3:6

God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? Nu 23:19
Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. Jas 1:16-18

If the story of Jesus' love is old, how can we make it new?

We can be inventive in our presentation and because each person is an individual, we need something to attract our personality or attention. But we must never lose sight of the **spiritual nature of the Gospel.** God is spirit and we worship in spirit (not soul)
"Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." Jn 4:21-24

Spiritual worship is not affected by age, gender, race or cultural

Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— Phil 3:1-3
So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Ga 3:26-29

It is our spirit that is re-born and saved at conversion—our soul (personality) is being saved (healed or made whole) by our faith
Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1Pet 1:8-9

25/03/2026

Psalm 23

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 5:

Questions

Who is God?
Why will God always be known as "*I Am*"?
What does it mean to be convinced of sin?
What does it mean to be convinced of righteousness?
What does it mean to be convinced of judgement?
How does God live in us?

Comments

Who is God?

God is the eternal Creator of everything—whether seen or unseen

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. Jn 1:1-4

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Col 1:15-17

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. Heb 1:1-2

As Creator, God is also owner of everything—both seen and unseen

God is holy (triple holy). Holy is the only word emphasized three times to describe God

And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." Isa 6:3

The Hebrews used this literary device to emphasize. If a word was used twice, such as "*Truly, truly...*", what was about to be said was very true. If a word was used three times it was absolute and ultimate. God is described not as being "*holy, holy*" but as "*holy, holy, holy*".

And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" Rev.4:8

The word "*holy*" means "*different*". But it's more than just obscure, it means *different* in the sense of "***not common***", "***very, very, special***". As it pertains to God, the word *holy* carries a sense of beauty, magnificence, awesome. While God is ***holy, holy, holy***, what is directly associated with Him is ***holy***. Thus, God calls His redeemed people, ***holy***. **To be a Christian is to be made holy.** Without being made holy, a person cannot see God let alone enter Heaven after this life - *Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.* Heb.12:14

God is right and righteous

And the heavens proclaim his righteousness, for he is a God of justice. Ps 50:6

Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever. Ps 111:3

God is just

I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. Deut 32:3-4

God is good

Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, LORD, are good. Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. Ps 25:7-8

"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. Mk 10:18

God is love

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1Jn 4:8-10

God is unchangeable

"I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Mal 3:6

God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? Nu 23:19

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. Jas 1:17

Why will God always be known as "*I Am*"?

Because He said He would be

Then Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the People of Israel and I tell them, 'The God of your fathers sent me to you'; and they ask me, 'What is his name?' What do I tell them?" God said to Moses, "I-AM-WHO-I-AM. Tell the People of Israel, 'I-AM sent me to you.'" God continued with Moses: "This is what you're to say to the Israelites: 'GOD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob sent me to you.' This has always been my name, and this is how I always will be known. Ex.3:13-15

Because that best explains who He is

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come. Rev.1:4

I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty. Rev.1:8

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. Rev 4:8 (also 11:17; 16:5)

What does it mean to be convinced of sin?

When he [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you. Jn.16:8-15

about sin, because people do not believe in me

The Holy Spirit convinces [convicts, exposes, proves] of sin meaning He pricks our conscience and challenges our apathy to the reality of God so that we believe in God and His Son, Jesus Christ

So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man. Acts 24:16

My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. 1Cor 4:4

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. 1Tim 1:3-6

The primary sin of people is not believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." Jn 6:27-29

And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. Jn 5:37-40

But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins." Jn 8:23-24

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Mt 16:13-16

"Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." Jn 11:27

And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 1Jn 3:23

What does it mean to be convinced of righteousness?

about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer

The Holy Spirit convinces us of the finished work of Jesus and that we are now right with God because Jesus paid the price for our redemption

Although Jesus has paid the price (in full) for our redemption, we still need to receive God's forgiveness—which is what faith is. Faith is that simple trust in God and what He has done. If we are not convinced that Jesus has made us right with God, we don't have saving faith. We can believe all the facts about God but it takes the Holy Spirit to convince us that we are right with God.

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— Rom 3:21-25

You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. 1Thess. 2:10

What does it mean to be convinced of judgement?

about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned

The Holy Spirit convinces us that the devil is a defeated enemy who now stands condemned.

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Col 2:13-15

The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. 1Jn 3:8

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. Heb 2:14-15

He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2Tim 1:9-10

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. 1Cor 15:22-28

When we are convinced of the devil's demise, we cannot be dominated by him and his lies will not deceive us. Some Christians are more focused on the devil than they are on God!

How does God live in us?

When we are saved, it is not just our position before God that changes but our very nature changes. We are changed from being spiritually dead to being spiritually alive and our sin-nature is changed to a holy-nature—we are spiritually righteous. We are a new creation and our new spirit (which is sealed by the Holy Spirit) is absolutely perfect and complete—which is why our spiritual transformation can only be referred to as a new birth. And because we are now spiritually alive with a new nature that is holy and righteous, God is able to make His home in us.

It is God the Holy Spirit who literally resides within us but because of the unity of the three Persons of the Godhead, we can say that all God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit all dwell in us

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Heb 1:3

Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Jn 14:9

Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. Jn 14:23-24

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? 2Co 13:5

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. Ro 8:9-11

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Ga 2:20

so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, Eph.3:17]

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Col 1:27

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. Rev 3:20

We become God's Temple—the place where God lives: *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.*[1Cor.6:19-20]

18/03/2026

Psalm 22:16-31

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 5: (x3)

Questions

Why should we honour our parents? (*Eph.6:1-3*)
Should we always submit to those in authority? (*1Pet.3:17; Tit.3:1-2*)
What are the benefits of being a citizen of God's Kingdom?
What are the responsibilities of being a citizen of God's Kingdom?
What is the inheritance of God's children?
How can God's Kingdom be peace whilst there is pain and chaos all around us?

Comments

Why should we honour our parents? (*Eph.6:1-3*)

It's the right thing to do and it's what God wants us to.

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Col 3:20

And if we don't honour our parents, we insult God—with consequences

If someone curses [insults, despises] their father or mother, their lamp will be snuffed out in pitch darkness.[Pro.20:20]
If a widow has children or grandchildren, they should learn to serve God by taking care of her, as she once took care of them. This is what God wants them to do… But if someone does not provide for his own, especially his own family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.[1Tim.5:3-8]

It's good for us (we reap what we sow)

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Gal 6:7-10

There is a Biblical promise attached to honouring our parents

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honour your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."[Eph.6:1-3]

Sometimes there is a choice between our heavenly Father and our earthly father

"Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Mt 10:37
Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Lk 14:25-27

Should we always submit to those in authority? (*1Pet.3:17; Tit.3:1-2*)

It's the right thing to do and it's what God wants us to.

Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the emperor.[1Pet.2:17]
Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone.[Tit.3:1-2]
For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour. Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.[Rom.13:4-8]
Paul replied, "Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.'"[Acts.23:5]

Sometimes there is a choice between God's laws and man's laws

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." Ac 4:18-20
Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings! Ac 5:29
The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, "When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live." The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, "Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?" The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive." So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own. Ex 1:15-21
Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved human praise more than praise from God. Then Jesus cried out, "Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. Jn 12:42-46

What are the benefits of being a citizen of God's Kingdom?

Eternal life

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. Phil 3:20-21
Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Eph 2:19-22

God's blessings—which provide a better, happier, more fulfilling and satisfying life

God blesses those people who depend only on him. They belong to the kingdom of heaven! God blesses those people who grieve. They will find comfort! God blesses those people who are humble. The earth will belong to them! God blesses those people who want to obey him more than to eat or drink. They will be given what they want! God blesses those people who are merciful. They will be treated with mercy! God blesses those people whose hearts are pure. They will see him! God blesses those people who make peace. They will be called his children! Matt.5:3-9

What are the responsibilities of being a citizen of God's Kingdom?

We have an obligation to live by the rules of God's kingdom

Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings. Lev 2:13
Now since we are under obligation to the palace [literally: We are salted [paid] by the salt of the palace.] and it is not proper for us to see the king dishonoured, we are sending this message to inform the king, Ezra 4:14

The rules of God's Kingdom are

Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1Cor 6:9-11
So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.
Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Eph 4:17-32

What is the inheritance of God's children?

An inheritance only becomes available through the benefactor's death

In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. When Moses had proclaimed every command of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep." In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.
It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Heb 9:16-24

Our inheritance is Eternal life (which begins at conversion)

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. Matt 25:34
For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. Heb.9:15
Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 1Pet 1:3-5
But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir. Gal 4:4-7
This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. Eph 3:6
he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. Tit 3:5-8
When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.

People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. Heb 6:13-20

Gracious gift of life

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. 1Pe 3:7

God's promises are only inherited through Jesus

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 2Co 1:20-22

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Ro 4:1-3

because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not... The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. Ro 4:15-25

How can God's Kingdom be peace whilst there is pain and chaos all around us?

We will inherit the promise of peace but we will have to wait until the final enemy of death is destroyed

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 1Cor 15:20-26

We possess the promises with patience

Stand firm, and you will win life. [By your patience possess your souls.NKJV] Lk 21:19

You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. Matt 10:22

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Heb 11:39-12:3

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom.15:4-6

Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! Jas 5:7-9

Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are convinced of better things in your case—the things that have to do with salvation. God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. Heb 6:9-12

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been. Rev 6:9-11

We believe that not everything that occurs on planet earth is the will of God. God has given dominion to the planet to humanity, and He is not enforcing His will on every event on this planet. This is why Jesus taught His disciples to pray that the will of God would be done on earth as it is in heaven. We believe heaven is the best picture of the will of God that there is right now, and that we should pray for things on earth to be done like they are in heaven. We reject the idea that sinful behaviour, sickness, poverty, and anything we are redeemed from are the will of God in any way at all. In addition God does not have a second, ineffable will by which He does things that He explicitly says in Scripture are not His will. *From Faith Statement of New Glory Christian Centre Int'l Ministries, Strood:*

11/03/2026

Psalm 21

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 5:

Questions

Why should we pray?
Does it matter how we pray?
What part does our soul (mind, brain, will and personality) have in prayer?
What part does our spirit (the re-created God part of us) have in prayer?
How does our faith develop?
What are the most important things in our life?

Comments

Why should we pray?

Prayer is our communication with God. Prayer is not a formula for getting what we want but the expression of the soul's sincere desire. However, God does hear our prayers and He does answer our prayers. Maturity is trusting God with His answers!

Before they call, I will answer.[Is.65:24]

Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.[Matt.6:8]

God does answer prayers when we ask according to His will (but God can't answer our prayers if we haven't prayed them!)

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.[1Jn.5:14-15]

Prayer is never simply a matter of talking to God. It is trusting Him with our concerns. There are many times when we are anxious about children, family, and friends. There is often much that we worry about—their spiritual well-being, schooling, health, friendships, living arrangements, and work. Needless to say, our anxious thoughts are seldom productive and frequently only serve to intensify our level of worry. In seeking to transform anxiety into prayer, it is not simply a matter of talking to God instead of talking to ourselves, for that may simply result in talking anxiously to God. Rather we are challenged to recognize the limitations of our worrying and the possibilities of what God can do.

Prayer involves so much more than making personal requests. It connects us with God and works to bring our wills into conformity with His.

The Bible says that we should pray

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 1Tim 2:1-4

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, Eph 6:18-19

"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Mt 26:41

In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy Phil 1:4

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Phil 4:6-7

Prayer builds us up in our faith

But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Jude 20-21

God's Name, God's Kingdom and God's Will must be the primary object of Christian prayer. Of course it is not as if God needed our prayers, but they are the means by which the disciples become partakers in the heavenly treasure for which they pray.*Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost Of Discipleship*

The only way prayer works is if God answers it, but He doesn't care for people testing Him to see if He does. *George Canty*

A friend of mine defines prayer as "a *declaration of dependence*." Prayer is powerful, but if our prayers are aimless, meaningless and mingled with doubt, they will be of little hope to us. *Billy Graham.*

Prayer isn't a "*spare wheel*" we pull out when we're in trouble—prayer is a "*steering wheel*" that directs us along the right path throughout our life. When we lose hope and think it's the end, God smiles and says, "*It's just a bend, not the end*".

Does it matter how we pray?

Yes. We can only come to God the Father through God the Son

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Jn 14:6

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." Act 4:12

And so our prayers must be in Jesus' Name.

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. Jn 14:13-14

By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see. Ac 3:16

"In Jesus' Name" is not a formula to get things done and so we don't have to say those exact words in every prayer but unless our identity is in Jesus our prayers are not a communication with God. But it is a good practice to use the phrase "*in Jesus' Name*" when we pray with unbelievers or those of little faith so they know exactly who we are praying to and praying through

speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eph 5:19-20

It is the same with our praise—the word "*Jesus*" doesn't need to be in every verse but His name should be prominent

In his book "Why *I left The Contemporary Christian Music Movement.* (*Confessions of a former worship leader*)", Dan Lucarini complains that contemporary worship programmes are often worldly performances. Well ... perhaps that depends on the worshipper, not the music! Another well-known musician confessed he had written songs we've all sung, before he even knew what true salvation was. I've wondered if other songsters really know either, judging by their lyrics. Basing songs on the Psalms alone won't do when we have the New Testament. **We have a right in church to expect songs with Christian content**. John Wesley was always anxious that Charles' verses should have sound theology. Today congregations fervently sing lines that have no identifiable Bible base. Often no deity is named, some could be sung by followers of any religion. One I heard recently addressed fervent love just to 'you' in language that would have suited any secular song. In any case it is His love, not ours that should be our theme.

John Wesley counselled, "*Sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself or any other creature. In order to do this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continuously."*

What part does our soul (mind, brain, will and personality) **have in prayer?**

We should pray with our mind—that is, we should be coherent, intelligible and understood—otherwise other people cannot agree with us and say their "Amen"

Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the pipe or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. If then I do not grasp the meaning

of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker is a foreigner to me. So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church. 1Co 14:6-12

For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified. 1Cor 14:13-17

Praise, worship and prayer are all spiritual activities that involve our mind as well as our spirit:

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you. Ps 32:8-9

Teach me, LORD, the way of your decrees, that I may follow it to the end. Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart. Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight. Ps 119:33-35

The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. Ps 119:130

The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behaviour, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young—let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Prov 1:1-7

"Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." Mk 12:32-33

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfilment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. Eph 1:7-10

What part does our spirit (the re-created God part of us) **have in prayer?**

We should also pray in the spirit (with the spirit and by the Holy Spirit). Our spirit is the eternal part of us that connects with God

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Eph 6:18

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." Jn 3:5-8

But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, Jude 20

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. Rom 8:26-27

How does our faith develop?

Our faith develops though life's experiences and especially through hardships

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a

wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do. Jas 1:2-8

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. 2Pet 1:5-9

When we see God's hand upon our life, with protection, provision, health, healing, helps, support, etc., we can trust Him for the next difficulty

What are the most important things in our life?

The most important things in our life are

To love God with everything (heart, soul, mind)

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matt 22:34-40

To believe on Jesus

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." Jn 6:27-29

This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. 1Jn 3:19-24

To love one another

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Jn 13:34-35

Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody. 1Thess 4:9-12

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them. Eph.5:1-7

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. 1Jn 4:7-21

04/03/2026

Psalm 20

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 5:

Questions

In what way are we the light of the world?
Why does it matter how we think about ourself?
How important is our testimony?
What does it mean to *dwell in the secret place of the Most High*? (Psalm 91)
How can we change our perspective of life from gloom to glory?

Comments

In what way are we the light of the world?

Purity. We are righteous, we are clean, we are holy

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.) Rev 19:7-8

And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1Cor 6:11

Navigation. We know who we are and where we are going—both in the present and also in the future.

And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. 2Ti 1:11-12

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. 1Jn 3:1-3

We are signposts and can point other to God

Don't imagine us leaders to be something we aren't. We are servants of Christ, not his masters. We are guides into God's most sublime secrets, not security guards posted to protect them. The requirements for a good guide are reliability and accurate knowledge. 1Cor 4:1-2

Here am I, and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion. Isa 8:18

We reflect Jesus who is the Light of the World

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."Jn.8:12

They will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness. Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honour Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—the people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.Is.8:22-9:2

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.Matt.5:14-16

No one lights a lamp and hides it in a clay jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light.Lk.8:16

Now we are God's children, made right with God, our light should be getting brighter:

The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.Pro.4:18

By letting our light shine we will lead others to righteousness:

Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.[Dan.12:3]
You, LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light. Ps 18:28
Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws. Ps 119:105-106
The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out. Prov 13:9
The human spirit is the lamp of the LORD that sheds light on one's inmost being. Prov 20:27

Why does it matter how we think about ourself?

If we think (or speak) differently from what God says, we are in conflict with Him

Woe to those who quarrel with their Maker, those who are nothing but potsherds among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' Does your work say, 'The potter has no hands'?[Is.45:9]
Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.[Jn.17:17]
Jesus answered them: Didn't God say in your Law, 'I have said you are gods'? We know that Scripture is always true. God spoke to some people and called them 'gods.[Jn.10:34-35]
Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.[Matt.22:29])

It is important that we have a good confession
This is my Bible; I am what it says I am. I have what it says I have. I can do what it says I can do. Today, I will be taught the Word of God.
I boldly confess that my mind is alert, my heart is receptive, I will never be the same again. I am about to receive the Incorruptible, Indestructible, Ever-living seed of the Word of God.
I will never, never be the same. In Jesus Name. Amen

Good Confession

Many people fail to receive what they pray for because of the lack of understanding about confession. In Hebrews 3:1, Christianity is called a "**confession**."
Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus[ASV].
In the Greek language "Confession" is **ὁμόλογος homologos** literally same *(homo)* word *(logos)* meaning *of one mind; to speak the same, to agree.* Thus "Confession" is to "*say the same thing.*"
It means, to believe and say what God says about our sins, our sicknesses, and everything else included in our redemption.
Confession is an affirmation of a Bible truth that we have embraced. Confession is simply believing with our heart and repeating with our lips God's own declaration of what we are and have in Christ. Don't accept anything that Satan brings. "*Give no place to the devil.*" (Eph.4:27) "*If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God*" (I Peter 4:11). In Ephesians 4: 29, we are commanded to speak only "*what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen*." We are not to testify for the adversary. We are to act faith, speak faith, and think faith.
A spiritual law that few recognize is that our confession rules us. It is what we confess with our lips that really dominates our inner being. **Make your lips do their duty**. **Refuse to allow them to destroy the effectiveness of God's Word in your case**.
Some confess with their lips but deny in their heart. They say, "*Yes, the Word is true*," but in their heart they say, "*It is not true in my case."* **The confession of your lips has no value as long as your heart repudiates it.**

How important is our testimony?

Our testimony is very important because we are the Bible that others read,

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Mt 24:14
I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge— God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1Cor 1:4-9
Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Rev 12:10-11

We are the "God" that other see. God is invisible but Jesus is the exact representation of God—Jesus is the visible person of the Godhead

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. Col 1:15-16
Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. 1Tim 1:17
Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see… By faith Moses left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. Heb 11:1;27
Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him. Jn 12:41
In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." Isa 6:1-3
At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus." Rev 19:10
Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from common human burdens; they are not plagued by human ills. Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. From their callous hearts comes iniquity; their evil imaginations have no limits. They scoff, and speak with malice; with arrogance they threaten oppression. Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. Therefore their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance. They say, "How would God know? Does the Most High know anything?" This is what the wicked are like— always free of care, they go on amassing wealth. Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments. If I had spoken out like that, I would have betrayed your children. When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! They are like a dream when one awakes; when you arise, Lord, you will despise them as fantasies. When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you. Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you. But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds. Ps 73:1-28
But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.[1Pet.3:15-16]

What does it mean to *dwell in the secret place of the Most High*? (Psalm 91)

Dwelling in the secret place of the Most High means to live in fellowship with God. It is secluded from the world's dominance and is a place of peace, protection and provision

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust."[Ps.91:1-2]

Fellowship is integral to our relationship with God

" 'Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle. Wherever I cause my name to be honoured, I will come to you and bless you. Ex 20:24

He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1Cor 1:8-9

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1Jn 1:7

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete. 1Jn 1:3-4

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Col 2:6-7

How can we change our perspective of life from gloom to glory?

we change our perspective of life from gloom to glory by seeing the "great Light"

They will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness. Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honour Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—he people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. Is.8:22-9:2

by changing our response from pity to praise, by saying the truth instead of un-truths, by consciously placing our trust in God (which means, forsaking our natural anxieties and worries)

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God. Ps 42:5

Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken. Ps 55:22

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1Pe 5:6-11

25/02/2026

Psalm 19

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 4:10

Questions

How can we be sure that our knowledge of God is accurate and credible?
How does God maintain His creation?
Why is work important for Christians?
What difference does it make that we are children of God?
Why do some Christians not believe in God's direct intervention?
What evidence do you have that God intervenes in your life?

Comments

How can we be sure that our knowledge of God is accurate and credible?

The Bible is our "canon" — our measuring stick by which we assess and judge everything for our spiritual life, which then affects our emotional and physical life and health

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Heb 4:12-13

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2Tim 3:16-17

We know that Scripture is always true; Scripture cannot be set aside; the Scriptures cannot be altered; The Scriptures cannot be discredited; The Scripture cannot be broken; You can't argue with the Scriptures; Scripture doesn't lie. Jn.10:35

Well, the basic point is how you're going to be saved. That's why Martin Luther caused all the fuss in the first place, and that's why John Calvin and his successors created such a fuss in France. How are you going to be saved? Are you going to go with the old church and its ways of salvation? For instance, the mass and the saints around the mass? Or are you going to say that no, there's nothing that you and I can do as human beings to save ourselves? We rely on God. God gives us a gift of salvation by grace. And he justifies us, he makes us saved by grace. That's what Protestants say. And if you say that, that means that the whole of the church's structures are irrelevant. Not just irrelevant, but wicked. They're cheats, they're con-tricks. That's what the Protestants are saying. And that is what is so explosive about the Reformation.

Internal Evidence The Bible says that the Scripture is true

External Evidence What can be know about the Bible stories is true (Creation and pre-history events cannot be affirmed by eye-witnesses) b

The Bible changes lives

Canonicity of the Bible

Criteria for Canonicity

Inspiration — 2Tim.3:16; 2Pet.1:20-21

Apostolic Origin — attributed to and based upon the preaching/teaching of the first-generation apostles (or their close companions).

Universal Acceptance — acknowledged by all major Christian communities in the ancient world (by the end of the 4th century) as well as accepted canon by Jewish authorities (for the Old Testament).

Liturgical Use — read publicly when early Christian communities gathered for the Lord's Supper (their weekly worship services).

Consistent Message — containing a theological outlook similar to or complementary to other accepted Christian writings.

New Testament Evidence for the Canonicity of the Old Testament

The church fathers. The church fathers accepted the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. The only exception was Augustine (A.D.400) who included the books of the Apocrypha (those "extra" books that some Bibles include between the books of the Old and New Testaments). However, he did acknowledge that they were not fully authoritative. The books of the Apocrypha were not officially recognized as part of the canon until the Council of Trent (A.D.1546) and then only by the Roman Catholic church.

(1) **Old Testament quotations in the New**. There are some 250 quotes from Old Testament books in the New Testament. None are from the Apocrypha (possibly Jude quotes the Book of Enoch in Jude 1:14 but Paul quotes Epimenides in Titus 1:12). All Old Testament books are quoted except Esther, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.

(2) **Old Testament quotations by Jesus Christ**. In Matthew 5:17-18, the Lord declared that the Law and the Prophets, a reference that includes all of the Old Testament, then summarized as "*the Law*" in verse 18, would be fulfilled. This declared it was therefore God's authoritative Word. Christ's statement in Matthew 23:35 about the blood (murder) of Abel to the blood of Zechariah clearly defined what Jesus viewed as the Old Testament canon. It consisted of the entire Old Testament as we know it in our Protestant English Bible. This is particularly significant in view of the fact there other murders of God's messengers recorded in the Apocrypha, but the Lord excludes them suggesting He did not consider the books of the Apocrypha to belong in the Canon as with the books from Genesis to 2 Chronicles.

The above evidence shows the books of the Old Testament, as we have them in our Protestant Bible, were God breathed and therefore authoritative and profitable the very moment they were written. There was human recognition of the writings; normally this was immediate as the people recognized the writers as spokesmen from God. Finally, there was a collection of the books into a canon

Martin Luther (1483–1546) made an attempt to remove the books of Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation from the canon (echoing the consensus of several Catholics, also labelled Christian Humanists — such as Cardinal Ximenez, Cardinal Cajetan, and Erasmus — and partially because they were perceived to go against certain Protestant doctrines such as sola scriptura and sola fide), but this was not generally accepted among his followers. However, these books are ordered last in the German-language Luther Bible to this day. In addition, Luther moved the books that later became the *Deuterocanonicals* into a section he called the Apocrypha

For centuries Bibles used to contain a small Epistle from Paul to the Laodiceans! It is referenced in Colossians 4:16. A*fter this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.* (Colosse and Laodicea are less than fifteen miles apart.)

The oldest known Bible copy of this epistle is in the *Fulda* manuscript written for Victor of Capua in A.D.546. It is mentioned by various writers from the fourth century onwards, notably by Gregory the Great, to whose influence may ultimately be due the frequent occurrence of it in Bibles written in England; for it is commoner in English Bibles than in others.

However this epistle is not without controversy. **There is no evidence of a Greek text.** The epistle appears in more than 100 manuscripts of the *Latin Vulgate* (including the oldest, the celebrated codex *Fuldensis*, A.D.546), as well as in manuscripts of early Albigensian, Bohemian, English, and Flemish versions. At the close of the 10th century Aelfric, a monk in Dorset, wrote a treatise in Anglo-Saxon on the Old and New Testaments, in which he states that the apostle Paul wrote 15 Epistles. In his enumeration of them he place Laodiceans after Philemon. About 1165 CE John of Salisbury, writing about the canon to Henry count of Champagne (Epist. 209), acknowledges that *'it is the common, indeed almost universal, opinion that there are only 14 Epistles of Paul ... But the 15th is that which is written to the church of the Laodiceans*'.

The Epistle to the Laodiceans is included in all 18 German Bibles printed prior to Luther's translation, beginning with the first German Bible, issued by Johann Mental at Strassburg in 1488.

In these the Pauline Epistles, with the Epistle to the Hebrews, immediately follow the Gospels, with Laodiceans standing between Galatians and Ephesians. In the first Czech (Bohemian) Bible, published at Prague in 1488 and reprinted several times in the 16th and 17th centuries, Laodiceans follows Colossians and precedes 1Thessalonians. It was included in Wycliffe's translation.

Practical Implications

1. Firstly, we need to beware of subtracting from the word of God. There are many today who call themselves Evangelicals but who do not accept the authority of the whole of the Scriptures, feeling free to dismiss certain parts with comments such as, "*that was just the Old Testament*", or even, "*That was just Paul*". To affirm the canon of Scripture is to affirm that all Scripture is profitable for us. We too can be guilty of a similar error by our neglect of certain Scriptures. Conservative Evangelicals all too often develop what is practically a canon within a canon by highlighting certain passages or themes of Scripture which we consider to be of prime importance while other, equally prominent themes are neglected. This too is a subtraction from the word of God.

2. Secondly, we need to beware of adding to the word of God, Evangelicals have been strong on opposing the additions and traditions of the church of Rome but we have been weak in recognising our own additions. All too often we expect Christians to conform to particular evangelical but extra-biblical standards or lifestyle before they are acceptable to us. We need to be careful that our single demand is for conformity to the word of God. The cry, *Sola Scriptura* must be a cry for continual reformation both of our personal lives and for the corporate life of the church.

3. Thirdly, we need to beware of distorting the word of God. Scripture is self-authenticating and self-interpreting. Neither the church, the pastor nor the Christian has authority in themselves to declare what Scripture means. The Scriptures must so be expounded that they clearly speak for themselves and impress their own authority on the life of the people of God.

4. Fourthly, we must beware of depersonalising the Scriptures. The Bible is not "*The rule book of the church*". This is a wholly inadequate understanding of Scripture. **Scripture is God's own testimony to his redemptive acts towards us centring in Jesus Christ**. It is pre-eminently personal or interpersonal as God addresses us through his word and speaks to us. It is full of the glory of God in Christ. **We speak of canon not as a set of rules for us but as the word which rules over us.**

5. Fifthly and consequently, we must beware of the unmoved heart. This is not a book to be studied 'objectively' and in a disinterested manner. It is a book through which God speaks to our hearts and by which we must be moved. It is the word of the Lover to his beloved which captivates our hearts and will not let us go. **Our proper response to the canon of Scripture is <u>worship</u>.**

(presented at Grace Evangelical Church Westerleigh 1990)

How does God maintain His creation?

Through His Word (through the natural laws of gravity, reproduction, etc

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, <u>sustaining all things by his powerful word</u>. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.[Heb.1:3]

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, <u>and in him all things hold together</u>. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.[Col.1:15-18]

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.[Jn.1:1-4]

Also by the Holy Spirit (who is the "power" Person of the Trinity)

Why is work important for Christians?

Work gives value and esteem to everyone, not just Christians. Work was part of the perfect

Creation values

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.[Gen.2:15]

NT teaching is those who are unwilling to work, should not be supported by the others! (Note, the Bible doesn't say we should be employed or even in paid work!)

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, labouring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat."

We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat. And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good.

Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instruction in this letter. Do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard them as an enemy, but warn them as you would a fellow believer. 2Thes 3:6-15

Work is worship—the same word used for work in Genesis 2:15 is also translated "*worship*":

And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."[Ex.3:12]

For the Christian there is no sacred/secular divide

On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the LORD's house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar. Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them. And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD Almighty. Zech 14:20-21

we should see our work as an act of worship. Christians are people follow Christ and have dedicated their whole life to serving Him—and so, whether we are working in secular employment or simply doing our daily chores, we are serving God

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him… Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.[Col.3:17-24]

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.[1Cor.10:31]

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.[1Pet.4:10-11]

However the most important work is to believe in Jesus:

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." Jn 6:26-29

What difference does it make that we are children of God?

Being children of God restores us to God's original plan and purpose

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we

shall see him as he is.[1Jn.3:1-2]

Being children of God gives us status with God

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.[Jn.1:9-13]

When you pray, don't babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! ***Pray like this: Our Father*** *in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*[Matt.6:7-10]

Being children of God gives us security

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Matt 6:25-34

Why do some Christians not believe in God's direct intervention?

The cessationists have a dispensational view point of God and His kingdom

Some people don't really know God

Your ways, God, are holy. What god is as great as our God? You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. Ps 77:13-14

God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? Nu 23:19

"I the LORD do not change. Mal 3:6

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. Jas 1:17

Some people are ignorant of the Scriptures (which is laziness)

Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.Matt.22:29

And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. Jn 5:37-40

For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel. Ezr 7:10

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth [Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that need not to be ashamed, dividing the word of truth aright.] 2Tim 2:15

Some people have seen the superstition, hysteria and abuse of fanciful Christians and that has influenced them

The Pentecostal Conference in Germany, December 8th to 11th, 1908.

Pastor Barratt spoke on a very different aspect-.

Tongues may be produced by an illness of the Brain. [*c.f. Foreign Accent Syndrome*] Directors of insane asylums tell us that patients sometimes speak in Tongues. Probably demons get in as well as diseases. This all proves that there is a channel in the human brain through which such work may be done.
Then why not far more should we not expect the Divine Power to work, communicating His power to us? The Divine Spirit condescends to fill the resigned spirit of man. He influences the Spirit life and the Soul-life, the mind, the will, and thus the vocal chords are touched into action.
The Divine Spirit does it all. The Spirit works mightily through the subjective or sub-conscious mind. Mental and bodily powers all become subservient to the Divine will. Every part of man is opened up to Divine influences. The connection being made, the Divine Electricity is turned on.
As to the impression that leads up to Tongues. It may be man's own will directed by the Holy Spirit. The will may decide when to speak or when to stop.
As to messages in Tongues with interpretation. I do not believe that all inspiration has ceased. I believe that utterance may be from God, but not in opposition to the teaching of God's Word.
It is generally allowed to depend upon knowledge of God and His Word.
Some messages are of such an inferior order that they are not worthy of interpretation. There is a danger of treating anyone who has given out a message as an infallible oracle. Some have turned away with scorn and considered the whole thing spurious. Some have condemned the interpretation and blamed themselves. We must remember that the oracle is a frail human being and liable to make mistakes. I am always thankful for any Biblical message and must not despise such, but must ever remember that the channel is fallible

What evidence do you have that God intervenes in your life?

New Birth

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.[Jn.1:12-13]

Love for other Christians

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 1Jn 3:14

Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God. Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything.

Dear friends, if we don't feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence. 1Jn 3:18-21

Provision

Protection

18/02/2026

Psalm 18:37-50

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 4

Questions

Are miracles important today?
Does it matter where our help comes from?
How important is it to check out what people believe?
Should we allow just anyone to pray for us?
What role does the Church have in our spiritual security?
Can we do anything to help miracles happen?
Can we do anything to hinder miracles from happening?

Comments

Are miracles important today?

Yes and No! Our faith is in God, not His miracles which are signposts pointing to the Miracle-Maker. It is our faith that pleases God (Heb.11:6) not miracles.

Jesus said that signs and wonders would confirm the preaching of God's Word

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." Mk 16:15-18

Miracles are not a sign of maturity nor of perfection but they do display God's glory and love and they do help people to believe:

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John 20:30-31

"Unless you people see signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe." Jn 4:48

What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. Jn 2:11

Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you."
He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. Matt 12:38-39

King Nebuchadnezzar, To the nations and peoples of every language, who live in all the earth: May you prosper greatly! It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation. Dan 4:1-3

Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. Acts 2:43

No miracles, no God—know miracles, know God. The direct intervention of God validates the Christian faith but miracles don't produce faith. In the OT, miracles declared God's glory but failed to produce faith in those who saw them and who were sustained miraculously for forty years:

"For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith." Heb.4:1-2

It was the same in the NT: "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him." Jn.12:37

Tongues are signs for the unbelievers

Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers. 1Cor 14:22

The only truly relevant sign is the sign of Jonah

He replied, "When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went away. Matt 16:2-4

Conversion, which is the greatest miracle of all, is absolutely essential to knowing God and eternal life.

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 1Pet 1:23

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." Jn 3:3

Salvation is more important than signs and wonders

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. Lk 10:17-21

This was the AG (American Assemblies of God) caution of spectacular signs given in 2000:

> We must admit that an omnipotent God could place gold fillings in teeth and gold dust on individuals. But can such events be empirically demonstrated? If it is for a sign to those present, the reason for the sign should be evident. But to run after such signs and wonders makes us little more than the Pharisees who came to Jesus asking to see a sign from heaven (Mark 8:11). The same attitude should guard believers, no matter what the unnatural sign might be. Judging from a distance on the basis of second-hand reports is dangerous.

Not every miracle comes from God— the pagan Egyptians performed wonders

So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the LORD commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret arts: Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. Yet Pharaoh's heart became hard and he would not listen to them, just as the LORD had said. Ex 7:10-13

Does it matter where our help comes from?

Absolutely yes! Our help comes from the Lord

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. Ps 121:1-2

But any interest in the spiritual world that ignores or contradicts the clear principles of Scripture is dangerous and will become a gateway to demonic influence, oppression or even possession.

Here am I, and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion. When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? Consult God's instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness. Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honour Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. Isa 8:18-9:2

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. They

have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. Col 2:16-19

How important is it to check out what people believe?

It is very important is it to check out what people believe. Orthodoxy (sound doctrine) should be measured against the early Creeds such as Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed; although these are not Scripture they are succinct and were formulated very early on and have stood the test of time.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 1Tim 6:6-12

Evil people can do miracles:

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!" Mt 7:21-23

We should flee from people when they go into detail about anything that cannot be backed up by Scripture

Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Matt 24:4-14

For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time. Mk 13:22-23

I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. Rom 16:17-20

I hope you will put up with me in a little foolishness. Yes, please put up with me! I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles." I may indeed be untrained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way. Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge? I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you. And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so. As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things

they boast about. For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve. 2Cor 11:1-15

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe. 1Tim 4:1-10

Should we allow just anyone to pray for us?

No! We should be discerning—which is why we need the security of Church where there is credibility and accountability

I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work. 2Jn 7-11

I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. Rom 16:17-19

But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people.

What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked person from among you." 1Cor 5:11-13

But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned. Tit 3:9-11

What role does the Church have in our spiritual security?

The Church structure of people with credibility and accountability is God's pattern for our security

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Eph 4:11-16

Can we do anything to help miracles happen?

Stay in Fellowship with God, His Word and His people

Preach God's Word

Mk.16

Keep in step with the Holy Spirit

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Gal 5:25-26

Be in the Spirit

On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, Rev 1:10

Can we do anything to hinder miracles from happening?

Unbelief?

And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith. Matt 13:58

Sin?

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' Matt 7:21-23

11/02/2026

Psalm 18:37-50

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 3 10f

Questions

Define faith using biblical phrases
Define faith without using biblical phrases
What are the ingredients of faith?
How do we receive faith?
How can we grow our faith?
Can you have faith and still be anxious?

Comments

Define faith using biblical phrases

Faith is confidence, certainty, a conviction

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. Heb 11:1-3

Now faith brings our hopes into reality and becomes the foundation needed to acquire the things we long for. It is all the evidence required to prove what is still unseen. This testimony of faith is what previous generations were commended for. Faith empowers us to see that the universe was created and beautifully coordinated by the power of God's words! He spoke and the invisible realm gave birth to all that is seen.TPT

The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see. The act of faith is what distinguished our ancestors, set them above the crowd. By faith, we see the world called into existence by God's word, what we see created by what we don't see.TM

Faith makes us sure of what we hope for and gives us proof of what we cannot see. It was their faith that made our ancestors pleasing to God. Because of our faith, we know that the world was made at God's command. We also know that what can be seen was made out of what cannot be seen.CEV

Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being certain of what we do not see. That is what the people of long ago were praised for. We have faith. So we understand that everything was made when God commanded it. That's why we believe that what we see was not made out of what could be seen.NIrV

Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation. By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen. NLTse

Faith assures us of things we expect and convinces us of the existence of things we cannot see. God accepted our ancestors because of their faith. Faith convinces us that God created the world through his word. This means what can be seen was made by something that could not be seen.GW

Faith assures us of things we expect and convinces us of the existence of things we cannot see. God accepted our ancestors because of their faith. Faith convinces us that God created the world through his word. This means what can be seen was made by something that could not be seen.The Voice

Faith is pleasing to God

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.[Heb.11:6]

Faith is the antidote to sin and fear

and all that is not of faith is sin.[Rom.14:23]

Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe." Mk 5:36

Define faith without using biblical phrases

FAITH is sometimes explained as **F**orsaking **A**ll **I** **T**rust **H**im

Trust, confidence, certainty, conviction, belief, assurance—these are synonyms of faith

What are the ingredients of faith?

God's Word

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. Rom.10:17

No one can have faith without hearing the message about Christ. CEV

Faith, then, is birthed in a heart that responds to God's anointed utterance of the Anointed One.TPT

Trust, assurance, confidence in God

There are degrees of faith for Believers

no faith;

He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith? Mk.4:40

little faith,

ware of their discussion, Jesus asked, "You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? Matt.16:8-9

great faith.

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. Matt.8:10

How do we receive faith?

Hear the Word of God

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. Rom.10:17

Faith doesn't come from just hearing with our physical ears

But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding." Ro 10:18-19

Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" "Twelve," they replied. "And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" They answered, "Seven." He said to them, "Do you still not understand?" Mk 8:17-21

Faith come from hearing with our spiritual ears

Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear." When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, " 'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!'" Mk 4:9-12

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. Rev 2:7

See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end. As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. Heb 3:12-19

We need to ask God for faith

If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." Matt 21:22

Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. Jn 16:24

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Matt 7:7-8

Ask with right motives

When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. Jas 4:3

Faith comes from revelation—*i.e.* God reveals Himself to our spirit

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. Matt 16:16-17

But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God's deep secrets. No one can know a person's thoughts except that person's own spirit, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us. When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths. But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. Those who are spiritual can evaluate all things, but they themselves cannot be evaluated by others. 1Cor 2:10-15

He who forms the mountains, who creates the wind, and who reveals his thoughts to mankind, who turns dawn to darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth—the LORD God Almighty is his name. Amos 4:13

At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. Matt 11:25-26

However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"—the things God has prepared for those who love him—these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 1Co 2:9-10

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. 2Tim 2:7

How can we grow our faith?

We don't need lots of faith

So watch yourselves. "If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them." The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you. Lk 17:3-6

But we can add to our faith.

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. [2Pet.1:5-11]

And we are to build ourselves up in the faith through prayer:

Dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Let the Holy Spirit guide and help you when you pray. [Jude 20]

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Col 2:6-7

Fight—we fight the fight of faith (not fight to get faith or fight with faith)

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 1Ti 6:12

Pursue faith

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 1Ti 6:11

Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2Ti 2:22

Stand firm in faith

You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. Ro 11:19-20

If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.' " Isa 7:9

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. Gal 5:6

They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. 1Ti 3:9

Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. 1Th 3:10

Faith will speak—we talk about what we believe

It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. 2Cor. 4:13-14

I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints. Philemon 6-7

Can you have faith and still be anxious?

Yes we can—but anxiety shows how little faith we have! And if we have little faith, we should aspire to great faith.

'*If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes." Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" Mk 9:23-24*

"I do believe, Lord; help my little faith!"TPT

"I do have faith! Please help me to have even more." CEV

Then I believe. Help me with my doubts!"TM

"I do believe! Help me to believe more [not to doubt; overcome my unbelief]!"EXB

We can ask God to grow our faith but faith will grow if it is living faith and we remember what God has done for us

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2Pe 1:3-11

We still need to deal with anxiety (which is unbelief) and feeling downcast

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar. Ps 42:5-6

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Phill 4:4-7

Unless the LORD had given me help, I would soon have dwelt in the silence of death. When I said, "My foot is slipping," your unfailing love, LORD, supported me. When anxiety was great within me, your consolation [comfort; assuring words; soothing touch] brought me joy. Ps 94:17-19

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Ps 139:23-24

So then, banish anxiety from your heart and cast off the troubles of your body, for youth and vigour are meaningless. Eccl 11:10

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man." Lk 21:33-36

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 1Pet 5:6-9

If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law, which are written in this book, and do not revere this glorious and awesome name—the LORD your God*— the LORD will send fearful plagues on you and your descendants, harsh and prolonged disasters, and severe and lingering illnesses. He will bring on you all the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will cling to you. The LORD will also bring on you every kind of sickness and disaster not recorded in this Book of the Law, until you are destroyed. You who were as numerous as the stars in the sky will be left but few in number, because you did not obey the LORD your God. Just as it pleased the LORD to make you prosper and increase in number, so it will please him to ruin and destroy you. You will be uprooted from the land you are entering to possess. Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods—gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your ancestors have known. Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot.* ***There the LORD will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life****. In the morning you will say, "If only it were evening!" and in the evening, "If only it were morning!"— because of the terror that will fill your hearts and the sights that your eyes will see. The LORD will send you back in ships to Egypt on a journey I said you should never make again. There you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you. Dt 28:58-68*

04/02/2026

Psalm 18:20-36

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 3 1-10

Questions

Why should we pay attention to the examples of Scripture?
When was God's final revelation given to us?
Does God still speak directly to us today?
What role does prophecy have in the Church?
Does God speak through dreams and visions today?
How can we know who has God's Spirit?
Why can we be confident that God will keep us?

Comments

Why should we pay attention to the examples of Scripture?

Scripture was written for us to learn from the examples of our forefathers in the faith

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 1Cor 10:6-13

The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. Rom 4:23-25

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things. 1Pet 1:10-12

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Heb 4:8-13

Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. Jude 5-7

All that God wants us to know about Him and our salvation has been recorded in Scripture

Contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. Jude 3

A further implication of this verse is that, after the writings authorized by the apostles were included in the NT canon, nothing more could ever be added to Scripture, since the content of the faith had been delivered "once for all." This is at odds with the teachings of other religions such as Mormonism and Islam, which hold that the NT writings existing today contain corrupted teachings,

and that additional authoritative teachings came from God later (e.g., the Book of Mormon or the Qur'an, both of which contradict the NT at many points). This conclusion also differs from the Roman Catholic view that official church tradition (in addition to Scripture) also has absolute divine authority. Since the letter of Jude was included in the NT canon, his letter must also have received early apostolic endorsement for inclusion, and everything in Jude's letter is in complete accord with apostolic teaching and writings of the early church and with "the faith once for all delivered to the saints."

When was God's final revelation given to us?

When Scripture was completed. Although Scripture was completed before A.D. 70 it was formally recognised at the Council of Carthage in A.D.397

The Old Testament

During the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, most Jews in the Roman world spoke Greek, instead of Hebrew, and used a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures called the Septuagint (LXX. (from the legend that there were 70 scholars who translated it). The Septuagint contained the Old Testament Apocrypha, that eventually were dropped from both Jewish and Protestant Bibles.

Sometime before Christ, the Old Testament was divided into three parts: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. But even after Christ, questions remained about which books and which versions of these books were sacred.

When Roman soldiers destroyed the Jewish temple in A.D. 70, the sacrificial system of worship ended, and more than ever, the Jews became a people of the Book. This made agreement on which books comprised the Word of God more important than ever. The Councils of Jamnia in A.D.90 and 118 finalized the Jewish canon and rejected the books now known as the Old Testament Apocrypha, most of which are still in the Roman Catholic Bible.

Early Christians quoted some of the Old Testament Apocrypha as canonical. But since the Reformation, Protestants have not treated these books as part of the inspired Word of God.

The New Testament

The first Bible used by early Christians was the Septuagint, which was translated before the canon was fixed and before the Old Testament Apocrypha was removed. This was probably the Bible Paul spoke of when he told Timothy, "*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).*

For Christians, God's authority rested in the miraculous life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as well as the Scriptures. The teachings of Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies of a coming Messiah and a New Covenant.

Christians, like Jews, began to collect and preserve the writings that expressed their faith. One surviving collection of Paul's writings may actually date to late in the first century, during the lifetime of some first-generation Christians. The three types of religious writings that emerged were: the Holy Scripture, commentaries on the Scripture, and theological writings.

The process of finalizing the New Testament canon spanned several centuries. Around A.D. 180, Irenaeus first suggested the four Gospels in the order we now have them. As Christians continued to write about their faith, the church was forced to sort out divinely inspired books from popular Christian literature. Over time, Christians began to put their greatest trust in the writings of the apostles. Books thought to have been written by others were eventually eliminated from the canon.

Athanasius's Easter letter to all churches in 367 is the first record we have of the 27 texts that now make up the New Testament. Still, formal acceptance of the New Testament canon did not come until the Council of Carthage in 397.

But perhaps a better question is who is God's final revelation to us—and of course the answer is Jesus

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Heb 1:1-3
God does not, and will not say anything that contradicts His revelation through Jesus (which is why the Old Covenant is obsolete and will never be reinstated).

Does God still speak directly to us today?

Yes in many ways. God still speaks through circumstances, creation, counsel of spiritual people and even through non-Christians but always in harmony with Jesus' teaching because God's revelation was complete in Jesus. Prophesy today never gives any new revelation but a reminder of what God has already said.
So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things. 2Pe 1:12-15
Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles. 2Pe 3:1-2

What role does prophecy have in the Church?

Edification, exhortation and encouragement—
But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. 1Cor 14:3-4
Prophesy is not directional for Christians to find out what God's will for their lives (such as "I need Word for God" or even "I have a Word from God for you"!!!). Christianity is not a proxy religion—we have to relate to God ourself and work out our own salvation
Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. Phil 2:12-13

Does God speak through dreams and visions today?

Yes! The Church was started as the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy
Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: " 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' Ac 2:14-21
But like prophesy, dreams and vision are for edification, exhortation and encouragement
No example of any "ministry of dreams" in Scripture and only unbelievers ever needed someone to interpret their dreams—God always gave Believers the understanding of their dreams or visions

How can we know who has God's Spirit?

By their fruit
"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good

fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Matt 7:15-20

By what they say about Jesus

Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. 1Cor 12:3

However, allow me to add this further advice, which is based upon my experiences in counselling others:

1. Do not trust all of your inward impressions, as though they must be of divine origin; and do not act upon any of them, until you have checked them by prayer and Bible reading.
2. Do not seek physical thrills and sensations, and—if you have received some—in whatever way, do not presume that they are a proof of the presence of the Holy Spirit.
3. Do not assume that every dream, or vision, that comes to you, is a message from God. If you can still remember a dream long after you have had it, ask God to interpret it to you, if He intends you to take note of it.
4. Do not get into the way of thinking that those who have great blessings, or are greatly used of the Lord in evangelism, are either the most saintly or the most reliable teachers of Christian doctrine. If a life or a message does not tally with the written Word of God, be careful. Sound doctrine comes from God-appointed teachers.
5. Try to avoid being driven into a psychological corner by an over-zealous Christian worker, concerning your salvation, your assurance, or your need of consecration. Guilt and conviction of sin are both real and we must face up to them, but do not allow anyone to drive you into a state of psychic disorder.
6. Since you cannot save yourself, do not try to attempt the impossible by working hard at it. In connection with the seeking of a fresh experience of the Holy Spirit, do not flog yourself; rather remember that all of God's blessings are received by that faith which He imparts to us through His Son.
7. Regardless of any prophetic utterance or promises made by the Lord to you (all of which may be genuine and very wonderful), refuse yourself as being more of a divine favourite than any to other Christian.
8. Do not throw your human reason overboard; it may be a nuisance sometimes, but it will save you from fanaticism. Common sense and faith are not the most likely companions, but they do complement one another; reason and extremism cannot go hand-in-hand.
9. If someone tells you that you are indwelt by a demon (and this is common in some circles), be slow to react. It may be true; if it is, then you need the counsel and ministrations of a genuine man of God. If it is not true (and this can be discovered very quickly by an expert counsellor), the whole idea must be banished from your mind, and you must forgive the person who so cruelly assaulted you with such a notion. To worry about it is to court trouble.
10. Investigate all teaching about 'instant holiness' very thoroughly, and take time to observe the teacher as much as his doctrine. Do not allow yourself to believe in any of it, until you have re-read Paul's letters prayerfully.
11, Do not allow Positive Thinking to replace New Testament Faith, however attractive it may seem. There is a vital difference between the two, as Paul will show you, if you read him on the subject.
12. Do not put your physical healing above your need of Christ. To bring your bodily needs to Him is one thing, but to intend to be healed immediately, and at all costs, is quite another.
13. If you are tempted to desert a good evangelical church, because of a small difference of opinion—which is unconnected with the basic Christian tenets—think again. Schism is more likely to lead you into fanaticism than anything else I know, and will shipwreck your faith. If your church

has become heretical and now despises the Atonement, the Virgin Birth, and belief in the Bible, then go to one which believes them; do not resign from any fellowship for petty reasons.
14. Be careful not to talk more about Love than you do about Repentance. Sentimentalism is rife today and it is easy to make Love a rallying point for anyone who will come—regardless of doctrine and relationships with God. Seek to be as compassionate as Christ was, but do not reduce His message to mere sentimentalism.
15. If you think that you are in error, or hold queer views, take time to discuss the matter with Our Lord in prayer, showing true repentance, and express a willingness to abandon anything which is contrary to His will, without hesitation.

It is impossible to live one's life in such a way that everyone (believer, heretic, and heathen) is utterly satisfied with you; you cannot please everybody. What is more, we are not called to attempt to please everyone in the world. It was said of Jesus that He pleased God; can more than this be said of any of His followers? However, it should be said of us that we have sought to please Him, even if we have failed to attain the standard set by Him.
Should it not be the prayer of each Christian, that he shall become the most Christ-like Christian who has ever lived ? And would it not be true to say that those who pray such prayers, even if they do not please everyone, have a hope of growing into the likeness of the Master?
May you, the reader, have a deep concern to be like the most Normal Man Who ever graced this earth and, in consequence, be saved from the mistakes and delusions of Queer Christians.
From: *Some Light on Queer Christians* by David R Smith 1967

Why can we be confident that God will keep us?

Because He has started His work in us

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Phil 1:3-6
He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1Co 1:8-9

Because He is able

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. Jude 24-25
Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. Rom 16:25-27

Because He kept Lot (and other people in Bible history)

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment. This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings; 2Pe 2:4-10

But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."
Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you." 1Sam 17:34-37

28/01/2026

Psalm 18:1-21

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 2 7:38

Questions

Why are we called the "Temple of God"?
Why is holiness the basic rule for God's Temple?
Why is it important for us to live clean and disciplined lives?
Is it possible to be a dirty or undisciplined Christian?
Why should we pay close attention to doctrine? (Doctrine is what we believe about God)

Comments

Why are we called the "Temple of God"?

God's Temple (previously called Tabernacle when it was a tent) **is God's Sanctuary** and the place where God meets—and dwells—with people:

"Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you. Ex 25:8-9

Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand and the table with its consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now. Heb 9:1-5

The Old Covenant (together with its rituals and paraphernalia) **was an allegory or illustration of the New Covenant**

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. Col 2:16-19

The rules and regulations of the Old Covenant had spiritual significance:

Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already priests who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises. Heb 8:3-6

But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. Heb 9:11-15

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and

goats to take away sins. Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, my God.' " Heb 10:1-7

Why is holiness the basic rule for God's Temple?

God is holy and those who serve/partake in God's Temple/kingdom must be like God

But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."1Pet.1:15-16

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy. Ex 31:12-13

Your ways, God, are holy. What god is as great as our God? You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. Ps 77:13-14

But the LORD Almighty will be exalted by his justice, and the holy God will be proved holy by his righteous acts. Then sheep will graze as in their own pasture; lambs will feed among the ruins of the rich. Isa 5:16-17

Why is it important for us to live clean and disciplined lives?

Anything less is dishonouring to God who is absolute purity and holiness

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.Heb.12:14-15

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. 2Tim 1:7

Self-discipline is important value of God's Kingdom

As Paul talked about righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you." Acts 24:25

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. 2Pet 1:5-9

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. Tit 2:11-14

Is it possible to be a dirty or undisciplined Christian?

Yes—because we are saved by faith not by what we do

For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. Ro 3:28

"We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified. Gal 2:15-16

For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because "the righteous will live by faith." The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, "The person who does these things will live by them." Ga 3:10-12

But if we are really understand what it is to be a Christian, we will live like one—Christians are followers of Christ!

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him. Mt 4:18-20

Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." Jn 21:22

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus

were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Rom 6:1-4

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. Rom 6:15-18

There is no fellowship between light and dark

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with the and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." Therefore, "Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." And, "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." 2Co 6:14-18

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us. 1Jn 1:5-10

Why should we pay close attention to doctrine? (Doctrine is what we believe about God)

Sound doctrine should keep us from error and deception

Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1Tim 4:15-16

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. 2Tim 4:1-5

An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. Tit 1:6-11

Sound doctrine should save us from unnecessary religious activity that the Bible calls "*acts that lead to death*" or "*useless rituals*":

Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death [useless rituals], and of faith in God, instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so. Heb 6:1-3

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death [useless rituals], so that we may serve the living God! Heb 9:14

We can only worship God in truth (thus when we believe untruths about God, our religious activity is not worship)

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." Jn 4:23-24

Jesus is Truth and so it is important we believe about Him

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. Jn 1:14

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Jn 14:6

This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. Ga 2:4-5

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. Jude 3-4

21/01/2026

Psalm 17

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 2 1:38-9?

Questions

In Ezekiel's vision, why did God's glory depart from the Temple?
Why was Ezekiel told to describe the specifications of the Temple?
Which Temple did God's glory return to? (Explain your answer)
What is the significance of the River that flowed out of that Temple? (Ezekiel 47)
How do we build God's Temple today?
Should Christians follow any religious rituals?
What role does God's glory have in our life?

Comments

In Ezekiels' vision, why did God's glory depart from the Temple?

God's glory depart from the Temple because of the rebellion and evil of the people and in particular the priests who desecrated the holy place and holy rituals

In the sixth year, in the sixth month on the fifth day, while I was sitting in my house and the elders of Judah were sitting before me, the hand of the Sovereign LORD came on me there. I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man. From what appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal. He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north gate of the inner court, where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood. And there before me was the glory of the God of Israel, as in the vision I had seen in the plain. Then he said to me, "Son of man, look toward the north." So I looked, and in the entrance north of the gate of the altar I saw this idol of jealousy. And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing—the utterly detestable things the Israelites are doing here, things that will drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see things that are even more detestable." Then he brought me to the entrance to the court. I looked, and I saw a hole in the wall. He said to me, "Son of man, now dig into the wall." So I dug into the wall and saw a doorway there. And he said to me, "Go in and see the wicked and detestable things they are doing here." So I went in and looked, and I saw portrayed all over the walls all kinds of crawling things and unclean animals and all the idols of Israel. In front of them stood seventy elders of Israel, and Jaazaniah son of Shaphan was standing among them. Each had a censer in his hand, and a fragrant cloud of incense was rising. Eze 8:1-11

But God promised a restoration of the Temple when His glory would return

The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, the people of Jerusalem have said of your fellow exiles and all the other Israelites, 'They are far away from the LORD; this land was given to us as our possession.' "Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Although I sent them far away among the nations and scattered them among the countries, yet for a little while I have been a sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.' "Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.' "They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols. I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God. But as for those whose hearts are devoted to their vile images and detestable idols, I will bring down on their own heads what they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD." Then the cherubim, with the wheels beside them, spread their wings, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them. The glory of the LORD went up from within the city and stopped above the mountain east of it. The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the exiles in Babylonia in the vision given by the Spirit of God. Then the vision I had seen went up from me, and I told the exiles everything the LORD had shown me. Eze 11:14-25

Why was Ezekiel told to describe the specifications of the Temple?

Ezekiel told to describe the specifications of the Temple so the people would understand what they were doing. The dimensions and rituals described in picture language the true and real worship

Son of man, describe to the people of Israel the Temple I have shown you, so they will be ashamed of all their sins. Let them study its plan, and they will be ashamed of what they have done. Describe to them all the specifications of the Temple–including its entrances and exits–and everything else about it. Tell them about its decrees and laws. Write down all these specifications and decrees as they watch so they will be sure to remember and follow them. And this is the basic law of the Temple: absolute holiness! The entire top of the mountain where the Temple is built is holy. Yes, this is the basic law of the Temple. Ezek.43:10-12

It is essential to read with understanding

all the people came together as one in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the teacher of the Law to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel. So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law. Neh 8:1-3

"So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand— Matt 24:15

With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything. Mk 4:33-34

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding." Ro 10:14-19

The Old Covenant rituals were illustrations of the New Covenant realities

you any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." Rom 3:9-12

The Israelites were called a holy people

Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak. The people all responded together, "We will do everything the LORD has said." So Moses brought their answer back to the LORD. The LORD said to Moses, "I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people will hear me speaking with you and will always put their trust in you." Then Moses told the LORD what the people had said. Ex 19:3-9

However they didn't (couldn't) live up to that standard

But when Jesus came, He made us holy through the new birth

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1Pet.2:9-10

Under the Old Covenant, anything that touched the altar became holy:

For seven days make atonement for the altar and consecrate it. Then the altar will be most holy, and whatever touches it will be holy.[Ex.29:37]

The **altar is the place of cleansing and worship within the Temple** and under the New Covenant, we have another altar—the place where we are cleansed—the cross on which Jesus died to make us right with God:

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by eating ceremonial foods, which is of no benefit to those who do so. We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat. The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.[Heb.13:8-16]

The Cross is greater than our sin!

"Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.' You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gift on the altar is bound by that oath.' You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, anyone who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And anyone who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. And anyone who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it. Matt 23:16-22

And God is greater than our conscience!

This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. 1Jn 3:19-24

[This is how we will know that we belong to the truth and how we will be reassured in his presence. Whenever our conscience condemns us, we will be reassured that God is greater than our conscience and knows everything. Dear friends, if our conscience doesn't condemn us, we can boldly look to God and receive from him anything we ask.

Whenever our hearts make us feel guilty and remind us of our failures, we know that God is much greater and more merciful than our conscience, and he knows everything there is to know about us. My delightfully loved friends, when our hearts don't condemn us, we have a bold freedom to speak face-to-face with God.

Dear children, don't just talk about love. Put your love into action. Then it will truly be love. That's how we know that we hold to the truth. And that's how we put our hearts at rest, knowing that God is watching. Our hearts may judge us. But God is greater than our hearts. He knows everything.

Dear friends, if our hearts do not judge us, we can be bold with God. And he will give us anything we ask. That's because we obey his commands. We do what pleases him.]

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the entrance north of the gate of the altar I saw this idol of jealousy. And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing—the utterly detestable things the Israelites are doing here, things that will drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see things that are even more detestable."bThen he brought me to the entrance to the court. I looked, and I saw a hole in the wall. He said to me, "Son of man, now dig into the wall." So I dug into the wall and saw a doorway there. And he said to me, "Go in and see the wicked and detestable things they are doing here." So I went in and looked, and I saw portrayed all over the walls all kinds of crawling things and unclean animals and all the idols of Israel. In front of them stood seventy elders of Israel, and Jaazaniah son of Shaphan was standing among them. Each had a censer in his hand, and a fragrant cloud of incense was rising. Ezek 8:1-11

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Which Temple did God's glory return to? (Explain your answer)

God's glory never returned to the Temple that Nehemiah was involved with, nor Herod's Temple (which was physically a truly magnificent building with much gold) However, even though Herod was an far-thinking leader and a great innovator, who built many magnificent cities, and buildings, he was an evil man and even tried to kill the baby Jesus.

God said that when His Glory returned to the Temple, His people would never again defile His holy Name: *While the man was standing beside me, I heard someone speaking to me from inside the temple. He said: "Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever. The people of Israel will never again defile my holy name—neither they nor their kings—by their prostitution and the funeral offerings for their kings at their death.* Ezek.43:6-7

But God's glory did (has) returned to the Temple:

Then the man brought me to the gate facing east, and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory. The vision I saw was like the vision I had seen when he came to destroy the city and like the visions I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown. The glory of the LORD entered the temple through the gate facing east. Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple Ezek.43:1-5

The return of God's glory to the Temple that Ezekiel saw in his vision was to the real Temple in the heavenly Jerusalem that is made of living stones not to the natural Temple in the geographical city of Jerusalem

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect. Heb.12:22-23

For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise. These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount

Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.[Gal.4:22-26]

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.[Rev.21:9-11]

What is the significance of the River that flowed out of that Temple? (Ezekiel 47)

The River of God is a theme that runs throughout Scripture from Genesis to Revelation, from the paradise of the garden of Eden through to paradise of heaven

A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. Gen 2:10-14

The LORD answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. Ex 17:5-6

How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light. Ps 36:7-9

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Ps 46:4-5

The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side.

As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. He asked me, "Son of man, do you see this?"

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing." Eze 47:1-12

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to

show his servants the things that must soon take place." "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll." Rev 22:1-7

How do we build God's Temple today?

We can only build on the foundation of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the apostles and prophets as found in Scripture. We need to be careful what materials we build with because they will be tested by fire (i.e. there is a future assessment of all that we have done)

For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames. Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple. [1Cor.3:9-17]

Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete. [Lk.6:46-49]

Should Christians follow any religious rituals?

Yes and no!

A ritual is a pattern or a guide—a template—and without a structure, we will live an aimless life that achieves little.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. 1Cor 9:24-27

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty [aimless, meandering] way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 1Pe 1:18-19

But rituals are not meant to control us—they should a scaffolding not a straight-jacket. However, our ritual need to be Biblical—and most importantly, New Covenant. The Old Covenant rituals were for the Old Covenant and are now obsolete.

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed

have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. Col 2:16-23
For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. But God found fault with the people and said: "The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear. Heb 8:7-13

What role does God's glory have in our life?

We should make God our delight and make His glory a priority in our life because God's glory is the presence or persona of God and is the atmosphere of heaven

In God's presence there is great joy

You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.' Ac 2:28
You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." Heb 1:9
For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? 1Thess 3:8-9
"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. Jn 17:13-19

Sin is missing God's glory

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— Ro 3:23-25

The basic rule of God's Temple is holiness

Son of man, describe to the people of Israel the Temple I have shown you, so they will be ashamed of all their sins. Let them study its plan, and they will be ashamed of what they have done. Describe to them all the specifications of the Temple–including its entrances and exits–and everything else about it. Tell them about its decrees and laws. Write down all these specifications and decrees as they watch so they will be sure to remember and follow them. <u>And this is the basic law of the Temple: absolute holiness</u>! The entire top of the mountain where the Temple is built is holy. Yes, this is the basic law of the Temple. Ezek.43:10-12

Pastor Rich Bitterman (FB)
21/10/2026

A Line Was Crossed Today When Protest Entered a Church

There are places a society instinctively protects, and today a church was not one of them.
We had just closed our Bibles at Cedar Ridge Baptist. The final "Amen" had been spoken. We had

opened Zechariah 4 this morning and I had preached it with the conviction that this world is not friendly to the light. That the work we are called to do will often feel impossible. That the church will stand, not because it is large or loud, but because it is lit from above.
Then, hours later, I saw it.
A church in Minnesota, Cities Church in the Twin Cities, had its service interrupted by activists. Protesters entered during worship. A livestream caught it. Don Lemon was there. The sanctuary was turned into a confrontation space. And the outrage, the confusion, the noise, it all went viral.
They were targeted over a pastor reportedly connected to ICE. Public records do link that pastor to a leadership role in immigration enforcement. But what unfolded was more than a debate over paperwork. It was the interruption of worship itself, and that is what deserves to be addressed.
What I had preached that morning suddenly felt less like exposition and more like dispatch. As if God, by His providence, had dropped a flame from heaven to remind us again that His lamp still burns.

--Wake Up!--

Zechariah had fallen into a kind of slumber. The fog that settles in when discouragement clouds your eyes and the work of God feels stuck.
So the angel returned. Shook him. Woke him up.
And what did he see?
A lampstand. Gold. Seven flames. Seven channels of oil. And two olive trees, one on each side, pouring oil through pipes into a bowl that fed the flames. No priests refilling it. No hands adjusting wicks. No bustle or sweat. Just the steady, quiet miracle of light, born of oil that never stops flowing.
"What is this?" Zechariah asked.
And the answer came like a sword sliding from its sheath.
"Not by might. Not by power. But by My Spirit," says the Lord of hosts.

--When the Mountains Block the Path--

The people of God had returned from exile. They had rebuilt the foundation of the temple and then froze as work halted as the enemies circled. The site lay silent for fourteen long years. Zerubbabel, the governor, stood at the front of a project that looked more like a tombstone than a promise.
Maybe you know that posture. The world feels too loud. Your church feels too small. You look around and see outrage getting the microphone and faith being shoved out the side door. And you wonder if the flickering flame in your own soul is enough to keep going another day.
You hear the chants as you watch the footage. You watch the sanctuary turned into a battlefield.
And then the mountain looms. Too much. Too broken. Too far gone.
But the voice speaks again, "What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain."

--The Fire Does Not Need You to Strike the Match--

This lamp in Zechariah's vision, it was not powered by hands. Not sustained by muscle. No man stood behind it, sweating to keep it alive. It burned because God fed it.
The olive trees dripped oil because the Lord had ordained them to. This reminds us that the people of God are not self-lit. We are not preserved by votes or volume or visibility. We are lamps that burn only because the oil flows from above.
Christ is the tree. Christ is the root. Christ was crushed to release the oil. And the Holy Spirit, the fire from Pentecost, still flows from that crushing, still fills the lampstand, still lights the flame.
The sanctuary may be stormed. The livestream may rage. The noise may shake the walls.
But the fire burns. Still.

--Oil That Only Comes From Crushing--

What drips into those bowls in Zechariah's vision is not just imagery. It is blood and it is cost. It is the Spirit of God, poured out because Christ was first poured out, body broken, breath given, curse carried.

There is no flame apart from that cross. There is no strength apart from that Spirit.
And if you do not yet belong to Him, if all you have seen of Christianity is noise, or politics, or hypocrisy, I plead with you. Look past the mess. Look at the lampstand. Look at the oil.
The flame still burns because the risen Christ lives.
The invitation still stands because grace still flows.
You are not too far gone.
You are not too late.
The church shines not because of its people, but because of its Savior.

--Small Things. Great Glory.--

There were those in Zechariah's day who looked at the rubble and laughed.
They said the work was nothing. The effort was wasted. The foundation meant failure.
But the Lord rebukes them in verse 10, "Who dares despise the day of small things?"
God rejoices to see a plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand, because God sees the finished temple even while the stones are still scattered. He sees the flame even when it flickers. He sees the church even when it is ignored, ridiculed, or shouted down.
The seven eyes of the Lord roam the earth, and they see.
God's attention is not captured by noise.
It is drawn to obedience that continues, to Scripture opened again, to Christ preached without protection, to repentance that costs pride, to endurance that refuses to quit.
It is drawn to the church that remains.

--Keep the Lamp Under the Oil--

Zechariah's final question is wise. He does not just accept the vision. He presses further.
What are the two olive trees? What are the branches that drip the oil?
The answer: they are the anointed ones, the priest and the king. In Zechariah's day, Joshua and Zerubbabel. But all of it is pointing to the One who would come and combine the priesthood, the kingship, and the prophetic office into one blazing person.
Christ.
He is the tree. He is the supply.
And if the lampstand stays close to Him, the oil will never run dry.
But if we move the lamp, if we drift, compromise, bend, or bow to gain the world's permission, then the lamp may still stand, but the flame will die.
Stay under the oil and near the tree. Stay close to Christ.

--Do Not Be Afraid--

Christian, hear this. The disruptions will grow louder. The headlines will grow stranger. You may find your worship interrupted, your faith misunderstood, your convictions called dangerous. Around the world, the church already knows what comes next.
This was not the suffering our brothers and sisters endure elsewhere, but it was a sign that the shelter once granted to worship is thinning.
When worship is challenged, the answer is not volume or vengeance. The answer is steadiness. The church gathers, prays, sings, and submits itself again to the Word, trusting that light does its work best when it is not trying to win the dark, but to shine in it.
But none of this surprises the God who spoke to Zechariah. He has seen a thousand mountains crumble.
He has lit lamps in darker times than this.
And He will finish what He started. The final stone will be set. The temple will rise. The fire will never die.
And when it is done, we will not say we built it.
We will say, "Grace. Grace to it."
And the flame will still be burning.

14/01/2026

Psalm 16

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 1 – Introduction 10.00

Questions

What is a "*saint*"?
Why does the Bible address unspiritual Believers (*like those in Corinth*) as "saints"?
What does it mean "*to live by faith*"? (*2Cor.5:7*)
Does academic study (*such as psychology, science, etc.*) have any value for Christians?
What should we expect to happen when we meet as Church?

Comments

What is a "*saint*"?

A saint is a Believer—someone who is holy.

To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours: [To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours] 1Cor 1:2

We are only holy (pure, without sin) when God makes us holy.

What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." Rom 3:9-12

The Israelites were called a holy people

Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak. The people all responded together, "We will do everything the LORD has said." So Moses brought their answer back to the LORD. The LORD said to Moses, "I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people will hear me speaking with you and will always put their trust in you." Then Moses told the LORD what the people had said. Ex 19:3-9

However they didn't (couldn't) live up to that standard

But when Jesus came, He made us holy through the new birth

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.[1Pet.2:9-10]

Under the Old Covenant, anything that touched the altar became holy:

For seven days make atonement for the altar and consecrate it. Then the altar will be most holy, and whatever touches it will be holy.[Ex.29:37]

The **altar is the place of cleansing and worship within the Temple** and under the New Covenant, we have another altar—the place where we are cleansed—the cross on which Jesus died to make us right with God:

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by eating ceremonial foods, which is of no benefit to those who do so. We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat. The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to

come. Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.[Heb.13:8-16]

The Cross is greater than our sin!

"Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.' You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gift on the altar is bound by that oath.' You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, anyone who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And anyone who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. And anyone who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it. Matt 23:16-22

And God is greater than our conscience!

This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. 1Jn 3:19-24

This is how we will know that we belong to the truth and how we will be reassured in his presence. Whenever our conscience condemns us, we will be reassured that God is greater than our conscience and knows everything. Dear friends, if our conscience doesn't condemn us, we can boldly look to God and receive from him anything we ask.

Whenever our hearts make us feel guilty and remind us of our failures, we know that God is much greater and more merciful than our conscience, and he knows everything there is to know about us. My delightfully loved friends, when our hearts don't condemn us, we have a bold freedom to speak face-to-face with God.

Dear children, don't just talk about love. Put your love into action. Then it will truly be love. That's how we know that we hold to the truth. And that's how we put our hearts at rest, knowing that God is watching. Our hearts may judge us. But God is greater than our hearts. He knows everything.

Dear friends, if our hearts do not judge us, we can be bold with God. And he will give us anything we ask. That's because we obey his commands. We do what pleases him.

Why does the Bible address unspiritual Believers (*like those in Corinth*) as "saints"?

Righteousness is a nature not a behaviour. Believers are righteous because of their new nature not because of what they do

No one is righteous by nature (Adamic nature) but all Believers are righteous by the new nature—that is the teaching about righteousness that Paul emphasised.

As Paul talked about righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you." Acts 24:25

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." Rom 1:16-17

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. Rom 3:21-26

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. You

have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 6:15-23

What does it mean "*to live by faith*"? (*2Cor.5:7*)

For we live by faith, not by sight. 2Cor 5:7

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. 1Cor 13:11-12

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2Cor 4:18

Being in the Spirit:

On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea." Rev 1:10-11

After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. Rev 4:1-2

Does academic study (*such as psychology, science, etc.*) **have any value for Christians?**

Yes

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. Col 2:6-10

I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. I applied my mind to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under the heavens. What a heavy burden God has laid on mankind! I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind. What is crooked cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted. I said to myself, "Look, I have increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge." Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom, and also of madness and folly, but I learned that this, too, is a chasing after the wind. For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief. Eccl 1:12-18

Not only was the Teacher wise, but he also imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true. The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one shepherd. Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body. Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil. Eccl 12:9-14

The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behaviour, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young—let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Prov 1:1-7

Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them. Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you

have, get understanding. Cherish her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honour you. She will give you a garland to grace your head and present you with a glorious crown." Prov 4:5-9
"At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for by his family. When he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action. Acts 7:20-22
but we must not mistake helpful guidance to live healthy, helpful lives for spiritual guidance
When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.
Then Paul said: "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as the high priest and all the Council can themselves testify. I even obtained letters from them to their associates in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished. Ac 22:2-5
Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith. Grace be with you all. 1Tim 6:20-21
though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Phil 3:4-11
Paul had books that he wanted Timothy to bring him (if these were scriptures, hr would most likely had said so)
When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments. 2Ti 4:13
We ignore the learning and study of past Believers at our peril. That is why church history is important. We can learn from their mistakes and be encouraged from their faith—just as we can from examples in Scripture:
For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom 15:3-6
Most Believers who grasped the eternal truths of the Gospel in a fresh way made many mistakes and were often unbalanced. It was only years later when that aspect of truth had been embedded in the Church's practice that balance came in. When people have to fight for the truth, they are rarely (if ever) at peace.
Examples: the Reformation—Luther and justification by faith. Wesley and Church of England. Evangelism and faith. Healing and health. Pentecostal doctrine and tongues. Worship and singing choruses. Shepherding.
The people who do not want the truth have exchanged the truth of God for a lie and the reality of God for the unreal. Yes they use the phraseology of the Scripture, and the innocent and the ignorant of the Word are lead astray. I do not know whether you thought of it or not but if a man denies that God is a Person, he is an atheist. These modern cults are all atheistic cults. This is religious atheism, the most dangerous thing that has ever come to our modern civilisation. It can only be combated by a real revival of real Christianity, a Christianity that unveils the miraculous, supernatural power of a living Christ. **E.W.Kenyon** *Herald of Life August 1945*
What should we expect to happen when we meet as Church?

Something good is going to happen!

I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory… Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. Ep 3:7-13;20-21

What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.[1Cor.14:26]

When we come together in Jesus' Name, some beautiful happens:

I know that when we come together something beautiful will happen as we are encouraged by each other's faith.[Rom.1:12]

07/01/2026

Psalm 15

Video: Digging Deeper into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Part 1 – Introduction 2.20

Questions

What is God's glory like?
What is sin?
What does "the glory of the LORD rises upon you" mean?
Can we become more like Jesus?
How can we display more of Jesus?
Should we change anything in our services to facilitate God's glory?

Comments

What is God's glory like?

God's glory is like Jesus:

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.[Heb.1:3]
The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.[Jn.1:14]
Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.[Jn.17:3-5]

The glory of God in the OT was known as the "Shekinah" and is what they believed Adam was clothed with before he sinned. We the redeemed are now clothed in Jesus' righteousness

"Let us go to his dwelling place, let us worship at his footstool, saying, 'Arise, LORD, and come to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. May your priests be clothed with your righteousness; may your faithful people sing for joy.' " Ps.132:7-9
I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. Is.61:10
Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.) Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God." Rev.19:6-9
So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal. 3:26-29

Because we are holy, we need to live holy lives

Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Rev 3:4-6

We also need to talk glory words. The Greek word for glory is doxa —*i.e.* doxology

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. Phil 4:8-9

What is sin?

Paul defines sin as falling short of God's glory:

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,[Rom.3:23]

All that is not of faith is sin

But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin. Rom.14:23

The Holy Spirit convicts of the sin of unbelief

"All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them. I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. Jn. 16:1-11

Sin is more than just wrong choices, bad decisions, and wilful acts of disobedience that violate God's Word and are contrary to His will. It is that and much more. Paul knows sin is missing the mark or deliberately stepping over the line, but he also knows that sin is a power at work in him and every child of Adam. As strange as it may sound, sin seems to have a will of its own. Like an addiction, sin takes hold of us and causes us to act in ways we never wanted. For Paul the cross of Jesus deals finally and definitively with the dual reality of sin. Not only are we forgiven of our sins—our wilful acts of disobedience—but we are also liberated from the power of sin. *[comment on Romans 3 in The Voice]*

What does "*the glory of the LORD rises upon you*" mean?

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is glorious—more glorious than the ministry of the Law

Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts! Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2Cor. 3:7-18

The New Covenant has set us free for the law of Moses—of trying and doing. Now we have a more glorious relationship with God

Can we become more like Jesus?

No and Yes!

No we can't become more like Jesus —because we are already like Him in our new born-again nature

But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.[1Cor.6:17]

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.[1Pet.1:3-5]

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.[1Pet.1:23]

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. [For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.][Col.2:9-10]

Yes we can become more like Jesus —because we are not yet like Him yet in our mortal body

This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts. [1Jn.1:5-10]

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.[Phil.3:12-14]

We still need to be transformed in our thinking by renewing our minds

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.[Rom.12:2]

How can we display more of Jesus?

Contemplate the Lord's glory

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.[2Cor.3:18]

We can do this by staying in harmony with God, by agreeing with what God says and by keeping in step with the Holy Spirit

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Gal. 5:22-26

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. Rom. 8:14-17

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground. Ps 143:10

"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll. He who testifies to these

things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen. Rev 22:12-21

Don't lie to the Holy Spirit

Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God." … About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." Acts 5:3-4; 7-9

Should we change anything in our services to facilitate God's glory?

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.Eph.3:20-21