

GODFIDENCE

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Every second of life is a seed. With every seed you receive you're given a chance and a choice. You can eat your seeds or plant them. Eating them provides pleasure for they day, planting them provides nourishment for years to comes. Regardless what you choose, the results of your past decisions will always follow you into the present.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

LOVE ONE ANOTHER.	4
TRIUMPH OVER TRIALS.	11
FORGET FEAR.	22
ENEMIES.	28
SUFFERING.	33
FAITH.	37
LIVING ON MISSION.	41
SEVEN STEPS OF UNITY.	46
SELFISH AMBITION.	50
ANGER.	55
GODS WAY.	60
REACHING THE LOST.	66
SET FREE.	71
THE RIGHT WAY.	78
LUNCH SPECIAL.	84
GODS PLAN.	89
HOW WILL YOU BE REMEMBERED?	93
OVERCOMING INSECURITY.	98
3:27AM.	103
POSER.	106
HELL TO THE NAW.	109
WHY WISOM.	112
PAY THE F.E.E.	117
DID IT AGIAN.	123
NO FEAR.	133
I QUIT.	139
STEADFAST.	148
REPRESENT OR RE-PRESENT.	158

THE THIEF. 164
GODFIDENCE. 169
THE TONGUE. 174
HUNDREDFOLD 179

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."
James 2:14-17

Ever witnessed people roll up their windows to a homeless person while waiting in line to turn into the church? I wonder if they knew scripture says, "Whoever shuts their ears to the cry of the poor will also cry out and not be answered." Proverbs 21:13 Have you ever seen people who proclaim Jesus all day, but when it comes to giving, they find every excuse, not to part ways with their money? I wonder if they knew scripture says, "whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" 2 Cor 9:6

What about self-proclaimed Christians who just refuse to help other people in need? Well, if you have, by the time I'm done writing this you will be able to identify the difference between how religious people act, versus people who have a true relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Religion is, “I wanted a bicycle but I was broke. So instead of saving up, I stole a bike, and then asked God for forgiveness.” A real follower of Christ is, “ I surrender my life to the will of God, through the finished works of Jesus Christ. I live to dedicate my life to spreading the good news of the gospel through love, action, and truth.” Can you see the stark contrast? The one who follows Christ will live how Christ lived, and in accordance with the calling God has placed on their lives. God's will has a lot to do with how you treat other people. In fact, he says, “By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.” John 13:35

Love, what's love?

Well, In a world where the word love gets tossed around back and forth, how can we clearly define what love is? I've come to find that true love has a name and that name is Jesus Christ! He literally set the living example of how we should conduct ourselves by walking out his teachings through action and truth. His example displayed on the cross shows us exactly how we should esteem others higher than ourselves, walk in love and forgiveness, by laying our lives down for one another in accordance to his will.

In fact, scripture says “By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence.” 2 Peter 1:3 That sounds great, but what's that look like in action, and how can I apply it to

my life? The answers are found In the word of God and through the Holy Spirit God placed in us when we dedicated our lives to serving him through the finished works of Jesus Christ!

Since faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. (Rom 10:17)

I'm going to supply you with several verses that span across the entirety of the Bible. These verses will help you have a clearer understanding of what it actually looks like to walk in love, not just say I love you. When you put these into action, people will clearly be able to see that you are not just a religious person claiming Jesus for the convenience of association. They will see that you are a living representative of God's love through the finished works of Jesus Christ!

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” 1 John 3:16-18

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

1 Peter 4:8-10

“Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”
Psalms 82:3-4

“Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”
James 2:15-17

“It is a sin to despise one’s neighbor, but blessed is the one who is kind to the needy.”
Proverbs 14:21

“In reply, Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I

will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’
“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.” Luke 10:30-37

“Honor your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’ ” Matthew 19:19

“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, “Come back tomorrow and I’ll give it to you”—when you already have it with you. Do not plot harm against your neighbor, who lives trustfully near you. Do not accuse anyone for no reason— when they have done you no harm. Do not envy the violent or choose any of their ways. For the Lord detests the perverse but takes the upright into his confidence.” Proverbs 3:27-32

““Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to lose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. “If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with

the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.”

Isaiah 58:6-11

“Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.” Hebrews 13:1-3

Last but not least!

Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you. James 1:27

All praise be to God, this should begin to show you what an actual follower of Christ looks like. If you have been curious about how and what you should be doing, or what walking in love looks like, you can get a clear understanding by just a few verses provided above! I pray that something written here sticks with you as you go about living the rest of your days here on earth! You

have the ability to change so many lives with the spirit that God has placed in you!

Today is the day to stop settling for man's religion and start showing the world what it looks like to walk in a relationship with God through the finished works of Jesus Christ! God has provided us with everything we need to complete the mission he has set before us! I pray that you find the encouragement to pursue the path of righteousness that has been displayed to you today, and that we as the collective body of Christ can find unity through the love of our actions. You are blessed beyond your wildest dreams, and you are loved more than you can ever imagine! Let's go out in the world today with a renewed mind and spiritual vigor, with the mindset of being a blessing to everyone we come in contact with! Adversity, trouble, and trials will come, but Christ overcame the world, and the spirit he placed in us is stronger than the one in the world! So let's get out there and be the change we want to be, let's go be FTP!! (For The People)

TRIUMPH OVER TRIALS

Don't let the deception of some Christian's perceptions fool you, In scripture, it says "Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered."

Hebrews 5:8

Christ himself, God in a body, learned obedience through what he suffered. Many times when Christians are suffering it's written off as unresolved sin, needing prayer, more works needing to be done such as fasting, Sozo, counseling, generational curses, etc, etc. The list could literally be endless. It seems the western world has some sort of answer for all of it, oftentimes ending with the individual focusing on shortcoming instead of their savior. This can turn into an endless loop of condemnation, leaving the person worse off than ever before. Lacking confidence and assurance of their salvation through Christ's finished works.

Sadly, most people give the enemy way too much credit over every aspect of their lives. Forgetting the enemy is a defeated foe, that sin and death have lost their sting, and that the spirit within them is stronger than the one in this world. This lack of confidence can become deep-rooted and often time is a result of poor leadership and a lack of personal intimacy (relationship) with God.

Scripture tells us, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange was happening to you. But rejoice

insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed." 1 Peter 4:12-13 The issue is, most of us have never been taught to rejoice in sufferings, especially the ones related to Christ. Instead, we search for the answers of what's going wrong, and where we messed up, instead of realizing that we should be rejoicing in Christ's finished works on the cross, especially when the suffering we endure in life is Christ-related. James 1:2-3 says, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness." Joy facing trials? Who has joy in facing trials?

Who was taught growing up that we should consider it joy because the testing of our faith will produce steadfastness? When was the last time you were taught that what you were going through was ok? When was the last time you rejoiced and we're encouraged that God was refining you, and building you up, and that, "he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion on the day of Jesus Christ." Phi 1:6

Oftentimes I've heard the opposite. Oftentimes I've heard the opinions of men, especially in leadership, point out people's shortcomings instead of the finished works of their savior. I've heard several times you need to increase your walk with God, not to rest in his completed works. Though, "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.” 2 Corinthians 3:18 So why is it that some of the people that we believe to be closest to God aren’t teaching that before Christ in us that in the flesh, “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind, our sins sweep us away.” Isaiah 64:6 But now through His finished works, “He has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.” 1 Col 1:22

Without a single fault? Meditate on that for forever! God's word said it, not me. If God himself looks at you and doesn't see a single fault, what is man doing trying to convince you otherwise? Is this not the very works that would be produced in vain, the very reason why Christ came and laid his life down, that through his grace, mercy, and sacrifice, alone we would be saved. So that no man, by his works, would have anything to ever boast about? That all things have been made level at the foot of the cross, that all fall short of the glory of God, that all stand condemned without Christ in us the hope of glory! (Rhetorical)

Don't allow anyone to cause you to stray from the confidence and assurance that you have found through Christ's sacrifice. Rather, look to the ones who came before you, those who walked with Christ to set the ex-

ample of what you might expect out of life. Here's what scripture has to say about a few of them:

“Some were tortured, refusing to accept release so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in the skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.” Hebrews 11:35-38 They were mocked, flogged, chained, in prison, stoned, sawn into, killed by the sword. Does this sound similar to your life?

If you don't find that to suit your needs, since those people are nameless in scripture and might be hard to relate to, what about Christ himself? We could use Christ, but being he was faultless and sinless, you might find it hard to relate, yet in scripture, it says in Hebrews 4:15 that, “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.”

Isn't Christ's life and what he endured the greatest indication of what we should look forward to in this Christian life? If it's true that the same spirit that lives in Him, lives in us, and allows us to do the work he has done and far greater, then wouldn't it be Christ who would lead by the best example? But again, for the sake of argument, let's

look at someone who is human, has sinned, and was completely sold out for the gospel. Let's look at Paul! Let's see what Paul's life looked like when Ananias was sent to him.

The words spoken in prophecy to him through Ananias were this, "The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. -Acts 22:14-15

Knowing this, here are just a few examples of what Christ servant of the gospel endured on his walk with Christ:

Paul wrote most of the New Testament (4 or more epistles) from prison.

He was stoned by the Jews who came from Antioch and Iconium. Then they drug him out of the city. -Acts 14:19

He was bitten by a very poisonous snake while building a fire-Acts 28.

By his own words, here is a small account of what he endured.

"Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been

exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.”2 Corinthians 11:22-33

Does this sound like your life?

Why then if Christ and Paul's examples are good indicators of what is a possibility of the Christian walk if we know that 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. John 15:20

That in Christ time when “John came neither eating nor drinking, they say, 'He has a demon.' And when “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' 1 Matt 11:18-19

If Christ himself and those who came before were spoken of like this, why are we so quick to assume that there is something wrong instead of something right going on?

Notice, the ones who choose to follow God throughout all of the histories of scripture all endured extreme hardships in their walk with God. Most of which the world thought they were crazy, or demon-possessed. Christ's own family thought he was out of his mind. I could go on and list a ton of examples, but it would be almost every individual who God used through scripture.

Does anyone not find it odd that every time a man of God is near to the father, operating in the boldness of the spirit, that he is considered to be hearing from demons and not God himself? The religious of Christ day and age said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.” Matt 12:24

If this is how Christ himself was treated, why are we so quick to fall under the judgment of man, especially when we have been freed from the judgment of God, bypassing from death into life from Christ's sacrifice. This sacrifice allows us to have the Holy Spirit as a deposit guar-

antee of our internal inheritance. Why would we listen to the judgment of man over the finished works of Christ?

Do you feel like what you endure for the sake of the gospel is comparable to what those who came before you had endured? Is what you are enduring centered around God's interest or self-interest? Are you pursuing God's will for your life or your own will? Are you concerned with the will of God, or are you concerned with your will and comfort?

Instead of allowing ourselves to be under a yoke of oppression, and being entangled in sin once again by focusing on our shortcomings instead of our savior; what if we choose to look at your heart's desires when it comes to our relationship with God?

What are your prayers?

Let me pass this test, let me make more money, let my wife be nicer, let me be able to handle the stress at this high-paying job. Please bless my American wage that is higher than what 90% of other countries will ever make. Please help my family clean up the mess of the abundance we have. Watch over the dogs, the cats, and my bird, and let my team win this weekend. I'm not saying this to be condemning, it's not that these aren't genuine concerns, but are the concerns of the Father for your life, or personal gain and self-interest? What do they look like compared to the servants that came before you? Though our generations are always different, the

message and the mission have never changed. What do these prayers look like in comparison to these?

Lord let your will be done no matter the circumstances let your mercy, grace, and power reign supreme in all aspects of my life. I completely surrender all things to you, I am in complete submission to your will. Allow your gospel to be spoken through me at all times in all ways, no matter the circumstances. Lord, you reign supreme in every aspect of my life and in all things that I do. Always be the meditation of my mind. All that I am belongs to you, all that I will ever want is you to complete your works in me and through me, your portion is enough for me. My focus is on you and your mission alone. Allow me to die to self daily and have the courage to pick up my cross and follow you.

Both believers, but one seems to be running from suffering, while the other is willing to endure hardship for the sake of the gospel. But, before we start passing judgment on who needs to repent, we should look in the mirror first at our walk with Christ before trying to set the tone for how others should walk. When Christ said "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure, you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and

then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.” Matthew 7:1-5

What if the speck you saw in your brother's eye, was simply the reflection of your own log. Then once you removed the log from your own eye, if there was still a small speck to be removed, you could remove it clearly through gentle correction instead of judgment. Don't allow Christian judgment of man, no matter how Holy they may seem, to corrupt the faith and assurance you have through Christ finished works. When Paul was faced with similar issues he said, “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. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.” 1 Corinthians 4:3-5

So go in confidence and assurance that “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—” Ephesians 1:4-5. With this assurance as the foundation of our faith through Christ finished works, you will stand strong against the trials and tribulations of life and the adversity of men. You will reign in supreme confidence in Christ finished works that no matter what the judgment of man in this world

holds for you. Believe that you are firmly rooted in the finished works of Christ, righteous and blameless in his sight because you are the ambassador of Christ's love through action and in truth. What is that loving confidence rooted in?

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? 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 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.” 1 John 3:16-24

FORGET FEAR

Since the beginning of time, we were created in God's image not given a spirit of fear but we were made to be strong and courageous. The second Adam transgressed by biting into the knowledge of good and evil the whole world and everything in it changed. The first thing that we notice is fear came into the heart of man and he hid. He hid because he was afraid, and up until this point he walked with the creator of the cosmos in the garden.

Could you imagine that? The type of relationship Adam had with our Heavenly Father? The ability to walk with the lord in the cool of the day must have been one of the most amazing, maybe one of the most overlooked parts of scripture. Either way, all of that was seized and held captured by sin when Adam transgressed. His first reaction to his transgression was that immediately fell into a deep state of fear. When God saw this, he created a separation between himself and mankind until the appointed time He sent Christ to give his life on the cross. But between that time and still today for those who do not know Christ as savior, fear has and will continue to run rapidly in the hearts of men for generations.

But thanks be to God that Christ came into the world and set the captives free! Through his living sacrifice made on the cross, He renewed our mind and gave us a new spirit, the Holy Spirit the great comforter! Because of this gift of the spirit through his atonement of sin we are now able to walk empowered by faith, free from all

fear, able to complete the good works he had planned for us since the foundation of the earth was laid!

Christ completed the mission of defeating the power of sin and death completely. Now that his finished works are accessible to all mankind, it's up to us to accept his sacrifice, believe it, receive it, and show others how to do the same. To show others that through Christ they can be set free from the bondage of sin, anxiety, fear, and any other emotions not born from the spirit of God.

But, before we can go and show others, we first must be able to understand it ourselves, and allow our lives to be a reflection of such truth and not just through our words! Seems easier said than done right? How many people have you ever encountered in life that are always, every second, fully free of fear, worry, anxiety, etc? I can say not a single person I've ever encountered on a personal level. I'm not saying it's not possible, but I believe it could be that that's how God intended it so that we would help carry each other's burdens, and remind each other to walk in love by being those representatives at all times. How do we do that? How do we get rid of fear? By walking in love.

The second we choose to walk in love we eliminate all access to fear because perfect love casts out all fear. Don't take my word for it, you will see it's clearly written in scripture. Yet it seems the only way to walk in true love comes from a renewed spirit and a renewed mind through the finished works of Christ.

Once we accept Christ and surrender our lives to Him, we have access to the Holy Spirit, also known as the Great Comforter! Access to the Holy Spirit seems to be the easier part of the equation, the second part, of a renewed mind is the part that takes daily effort. The spirit is a gift given, the changing of the mind is a choice made through free will to surrender the old ways for the new.

Your body was never meant to live in fear, fear paralyzes you, it makes you live a life of bondage, it can crush you, and turn your life into a horrible existence, and if you let it take over, it could lead to worse. But don't waste time choosing to dwell on the negativeness that comes from fear, because through Christ perfect love casts out all fear! That's right, when you are walking in love it will cast out all fear! The second you choose to love you defeat fear, when you choose faith you crush doubt, the choices are yours through free will, and you and you alone make the choice to choose love and faith daily. What's the best way to do this?

Well, scripture says faith comes by hearing and hearing the word God. So first we have to activate faith to believe God's word, so our first step would be to meditate on God's word daily. When we meditate on God's word it allows faith to sink into our spirits and let us stand firm on the word, which we know the gates of hell can't prevail against because it lasts forever! That allows us the

boldness to stand on his tried and true promises, through faith we have the ability to activate.

Next would be to hold all thoughts captive to Christ. I'm talking about all thoughts, such as imagination, day-dreams, any and all thoughts must be brought into submission. As scripture says we are to focus on things that are kind, good, gentle, uplifting, things of love, against such things there is no law. So if we are focused on the word we are increasing in faith and in our increased faith leads us to a disciplined mind.

The next part would be to clearly identify the difference between the voice of our Heavenly Father and the voice of the enemy.

It clearly says in scripture that the sheep know the Shepherd's voice, so we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of lies are complete opposites. Never allow yourself to be subjected to the influence of the enemy. Oftentimes the enemy will use the voice of impure vessels to try to influence you. Planting doubt in your mind, causing you to react in a self-seeking way.

Oftentimes the voice of the enemy will try to influence you to be prideful when you feel wronged. He will seek to get you to speak poorly about others, to reach out and try to get opinions of weak men in faith, in an attempt to destroy whatever good is in another. The enemy's voice is always the accuser, he is prideful, he is always self-seeking, and operates out of a spirit of of-

fense and rejection. He pours out threats, lies, and impurities. His objective is to kill, steal, and destroy.

But the voice of God is one of love and forgiveness. Though The Lord wants perfect peace and unity in the body, he will be quick to expose wickedness. You will know the difference between the two voices because one seeks to love and heal, the other seeks to destroy and kill.

If you find yourself in a position where for some reason you lack the assurance of if what you are hearing is God's voice, compare it to scripture. God's word will never be divided against itself. Compare it to God's love, the example being Christ. "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."1 Corinthians 13:4-7

If it's condemning instead of forgiving. If it's pointing the finger in blame, instead of praying for others' shortcomings. If it's slandering someone's name out of anger, instead of finding peace. It's a spirit of inequity, not of God.

Recap to ridding yourself of fear:

1. Walk in love through meditating on God's word.

2. Hold all thoughts captive through Christ
3. Identify your heavenly father's voice, and speak God's word over your life.

Here's a prayer that I believe will help bless you and keep your focus:

Lord, I thank you that your finished works have fully defeated the power of sin and death. I thank you for perfect peace at this moment through the Holy Spirit. Thank you for taking all my thoughts captive in obedience to your will. Thank you father for your love and kindness, I thank you for the protection and the wisdom you've given me to overcome this situation. I am blessed at this very moment with your peace and unconditional love. I will always walk in the comfort and assurance of your finished works. So it's so in Jesus name

Short version: Through the blood of Christ I am anointed, appointed, elected, and protected. Through Christ's resurrection, I am made whole, I am righteous and redeemed. I have complete peace and all fear is completely defeated through you at this very moment. Thank you for your perfect peace so it's so in Jesus Name

ENEMIES

“But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. Luke 6:27-28

First off, I love that we have the God-given ability to meditate on the living word of God! All of the resources God has given us in this day and age allow us to dig deep into the details of scripture! God willing, over the next week we will be able to cover Luke 6:27-36, but for now we are going to review 6:27-28.

Notice from the start of this verse it says, “To those who hear, Love your enemies.” Someone might say how does one love his enemy? Without a long explanation, you can see what God defines as love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

“Doing good to those who hate you,” is the action you take from implementing the same scripture! Look it up!!!

“Bless those who curse you?”

Why would someone be cursing a follower of Christ in the first place? Aren't they supposed to be some of the kindest, loving, forgiving, generous people in the world? If they are following Christ wouldn't they themselves be like him as followers? The answer is yes, they would be like Christ! But, to be fair, you have to take into account how Christ was treated by the world.

With there being far too many examples to use, we can clearly see that the spirit of God was looked at as an enemy to the flesh of man. They said he was the prince of demons, his own family thought he was crazy, he was abandoned by all of his followers, and then sent to be crucified on a tree by the ruling authorities of that time. We know that he was righteous, yet the world cast him out as if he was scum.

Knowing this is how they treated Christ, we can look to the world of God to see how followers will be treated. Here's a few examples of scripture:

“Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.”
Luke 6:26

“It is enough for students to be like their teachers and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!” Matthew 10:25

“Our lives are a Christ-like fragrance rising up to God. But this fragrance is perceived differently by those who are being saved and by those who are perishing. To those who are perishing, we are a dreadful smell of death and doom. But to those who are being saved, we are a life-giving perfume. And who is adequate for such a task as this?” 2 Corinthians 2:15-17

Seeing that these are the examples set, we know what we have to look forward to from the world if we are truly followers of Christ. Though this may be tough, he has given us the spirit to endure and works all things towards the good of those who love Him.

Let's continue!

“Pray for those who abuse you”

Before I jump right in, we need to take a second to gain a positive perspective and filter everything through the lens of God's love. Through that lens, we will see that we have an amazing opportunity to meet people right where they are, and see them through the lens God has for them, and where he intends for them to be. Though they have the free will to make whatever choice they please, scripture says God is long-suffering hoping all come to repentance! That's truly powerful!

Knowing this truth, we as his ambassadors have the ability to stand in the face of adversity and do the same works Christ did and far greater, through praying for those who abuse us? Yes, and more so! Oftentimes when we are abused, our flesh has a natural reaction to meet force with force, or to run away from the abuse to isolation. Both responses can lead to detrimental results if the motives of our hearts are impure.

When he says, “pray for those who abuse you.” He's offering us a way to put him in charge of the situation and not rely on ourselves, but instead trust him to reign supreme over the situation. That doesn't mean to passively accept the abuse, the reaction God requires of us is to pray.

Now, before we go any further, I must note that due to several translations, the word used here is “abuse.” In our generation, this could take on many various forms and could cause a misinterpretation of the original intention of the word. Because many people seek to make multiple translations, they are forced to use other synonyms that can sometimes be a bit of a stretch from the original meaning.

So, if you want to truly understand scripture go to the source of Hebrew and Greek interlinear bibles for references. Even then, if we are being extremely honest and transparent, it’s difficult to fit some 5 million Greek words into roughly 1 million English words. But the original word used from abuse is “μισοῦσιν,” which means to hate. So it should read in the original translation “pray for those who hate you.” To me, that’s far different than those who abuse you, but it’s just my opinion. Nevertheless, we are called to seek God and his will by taking action not in revenge, but through the power of prayer. I hope all this makes sense!

Now, we have an amazing opportunity to go into the world knowing that the spirit God has placed in us is stronger than the spirit of the world! We know that true followers are going to face extreme adversity, and that’s the cost of picking up our cross and following while we live on this earth. Christ himself is coming to make all things new, and until then we have the ability to be His ambassadors here on earth!

We have been commissioned with the task of spreading the good news of the gospel to all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit. We have the opportunity as ambassadors, to be the living representatives of love that we have been called to be, through Christ's finished works!

Stay strong and encouraged, surround yourself with like-minded individuals, having no root of division among you. Be strengthened by one another through the edification of God's word and the Holy Spirit, spurring each other to do the good works he has called us to do before he laid the foundations of the earth. I pray that each of you finds peace and assurance in God's finished works, never forsaking the assembly, and always pushing towards the common goal of unity in the body.

SUFFERING

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which will be revealed toward us.” Romans 8:18

What is it that you're going through? What pridefully takes you away from interdependency, and isolates you in pride? What are you afraid to bring into the light? We all have trials and tribulations throughout life that cause hardships and sufferings. We see that by Christ's example of his life on earth, we would have similar results. Not only did he produce an amazing harvest, but he also produced a ton of adversity. The only way he conquered it was through keeping his eyes on the prize of glorifying his father in Heaven.

I learned this weekend that if adversity is staring you right in the face, tilt your head a little to the left or right, and look right past it. You never have to face it eye to eye, you don't have to look at it, when God gave you the ability to look past it. When we keep our eyes on the goal and not the distraction, we control the reaction and oftentimes the outcome as well.

Is the obstacle still there? Absolutely! But, with a heart full of faith, and your gaze set on the prize, you can rest assured as stated at the beginning of this message, “That for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

All things? Yes, all things! That means when you change your perspective from negative to positive, the harsh adversity that you're facing is actually there not for you to retreat, but it's there for you to defeat. These obstacles are there to help shape and mold you into the amazing individual you have been called to be. "Well, you don't understand the obstacles I've faced in life. That blanket statement doesn't apply to the harsh unfair, evil and cruel treatment I've faced in the world."

Though I don't have an answer for everything, I know humans have been given free will and a certain amount of time to either choose God or do as they please. I know and believe that the harshness of the world is not a reflection of God's heart, but the depravity of man's evil desires. With that depravity comes suffering, and nobody likes suffering. But, let's take a moment and read what the word of God has to say about it, and how we should react to it:

"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Not only that but:

"More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and

hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." Romans 5:3-5

But it's so hard to deal with at times, I just feel like giving up!

In the world, you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. Psalm 34:19

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,
2 Corinthians 4:17

Why is that? Because in the end
"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." Revelations 21:4

So please know, you are not alone in the world no matter how isolated you may seem. There are people all throughout the world that are followers of Christ who are going through the same, similar or worse situations, How do I know? "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted," 2 Timothy 3:12 That means all of us who are seeking out God through

action and in truth, will be persecuted, and persecution causes suffering.

I hope that this encourages you and gives you strength while you continue to shine bright as a representative of love! Do yourself a favor and keep yourself rooted in the word of God, surrounded by the brethren, never forsaking gathering together, so that you may spur each other to do the good works God has prepared for you to do in advance.

Remember to Consider it a **JOY**, and **REJOICE** in these light and momentary afflictions!

May the Lord guide you and keep you forever and always! With scripture in closing: "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2

FAITH

Be encouraged to let your light shine! God predestined you to do the good works that he has prepared you to do since before the foundation of the earth was laid. This is a truth worth repeating continuously until it resonates within every fiber of your being. The repetition itself is the very key to human success. It creates the disciplines necessary for us to achieve the heights of success in any category of life.

But the repetition of what? For a follower of Christ, it's to repeat the lifestyle of an ambassador, to be a living representative of Christ's love through action and in truth. But, oftentimes many followers are repeating the process of worldly desires and not the will of God. This leaves people professing Christ's name, but repeating the same worldly thoughts, words, and actions that lead them to depravity in the first place.

If this is the case, what can we do to solve the issue, so that we aren't spinning our wheels, but are actually catching true traction?

The answer to that question is faith. But not faith in the God of your understanding. You know the one you hear other people talk about, their opinions, pastors, teachers, tv shows, etc. Sure, there might be some serious truth in there, but I'm talking about true faith. The type of faith that only comes from spending time walking in a divine relationship with the Lord, through his word.

Many people say they have faith in God, but they don't know his word. So what do they actually have faith in, and who is the God they are actually serving? Is it the true God of Issac, Abraham, and Jacob? Or, the God of their own appetite? It's very easy to name your indulgences Jesus Christ and pray to them, but a good tree will be evident by the fruit it produces.

Why do you think that on judgment day, God says to those who said they prophesied in his name and cast out demons, "Depart from me workers of iniquity, for I never knew you?"

It's not the ones far from him he says this too, it's those that are lukewarm. "But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth!" Revelations 3:16

So again, how do we know we are serving the one true God? The answer is still faith, and the way we display that faith is through repeatedly spending time in God's word.

But where can I find faith?

The answer is found in Romans 10:17 "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." Scripture plainly states that faith comes from hearing, and hearing the word of God. So if you are continuously in the word, you are communing with God, and increasing faith.

How?

Because he himself that is the word, never contradicts the word that is written. Because what's written is the living word of God. But, if you are consistently living outside of a relationship with the word, you are probably hearing the voice of your own desires, rather than the will of God.

I truly believe as scripture says, that we are to study to show ourselves approved. We can accomplish this through faith working itself out through consistent repetition. I want to encourage you to stand firm on the pure unadulterated word of Jesus Christ. I pray that your faith is increased immeasurably, so much so that every insecurity, every doubt, and every other misleading opportunity be removed in Jesus' name. I pray that you find confidence in the word of the living God. Not relying on others to interpret the word of God for you, but for you to diligently seek him in all ways in all things, depending on his word to guide you.

I pray for an abundance of peace, grace, and mercy, to fill your mind with the courage it takes to face the persecution that every follower of Christ must endure. Hold on, be strong, and be of great heart, for these light and momentary afflictions count for nothing in comparison to what The Lord has in store for those who love him. Be bold in all ways, while you continue to practice the daily repetition of walking with God through his word. May God be with you all days, always showering you with

peace, grace, mercy, and abundance. In Jesus' name,
so it is so.

LIVING ON MISSION

God has blessed us with the opportunity to spread the good news of the gospel to the ends of the earth! We know that no matter what we face, he is with us every step of the way. Though this path is what we have been called to, it is not for the faint of heart. Christ himself said in Luke 14:33, "In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples."

This isn't a popular Sunday morning pastor's passage. This is the kind of message that runs people away. Why? Because it's difficult to truly pick up your cross, deny yourself daily, and follow Christ. I've noticed the closer I get to Christ, that some of my closest friends don't even call anymore. Instead, I've noticed more people coming for what they need, and then they go away.

But, scripture helped remind me this is exactly what happened to Christ in his ministry throughout scripture, and it's very similar to what you see when Jesus fed the 5,000.

"Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." John 6:26-27

In the same way, many people will come to glean off what you can personally provide them, but as soon as they have had their fill they will be on their way. Especially when they realize it requires true dedication and sacrifice to follow Christ, that's when most turn to go back out into the world. But, the more we get to know God, the more we will participate in his persecutions and sufferings. The Bible has much to say about them, but here are just a few:

“Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man Luke 6:22

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Matthew 5:10-12

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange was happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”

1 Peter 4:12-14

How amazing is that? The word of God explicitly lets you know that as you draw near to him, you will experience these hardships as a follower of Christ. 1 John 3:13 says, “Do not be surprised if the world hates you.” It goes on to say in Luke 6:26 “Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.” Are you starting to see the picture being painted here?

So if we have given up everything to pursue him, and we are being persecuted, how are we supposed to deal with these hardships?

By looking to the example set by those who came before us. Paul states in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

If that's not enough of an example, let's look to Christ himself to see what he has to say:

“In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

So if you find yourself lonely, suffering, being persecuted for your faith, know that you are in good company. Look what Hebrews 11:37-38 says about our ancestors, “They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were

killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”

So don't think for a single second that you are the only one enduring persecution and suffering. It's the enemy that tries to isolate you to make you feel alone. “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.” 1 Peter 5:9

Instead of allowing him to gain traction, “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words

may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.” Ephesians 6:11-20

Remember, you were created for such a time as this. No matter who believes in you or who stands beside you, you have God almighty as your shield, rampart, vindication, and supplication at all times. You are blessed, righteous, and redeemed; A co-heir, predestined as a child of the most high, to do the good works he has prepared for you in advance. You are righteous and blameless in the sight of the Lord.

“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.” Proverbs 4:23-27

God is with you this very moment, just continue to push. For God, himself is making level paths for your feet. Do not retreat, do not back down, do not surrender for even a moment. Stand tall man of God, this is the day the Lord has chosen, this is your time to shine.

SEVEN STEPS OF UNITY

If there is, therefore, any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassion, make my joy full, by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through rivalry or through conceit, but in humility, each counting others better than himself; each of you not just looking to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Philippians 2:1-4

Where can we even begin with a verse like this? I honestly believe prayer is the only way. If we are transparent with ourselves when reading this verse, it's so deep, I'm unsure if we could swim far enough down to find the bottom of all of it. But, if we start from the top, I believe God can reveal some amazing things to us as we begin to tackle this amazing piece of scripture.

- 1. To be like-minded**
- 2. To have the same love**
- 3. Being in one accord**
- 4. Being of one mind**
- 5. Doing nothing out of rivalry or through conceit**
- 6. In humility, count others better than yourself**
- 7. Not looking after yourself only, but also for the well-being of others.**

If these 7 things listed were performed on a daily basis, it would bring unity to the full body of Christ. These 7

things aren't just a list of character attributes we should aspire to achieve, they are the keys to breaking down every stronghold that seeks to divide the body of Christ. Honestly, not only the body of Christ, the entire world would find peace if each of us implemented these daily. But, let's start with the

1. The body of Christ being like-minded. If we were like-minded there wouldn't be denominations, segregation, gossip, and slander amongst the brethren. We would find a way to come together and find common ground, focusing on the key fundamentals of Christ's sacrifice, and how to share that with the world through actions and in truth.

2. What about having the same love?

The love we are called to have is plainly stated in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor 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." A life dedicated to just those few verses is a life well lived, without a second being wasted.

3/4. Being in one accord and of one mind is very similar to the prayer Christ prayed in John 17. That we be in Christ as Christ is in the Father. That's a unity to the likes of which the world has never seen!

With all that said, let's slow down for a minute and really hone in on this one!

5. “Do nothing out of rivalry or through conceit.” An entire series of books could be written on these two alone. Let's answer what rivalry is by definition, not today's interpretation, but the original Greek translation. The word used for rivalry is “Eritheía.” According to Strong's Concordance, the usage is: (the seeking of followers and adherents by means of gifts, the seeking of followers, hence) ambition, rivalry, self-seeking; a feud, faction.

Seeking followers? Adherents: (someone who supports a particular party, person, or set of ideas.) through gifting!? Doesn't this sound like the church of the western world? Doesn't this sound like social media!? Doesn't this sound like... Well, you get the point.

So, what about ambition and being self-seeking, causing feuds and factions? Isn't it amazing how much gets revealed when you don't speed right over a word? Instead, you stop and take the time to look up its original meaning and the intended use of it before being retranslated. Don't forget for a second that the Greek language has over 5 million words. Imagine trying to condense 5 million words into the English language that has roughly only 1 million words. Some things might get lost in translation right?

Take some time to really meditate on that usage of the word “rivalry” in scripture. It's really, really, really heavy

stuff. I believe time, honesty, and transparency spent with The Lord, as well as the brethren, would change entire ministries off of just that one part of scripture. Especially if they are truthfully sold out for the gospel. I pray this is hitting some of you as hard as it hit me and more so.

Drum roll, please!.....

Last but not least,

6/7.“In humility, count others better than yourself, not looking after yourself only, but also for the well-being of others.”

I hope and pray that God gives you the foresight to implement everything listed here for the days to come. I pray that you seek out the wisdom in these verses and allow yourself to be open to the opportunity to serve others. Through humility, I pray that God gives you the insight, revelation, knowledge, and understanding needed for what he has prepared for you. I pray you take the time to meditate on the words that have been written here today, and that you find encouragement, and seek out opportunities to share this with others.

Let's continue to spread seed and wait patiently on God to provide the harvest. Let's continue standing as a bold symbol of God's finished works of Jesus Christ. Remaining unified as the true pure unadulterated body of Christ. Grace, peace, and mercy be with you all of your days.

SELFISH AMBITION

“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” James 3:14-18

I believe anything worth doing is worth evaluating, especially when it comes to our personal lives. If Christ says his yoke is easy and his burden is light, then why is it that sometimes we feel like following Christ is so hard? Is it that the world is that difficult, or are we following Christ for what we believe he can do for us? Think about that for a second, if everything you ever prayed for never came to you, would you still follow Christ? Are you praying for his will to be done, or yours? If it's his will, then why do we immediately have negative reactions when we face adversity? Is it that we pray for God to have his way until his way doesn't line up with our way, then all of the sudden we don't feel blessed we feel stressed? When we feel stressed we often look for comfort in the flesh. So.....

How about relationships? Are the people he's placed in your life not following him how you feel they should so

then you want to give up on them? Are you tired of dealing with the same results over and over, so much so that you isolate yourself in search of new outlets that might not be leading to God's Glory? Is that God's expectation or your expectation of others?

Even more so, is it possible that you've begun to self-loathe your shortcomings, and because of that, you push people away instead of wanting them to stay? Do any of these sound familiar, make you angry, or affect you in a negative way? You might be dealing with bitterness, jealousy, or selfish ambition.

Might be, that instead of living for God's will, you have found yourself bitter due to jealousy, and are actually pursuing selfish ambition? The verse above clearly states that wisdom does not come from above, but it's earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. Because wherever jealousy and selfish ambition exists, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

Now, you could give up, or get in. You can fight or fail. You can be a victim or a victor. You can learn a lesson or keep stressing. But blessings aren't going to come to those who are just praying for their will to be done. You may advance according to worldly standards, but never reach the fulfillment you desire in your heart. That fulfillment only comes through Christ and Christ alone. If we pay close attention to this verse, ultimately the pursuit of a Christian should be to find the wisdom that is pleasing to God. The wisdom he allows us to have so

we will know which direction to go in life. I mean isn't that what a Christian wants? To do what is pleasing in God's sight, and know that the path they are on is the narrow path that God wants them to take? If that's the case, how do you find the answers and know they are from God?

By walking in relationship with him through his word. Not just praying to the God of your understanding, but submitting to the one true God we find in scripture. If faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of Christ, then his word will never contradict what is already written. The prescription for what you need is to feed on the word daily and search out God's wisdom. Proverbs 2:1-12 says:

“My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints. Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path; for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; discretion will watch over you, understanding will

guard you, delivering you from the way of evil, from men of perverted speech,” Proverbs 2:1-12

If that’s not enough of an answer, What does the Bible have to say about wisdom?

Here are just a few verses:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction Proverbs 1:7

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him James 1:5

Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. Proverbs 3:13-18

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. James 3:17

The point is, if bitter jealousy and selfish ambition are worldly, unspiritual, and demonic, then we should replace what is unspiritual with what is spiritual, and the

only spirit we want to have in us is the spirit of God. That spirit is also known as the Holy Spirit, and through the Holy Spirit, we can ask God to impart wisdom to us through his word, showing us how to keep walking the path of righteousness that he desires for us to take. I pray you seek to uproot every impurity by turning away from your distractions and focusing on his actions. Not focusing on your shortcomings, but focusing on your savior. Not your behavior, but your right standing in Christ. Only when you can see yourself as Christ sees you, will you be able to love yourself enough to love others properly.

Know that you don't need to be jealous or self-seeking, because everything amazing that you are, have, will have, or will ever be, is found in God through Christ Jesus alone. Be encouraged, love yourself by seeing yourself how God sees you. When he sees you he sees his Son, righteous, blameless, and full of love. Remember, it's Christ in us, the hope of glory. The whole reason why the story exists. Persist in love, showing forgiveness to all. Keep no records of wrong and continue to walk the righteous way.

ANGER

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:31-32

But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire Matthew 5:22
How many times have we let anger get the best of us? How many times have we called somebody foolish, or used a similar term like an idiot, stupid, moron, dense, etc?

How often do we find ourselves angry, and regretting things we have said or done. How many times have you allowed anger to take things too far? If you have at any time experienced any of these feelings, maybe it's time that we look at a couple of solutions.

Here's three I have thought of that might be helpful:

- 1.** Shut up and walk away. Think about how many things could have been avoided in your life by just doing this. Seriously, take some time to come back and meditate on this one. Shutting up and walking away gives you enough time to gain composure and look past the trespass, or to re-address the situation with a clearer mind.

2. In the moment, speak over yourself, “Thank you, God, I hold all my thoughts captive to you who strengthens me.” This allows you to regain control of the moment by choosing worship over wrath, and gratitude over a bad attitude.

3. Give God complete and utter control of the situation by allowing him to be your vindication over any impure situation. Safeguarding you from shortcomings, and allowing you the rest to progress, Instead of over obsessing about the situation

Bonus Pro Tip: If you’re not gonna be mad about it 5 years from now, why waste the precious time you have now by allowing it to steal your energy.

When addressing anger, scripture says, “Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil” Proverbs 37:8

I love that verse! Seriously, think about it, what an incredible reminder it is. Refrain from anger, because anger leads to fretting, fretting leads to a lack of trust in God, and the outcome of not trusting God with the situation leads to evil! Ain’t nobody got time that lol

Think about it! Even on a mild scale, have you ever gotten so mad that even though you choose to walk away, later on, you start thinking about the situation so much that you begin to re-enact the events that took place?

Possibly even verbalizing all the things you felt like you should have said in the first place?

Things like:

“Man, if I could go back I would have”

“What I should have said was”

**“Wait till I see them again because,
what I’m gonna do next time is!”**

Sound familiar? Soooo, I’m the only Christian who’s ever had that issue? I think not.

If we are honest with ourselves, we are all too often probably guilty of standing in the mirror and re-in-acting situations of the past, holding a grudge and/or bringing it back up way more than we should. Why? Because we won’t let it go! Since we won’t let it go, our thoughts take control and make our brains feel like we are reliving the moment. Because of that, you may feel flustered, be full of adrenaline, shaky, or just scatterbrained, and lacking rest because you’re obsessed with what happened, or the current state you are going through.

All of these symptoms can be resolved over time by trusting that God has complete and utter control over the entire situation at hand. Though this statement doesn’t cover absolutely every single scenario, we still know that James 1:20 says, “The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God“

And that,

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” Proverbs 15:1

The solution:

“You must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth” Colossians 3:8

Notice how anger is first on the list in this last verse? Pay attention to what follows, “wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Most of these are self-explanatory, so I won’t spend too much time on them, but notice at the end it says obscene talk. Scripture clearly states in Matthew 15:11, “it’s not what enters a man’s mouth that defiles him, but what comes out of it. The writer here is trying to impart wisdom so that you will avoid fleshly anger, which as stated before, does not produce righteousness, and keeps you from defiling yourself.

I know this is probably a lot to take in, but I hope you find it beneficial to your walk with Christ. Take some time to put it into action, and see what happens! I want to encourage you that we’ve all felt this feeling at some point and it’s not that we weren’t intended not to feel anger, but as scripture says in Ephesians 4:26-27 “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.”

So as Elsa sang in the first Frozen movie “Let it go, let it go!” It’s to one’s glory to overlook a trespass, and com-

plaining doesn't get you anywhere anyway. So, for the majority of the situations we face, we have enough here to proactively protect ourselves from a ton of potential problems. I'm personally praying that each one of you takes what we have reviewed, apply it to your personal lives, and help teach others to do the same. Each of us are only a couple of good actions away from making the whole world a better place.

GOD'S WAY

“If you let your actions determine your life, God's actions never will.” Bold statement huh? But, facts are facts, and when the true unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ is revealed to a man's heart, he has the ability to accept or reject the truth. Little do most people know, because it's rarely preached, you're not just making a one-time decision. You will be making the same decision day by day, hour by hour, second by second. The decision is to either choose God's way or the way of the world.

I'll say it again. “If you let your own actions determine your life, God's actions never will.”

Someone might say, “Sounds good as a catchphrase, but honestly, what does that even mean?”

It means that God sent his only begotten son, to lay his life down in place of all our sins, to become the sacrificial atonement for all mankind. Simply put Christ died so that we may have life, an abundant life leading to eternal glory. See when we through faith accept this truth into our lives, we receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit then teaches us through God's word, what our mission, purpose, and calling is in life.

Our mission then becomes, to spread the good news of the gospel to the ends of the earth. Our purpose is to be representatives of love through action and in truth. Our calling: is to use our time, talents, and resources, to glorify God in everything we do. What it means is, we stop

living for selfish gain, and retrain ourselves to love others as servants for God's glory.

As scripture says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Anyone in Christ is a new creation, the old has gone and the new has come. We once lived for selfish gain, now we live to give.

Because of Faith in Christ, we are now able to serve him with the specific gifting that he has placed in us. Scripture says in Romans 12:4-8 "For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness."

Ok, that covers my gifting, but what am I supposed to do for actual work?

That's a great question! That same question, almost more than any other, used to rack my brain like crazy when I was first saved. Literally, from the second I was saved, I felt a huge desire to want to please God with everything that I do, but I didn't know what work to do

that would be pleasing to God until I read Colossians 3:16-17

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Whatever I do? Yes, whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father. God has ultimately given us the free will, to take the allotted amount of time we have to seek him out. We can choose free will to go partake of the worldly ways, or we can choose to submit our free will to our father in Heaven. Scripture says in 2 Timothy 2:2

“In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master, and prepared to do any good work.”

Those who cleanse themselves of the ways of the world become instruments intended for the special purpose of the Lord.

If that's not enough, let me explain to you what God showed me in a vision when I was trying to figure out what to do with my life. He showed me Grand Theft Auto. Not promoting the video game, but this was a reference point he obviously knew I would be familiar with. In that video game, you have the ability to roam free or choose the mission mode designed for the game. You have a certain amount of health and resources, and it's up to you what you choose to do.

If you choose free will, you are on your own to do whatever you choose with the life you have. But, if you choose mission mode, your life now becomes a part of the storyline it was intended to be a part of. You can die in free will, and you can die on mission mode, the choice is ultimately up to you. The great difference between real life and this game is that the storyline on Grand Theft Auto and God's will are a lot different. In real life, God meets you exactly where you are. Though you may have been free-roaming the world, through Christ's sacrifice, you are now able to enter into story mode. God then begins to use what you have been through, and that is available to you in that very moment.

God's amazing love, grace, and mercy meet you where you are at, but he loves you enough not to let you stay there. How amazing is our God, I hope you give him praise today. If for some reason you are still struggling with the direction to go, here are 5 simple steps that might help you make that clear.

1. Pray - What is God's will for my life? How can I leverage my time, talents, and resources to glorify God the most?

2. Focus - Once you've determined what God has called you to do, focus on that calling and then eliminate every distraction that would stop you from reaching the destination he has planned for you.

3. Plan - Strategically write down everything that is necessary for you to complete the goal God has placed before you. Once everything is written, start listing these things in order. I highly suggest focusing on the 20% of things that will get you 80% of the way. The rest will follow accordingly.

4. Execute - Create a daily routine of tangible mini-goals that track the progress of the pursuit of your main goal. As you continue to collect data along the way, you will be able to evaluate your progress. This allows you to get rid of what isn't as helpful, and replace it with new methods that leverage a favorable outcome. Anything worth doing is evaluating, so tracking data is one of the most important things you can do to help you achieve the mission set before you!

5. Repeat the process

My advice is Like what Brian McKnight said in his song, "If ever my work is done, then I start back at one." You get the point! I pray God blesses you with insight, revelation, knowledge, and understanding, as you diligently

continue to pursue him each day. May his love, mercy, and grace bring you to comfort in the spirit, and the boldness to finish the mission, and achieve your calling at the highest level possible on this side of heaven. May you be blessed, and all of your days be productive for God's glory, in Jesus' precious and holy name. Grace and peace be yours in abundance!

REACHING THE LOST

It says in scripture John 6:44 “For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and on the last day I will raise them up.” Pay attention and you would do well to notice that this statement was during Christ’s time on earth, before the resurrection, and before the Holy Spirit was given to us.

That scripture can easily be misinterpreted and can leave large margins for error. It’s easy to say, “I can’t draw them near to him, only God can.” But, we have been called to “To do the work of an evangelist” 2 Timothy 4:5. Matthew 28:18-20 “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.”

“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!” Romans 10:14-15

Are you starting to get the picture here?

There’s no such thing as a private relationship with Jesus. Your relationship with Christ is meant to be a public

spectacle for all to see. It's easy to make the excuse of, "Only God can draw them near," but to those of you who choose to go against scripture and not do the work of an evangelist... My question is, though you already stand in error if your point had validity, wouldn't it be rooted in scriptural truth?

Isn't the same spirit that lives in Christ now living in you? Am I making that up, or is that Romans 8:11? And if that scripture is true, then didn't Jesus also say "Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these." That's scripture also, correct? John 14:12 to be exact.

Doesn't scripture also say:

"To whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.—Colossians 1:2"

Is that not the answer to, "Only God can draw them near?" Is Christ being in us? Remember the beginning of this message? The part where when Christ made that statement it was before his resurrection, and ascension back to heaven? See, when Christ gave us the Holy Spirit it was the deposit guarantee of our entire inheritance with God through Christ! Not only that, but now the same spirit that lives in Christ lives in us! As Colossians say's, "Christ in us is the hope of glory."

Since only God can draw them near, he placed himself in you through the Holy Spirit to go draw others near! It's your God-given opportunity as a true follower of Christ to be an ambassador of his good news! It's the joyful duty of spreading the gospel. There is not room for excuses in the kingdom of heaven, because "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." 2 Peter 1:3

Listen, I know it's uncomfortable to share your faith. But, God gave you the great comforter for a reason. He knew you would be uncomfortable. But nothing worth value comes cheap, and most things worth doing are difficult at times. Yet God has given you the amazing opportunity to represent him in all that you do, while you are here on this earth. You literally have been blessed with the opportunity to represent Christ in everything that you do. The great commission was not the mission of a few men, rather it was the commission sent to all believers by Christ through God The Father himself. "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" 2 Corinthians 5:19

I'm encouraging you at this very moment to make the uncomfortable your new comfort. You don't have to go hold a sign and scream at people in parks lol. But, if you would just take the time to study God's word you would realize, a life without Christ is not a life at all. You were created to interrupt people's lives with the gospel. You

are there to be an absolute blessing to everyone you encounter, by showing them what a renewed life through Christ looks like.

If it's not all about you, and it's truly about him, then remember that "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." 2 Peter 3:9

If you've read the New Testament you know that Christ speaks about hell often. When you read what hell is described as it's horrible beyond imagination. Imagine an internal existence void of the presence of God. Eternity without God, that's worse than any horror movie that could ever be made. This is not a guilt trip, but I truly hope you remember that every time you look into the eyes of a lost soul that is far from Christ. There is no favoritism and all of us were dead in our transgressions. But Jesus didn't come to make bad people good, he came to make dead people live.

This is your opportunity to be the torchbearer of your generation. God has a mission, purpose, and calling for your life. It's time to have the courage to follow it. I pray that you boldly represent God in all matters, in everything that you do, you do for God and his glory. His generosity has been bestowed upon us, so that we may be able to live a life that is richly filled with his abundance of faith, love, hope, grace, and mercy. May the peace of

God rest upon you, and wisdom and discernment be your guide.

I pray you leverage all your time, talents, and resources for the kingdom of heaven. The time is short, and your opportunity is now. Let's go show the world what true ambassadors of Christ really look like. Let's go show the world what it means to love free of judgments and condemnation. Let's allow God in us, to draw them near, showing no favoritism, but making the gospel available to everyone freely.

Someone might say, "I want to reach people with the gospel, but I don't know how to do it"

Plant a seed of love by being present, listening until asked a question. Extending a helping hand, and a shoulder to cry on. Point them to encouraging words through scripture. If they aren't willing to read the bible yet and you feel this book has helped you in any way, send them a copy of it. Just be patient, free of expectation, and represent love no matter the outcome!

SET FREE

Galatians 6:8 “For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption. But he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”

Where’s your focus?

Is it in the ways of the world? Trust me when I say, no man chooses evil because it’s evil; It’s the bi-product the world produces through the happiness he seeks. Read that again slowly this time. See, peaks and valleys will come and go, but we must know, as the scripture in Galatians 6:8 says, “When we sow in the flesh, we reap from corruption.” Yet the alternative is clear, we have the ability to reap through the Holy Spirit, and what we reap is eternal life.

But, to sow seed in the flesh, we must understand the flesh; and to sow seed in The Spirit, we must understand the seeds of The Spirit. Thankfully for the word of God, this isn’t open for just man’s interpretation, instead, it is clearly spoken on directly in Galatians 5:13-26

“For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don’t use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. The whole law can be summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out!

Beware of destroying one another. So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what

your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.

But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses. When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another."

Thank God for scripture! Serving each other humbly in love, did you notice that? Servitude of love, through loving your neighbor as yourself, is the completion of the law! The entire bible is centered around that one recur-

ring theme! God forgives us of our shortcomings, missed steps, and failures; then clearly identifies how he wants us to live, by setting the example through his son Jesus Christ.

Yet, in just a few verses later, we clearly see it state, “The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.” That last part is kinda wild according to what translation you read. King James says, “So that ye would not do the things ye would.” Implying we would be choosing the opposite of the spirit. Why? Romans 8:5-8 “Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.”

Think about that for a second, without The Holy Spirit we are fully deprived and in complete loss. I mean be honest with yourself, what are your natural inclinations and cravings? Are you truthfully always full of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control? Or are you naturally pulling yourself back from the opposite of that at most times?

When answering that question for your own life, it may be easy to want the world to think differently about you, but if you're honest in how you feel, you're probably constantly at war with yourself trying not to indulge in the flesh. There's a reason scripture says the flesh and the spirit are at war within you, it's not a secret. Though, with social media it's easy to make your life look great by showing everyone a highlight reel; yet when you see how most people feel, it's normally the opposite.

But all thanks be to God for Christ Jesus and the redemption of sins through his blood! God himself provided a way through giving his son, so that we may live a life of freedom through the Holy Spirit. How? By loving our neighbors as we love ourselves. Well, what does that even mean? It means forgiveness. Forgiveness of other people's shortcomings, means knowing they messed up but loving them anyway. It means getting rid of the grudge you have against one another and forgiving people as Christ himself forgave you.

You wanna stop for a minute and go back over that? It means complete forgiveness for all people. If God himself doesn't hold someone's transgressions against him, who are you to hold a grudge against someone God himself already forgives?

Romans 3:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

See we don't get to pick and choose who we love, we've been called to love them all. Yes, that includes the peo-

ple you don't get along with, the ones who did you wrong, those who stole from you, cheated on you, backstabbed you, crushed you in spirit, and let you down when you thought that they had your back. I'm talking about everyone.

Why?

Psalms 103:11-12 "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."

As imitators of Christ, we have been called to do the same. As scripture says in 2 Peter 3:9 "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."

Who comes to repentance? EVERYONE

That includes all those people you really don't like. But what is it that you've been called to do? Isn't it to be imitators of Christ and keep no records of wrong? Someone might say, "But you don't understand what happened to me, you don't even know half of what they did to me. If you understood, you wouldn't dare say forgive them."

Listen closely...

Though I may not know all the personal tragedies that have been done, this bold blanket statement does cover every horrific act under the sun.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does

not dishonor 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.”

It's not about the things that have been done, it's about you finding peace through Christ the Son. Others may have used their free will to hurt you, but you can use your free will to heal. That healing comes only through forgiveness. Forgiveness has to be for both yourself and others. That's when you are able to live the life God has always intended you to live. A life of true freedom, through Christ's sacrifice.

Sure we are all going to make mistakes. But like Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4:3-5 “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. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.”

Today is a day for healing. Today is a day of purpose filled with love and forgiveness. Today is a day to right wrongs, and to sing songs of joyful praise unto The Lord. Today is a day to let go, and live life the way God

has always intended it to be. Today is a day to be free.
Today is a day to go FTP! Go forgive somebody!!!

THE RIGHT WAY

Ever known the right thing to do, but you just didn't feel like doing it? I'm talking about when you are struggling and you are just tired of struggling, yet you find the ability to push through that struggle... You know, the really tough times of life, where you could choose an easy out, but instead you choose to stand your ground and fight? I believe that's where greatness lives. I believe a very small percentage of people achieve that level, and an even smaller percent thrive there. Is that you, is that where you thrive?

If not, are you a part of the masses that just always gives in and gets run over by life? What if you've always wanted to be better, but every time you just choose the easy way out? What if you are captive to being a people pleaser, hate confrontation, and just deal with what life throws at you? If there was a better way, would you listen?

What if I told you there's a secret weapon to overcoming life's challenges by just implementing a few key disciplines in life, would you repeat them?

I believe that scripture gives us all the answers we need and more in 2 Peter 1:3-11. I believe if we spend enough time breaking this down you will see that God not only provided us a way to survive but to thrive in this life and the next!

“By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world’s corruption caused by human desires.

In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God’s promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins. So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away. Then God will give you a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:3-11

Scripture breakdown:

“He has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him”

Everything? EVERYTHING. That means we are void of any excuses. Once we have been made aware of this knowledge, the decisions we make afterward we are fully conscious of.

By coming into the knowledge of God, we are blessed with his promises. “Promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world’s corruption caused by human desires”. Not only are we blessed to know him, but through our knowledge of him, he equips us with his promises to help us escape the ways of the world!

Through these promises, we have the opportunity to respond to them by, “supplementing your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. I believe these are all written in this order for a reason. When you have faith in God, that faith allows you to follow him and become an ambassador of Christ.

When you become an ambassador of Christ by representing or are RE-presenting his love to others, you will lay a matchless structure of moral excellence to begin your framework of faith. Once the foundation is laid, you are able to continue in knowledge. Faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of God. This allows us to ma-

ture in him through pursuing his work diligently and duplicating it in our daily lives.

When we are maturing in our walk, we begin to be faced with worldly opposition in many forms. These trials and tribulations refine us and teach us how to have self-control. These interactions discipline us and help us to grow in spiritual maturity, learning how to rightly handle the word of God and disperse it to others. But during the process of learning self-control, we learn to patiently endure. This is where I believe many of us tend to fall short.

When you are strong in faith, you will begin to notice the closer you get to God at times, the harder the opposition gets. It makes sense in the world that if you do bad you get bad, but when you're a Christian and you're doing good but continuously receiving bad, it challenges you by shaking you to the core. I believe that this is when God allows the enemy to separate the real followers from the fake followers.

See, just like the seed that fell in the thorns, this is the part where the trials and tribulations, and/or the opportunities of life choke out the word before the person can mature. I don't find it ironic that this is the major testing ground of faith. This is when the enemy can offer opportunities just like the ones he tempted Christ with in the desert. This is also a time when The Lord can use him to test the foundation, to see if the faith you have built on is real.

The next part that comes after patient endurance, is Godliness. Godliness allows us the insight to see others how God sees them through Christ's finished works. Being able to view people through the filter of what I call the "God lens," makes it possible for you to have brotherly affection, by helping them also carry their burdens through this walk. Brotherly affection leads to love for everyone.

At this point you will be able to see people how God sees them, love them how he loves them because just like God, you will hold no judgment or harbor any hatred, bitterness, or resentment. This allows you to walk in the completion of the law, doing what Christ did here on earth and far greater. This is the mission of a follower of Christ. This is the way. (Mandalorian voice)

When you are following the way, it says "The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." How amazing is that? With each situation and each new encounter with each new person, you get the ability to represent him! The trials and tribulations might not all be the same, but you have been equipped with everything you need to live a godly life!

"But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins. So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never

fall away. Then God will give you a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Do these things and you will NEVER fall away. Never? NEVER! I don't know about you, but that's the type of knowledge I need to succeed in this life. So let's get out there and be the change we want to see. We have everything we need through his promises to live a Godly life that is pleasing in his sight! Not only that, but when our mission is finished and we get the blessed opportunity to finally go home and have a real-life, we will receive a Grand Entrance into the ETERNAL KINGDOM of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! To God be the glory forever and ever! So it's so, amen!

LUNCH SPECIAL

Don't allow yourself to be driven away into temptation. Scripture itself says "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." James 1:13-15

So if we know that "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." 1 Corinthians 10:13
What are the ways we can escape going through the process of even being tempted?

#1: Let go and let God: Call out to God immediately what is happening and ask him to take care of it, having full faith and confidence that he's already in the process of doing so. This allows you to not stress, but progress in the works that he's called you to do. He's not too busy to help out his kids, he's waiting on you to have faith enough to trust his process, instead of stressing and robbing yourself of a blessing. Simply ask him to remove the distractions so you won't have impure reactions. "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7

#2: Make the Lord your refuge: “You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. If you say, “The Lord is my refuge,” and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. “Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.”
Psalms 91:5-16

#3. No vacancy: A lot of times we are willing to let God into our house, but we are too afraid to not fully sign over the deed. Some allow him to come to stay in their lives, but not every room of it. Some might be so bold as to give God their master bedroom, just not the closet, or the basement where we want to keep our messes hidden. I’d like to challenge you today to allow the Lord in every part of your life by signing the deed of your life over to him, making the house his responsibility.

So when the enemy comes knocking on the door, no longer will you have to answer it, God will. When the accuser comes knocking ready to plow through your life, he will be met face to face with God the creator of the cosmos, your vindicator. Do you have even the slightest idea of what happens when the enemy comes to bully one of God's children? Do you know what the Lord will do to the enemy when he tries to trespass on his property?

As an example, I'll say, "Lord you see that I'm under attack and I thank you for stepping in and defeating the enemy right before my eyes. Thank you for the victory, you've prepared a feast before my enemies, anointed my head with oil, and my cup runs over with your abundant blessings and protection. My mind and conscience are clear, I give you all the glory! Thank you for removing this stress so I can continue to progress for you"

#4. The meditation of your mind: If someone hasn't told you yet, you definitely need to know, you are not responsible for all the thoughts that pass through your brain. It's when you choose to hold on to one of them by dwelling on them, that things can really get out of hand. Instead of holding onto a negative thought, say "I hold all thoughts captive to Christ who strengthens me. May the meditation of my mind be pleasing in your sight. Remove any barriers that would be a hindrance and bless me in all of my ways. I thank you that this is complete in my life in Jesus' name.

#5. Believe and Receive: Some time ago I began to reword my prayers. When I did, I noticed a huge transformation in my life. I realized that God was so good that he was blessing my faith. When I increased my faith to pray big bold prayers, is when a major shift happened in my life. Scripture says it Mark 11:24 “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

This single verse of faith changed my entire life. I plan on going over this topic in extreme depth in the near future, but for now, just let that verse be the meditation of your mind when making a request from the Lord. These words directly from the mouth of Christ, give us an inside look into how God operates in our lives, how to access him at that level, and what the result of our faith can truly be when we choose to ask God to move on our behalf.

I pray that today you will take the opportunity to operate in these 5 opportunities. Reading them is the same as looking at weights, if you don't use them you will never grow your muscles. You can stare at them all day, and pray all day long that you'll grow strong, but until you use your free will to operate the weights by putting them into action, you'll never begin to grow.

The same goes for scripture, you can read it and know it all day, but it counts for nothing until put into action. Faith without works is like knowledge without application, it's dead. So be encouraged today, choose one of

these each day to practice, let the meditation of your mind become dependent on the Lord. Begin to walk in relation by a conversation with him, reminding yourself that he's present and willing at all times to be of service to his children.

Humble yourself to remember that's exactly what you are and will forever be in his eyes. You are blessed, righteous, redeemed, children of God. You are loved, blessed with abundance, and fully walk in the light of his grace, mercy, and peace. Go today and be blessed by being a blessing to others. Let your irrational generosity be a symbol of hope to others, by refreshing them through your faith. Finish the day without arguing or complaining, without grumbling about situations. Scripture says that this will allow you to shine bright in a crooked and perverse generation.

Most of all go in full trust that God is working all things towards the good of those who love him. When the spirit of temptation comes, point him to Jesus. When the accuser starts pointing fingers your way, point him to the finished works of Jesus Christ. Go be the change you want to see, go be FTP!

GODS PLAN

“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” John 14:12-13

No matter what we see in the world, the power of a believer of Christ comes through faith alone. God knew what was, what’s current, and what’s to come. He has given us the amazing opportunity to communicate with him through faith and has given us the assurance to depend on him and his word. As the verse above says, “If we believe we will do what he does, and far greater.”

The way that we access the far greater is having the ability to first walk in love, and second, re-present him to the world by laying our lives down in service to one another.”

This requires humility.

When we choose to esteem others higher than ourselves is when we can take the time to silence the ego, and lay to rest the flesh and the rest of everything else in our carnal mind that would get in the way of clear communication. We must understand one another to be able to help one another. Assumptions and closed minds from results of the past only stir the pot of tension. Not to mention creates division in a vast number of ways that become extremely difficult to overcome.

So, what do we do to find an answer in a world full of injustice?

We ask God to reveal the best routes for progression in our society, to heal the hearts of the people, and to turn them towards the will of God's Grace, love, and mercy. When we make our requests of faith known to God, we believe he has granted our request through faith, then go out and show the world what God looks like through our actions. **How can we have the assurance that our prayers are answered?**

Solely the word of God himself!

“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

Mark 11:24

Having this confidence in the word of God is vital to taking the necessary actions to create change. Nobody has seen God, but the way they see him and experience his love, grace, and mercy, is by how we treat one another, by us walking in the Holy Spirit. The spirit of God in us compels peace, insight, revelation, knowledge, and understanding. It makes no room for fits of anger, outburst, rage, and animosity. He leads us out of rage-filled unrest, into a place where we can digest the truth, and know who is ultimately in control of all things.

So what's the next move?

As the body of Christ, each of us has to play our part in re-presenting Christ to the world. This means choosing the faith and humility of Christ, esteeming others higher than yourself. This doesn't leave room for becoming inflamed in our carnal mind with outbursts of anger or revenge, God gave us a sound mind to be ambassadors of his love!

So in these dark times of unrest, it's our God-given opportunity to do our best to serve him in all things, at all times, in all places. To summarize it in a clear concise way, "When the world sees you, they should see Jesus." My prayer today is that you have the courage to pick up your cross, deny yourself. That in the face of adversity you have the faith, courage, and boldness to show the world what a true servant of God looks like. You don't have to be passive and idly wait on the sidelines for change. Instead, you speak out about injustice and hate, by representing love through your actions, by showing the world what forgiveness and mercy look like.

We all know that the misconduct of a few can lead to the outrage of many. But, with that being said, we have to have the courage to speak up about oppression, it's our duty as the body of Christ to be a voice for the voiceless not through inaction or passivity, not through outburst of anger, or fits of rage, but through living out the word of god through action and in truth, displaying love through a sound and mind.

When the world can see Jesus in you, is when the true change will occur. Not in all, but in some. It all starts with you making the choice of who you represent, the ways of the world, or the ways of Christ. Don't be the one claiming his name causing confusion by your actions of misconduct. If you choose to represent Christ, represent him well, not as one to cause anyone further confusion or harm. It's time the men of God display the righteousness of Christ through their actions, not their worlds.

The climate of the world is rough, but we are in it, not of it. We have been sent by God to show the world that the kingdom of heaven is alive and well, living in us and working through us, making his spirit manifest and available for all to partake in his love and mercy. Every knee will have to bow and every mouth will confess Jesus Christ is Lord. Until then, let's make the rest of our days the best of our days by denying ourselves and following Christ. Let's not choose inaction, let not choose reaction, let's choose proactive steps to ensure that the voice of the voiceless is heard in this country and around the world.

We can only do that through love. True love has a name and that name is Jesus Christ. It's time to unite and show the world what the unified body of Christ through action looks like. I'll play my part in the body, will you?

HOW WILL YOU BE REMEMBERED?

This is the time we have to be called the torchbearers of our generation. How will we be remembered? Will we be the ones who mixed the world with the word, or be remembered as those who stood on the finished works of Jesus Christ when the times became like that of Noah? Who will be bold and stand in the face of adversity, not through human wisdom, but Godly provision?

We have been fashioned for such a time as this. These are the last days, and we are the ambassadors of Christ sent to spread the good news of the gospel to the ends of the earth. We have the opportunity to represent him in a way the world has never seen before. We have communication and technology that is second to none. We can reach the world with the click of a button. So with all the power trusted to us, are we going to sit and scroll, or seek to help save lost souls?

This life is fleeting, It's a mirage. All things will burn and be tested before the fire. The only things that will stand are those that have been built on the finished works of Jesus Christ. God himself said he was even shaking the heavens. The only thing that stands is the word of God alone. What are you building your kingdom on? Worldly desires or Godly desires?

Are you preparing riches for yourself here on earth, or in heaven? What is your focus, what are you talking about, what are your actions revealing to you? Where are your

investments being made? Are you being generous with the life he laid his life down to give to you? Are you giving back to the one who gave his all? Or are you using his life to choose to live your life for the desires of the world?

Remember he gave his life so that you could have life in this life and the next. Do you think that was for you to selfishly pursue your own way, or to become a follower by becoming imitators of God himself? In the same way, we have been called to be his ambassadors by showing the world his love through laying our lives down for one another? Where's your focus? Where's your boldness? Is this a fragrant offering to you, or a smell of death?

God said to some we are a fragrant offering, to others we are the smell of death. Those that we are the smell of death too, those are the ones perishing. If me reminding you of who you are in Christ irritates you, check your heart. If it's encouraging, show it by going and being the change he's called you to be. Go be the Love he laid his life down for. Go do the same works he did and far greater. Go be the city set on the hill for all to see. Don't shrink back, don't hold back, increase in boldness and be relentless in love. Do not shrink back for a minute.

May the Holy Spirit in you guide you and keep you for all of your days! Go press into the dark places that no one would go, to help save the lost souls that no one knows. There's a reason no one goes there. Go there! He didn't

come for the healthy, he came for the sick, looked over, lost, and forgotten.

Or, are you afraid of getting sick? By his stripes, you are healed! Are you afraid of those places? You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you! Are you afraid to be hurt? Do not fear the arrow that flies by day nor the pestilence that stalks at night. 1000 by your side, 10,000 by your right hand, but no harm will come to your tent! Is it that you are weak in faith? Don't doubt, believe! When you have prayed for it, believe that you have already received it and then you will have it!

Or, is it that the comforts of this life are consuming you and wedging you into a life of lukewarm complacency. Living with faith in God, always hearing, but never perceiving. Always willing to learn and lean an ear to wisdom, but never lifting your hand out of the dish to feed yourself. This word is a call to action, you don't read it to learn the word, you read it to become the word. Transforming from glory to glory daily, reflecting and projecting the image of God in all endeavors.

Scripture makes it evident that when we stand before God we are without excuse. Your excuses might work here on earth to some extent, but not in front of our Heavenly Father when you have to stand face to face with him. Some of you might ask, "what are you even talking about?" This is a very good indicator you need to learn the word of God so that you will understand how

great the war is that's going on every single day for the attention of mankind.

The world wants you to be distracted, polluted with its ways so that you will deteriorate yourselves, and sell yourself cheap for materialism and a fake facade. If you only knew how powerful you were, yet some show favor through their actions to the defeated foe who still tries to claim victory over the earth. The enemy was destroyed the second our king laid his life down on the cross. He laid his life down so that we may have life and life abundantly, allowing us the ability to regain access to God The Father through Christ The Son's sacrifice. This isn't a fairy tale made up in some man's head. This is the blessing bestowed upon us by the creator of the cosmos. By true life. True love has a name and that name is Jesus Christ.

I choose to personally proclaim it boldly and unashamed. For it is the testimony of Christ that leads people to repentance. All glory be to God through Christ Jesus' sacrifice. That we have the ability to pull people back from the flames. That he works with us to reconcile the world to him, through his finished works. We have the opportunity to partner in the harvest with Christ, knowing he is long-suffering hoping all to come to repentance.

What will you do with your time? Spend it on the world, or His righteous decrees? The time is coming and the days are short. His arrival is near, and be it our genera-

tion or a hundred generations to come; one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day to our Father. What is important is what we do with the little time we have here left on earth. It's time to gather the troops. This is the roll call and the reminder. This is why you have been sent. This is your mission, purpose, and calling:

Mission: Spread the good news of the gospel to the ends of the earth, baptizing in the name of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit.

Purpose: Be a representative of love through action and in truth

Calling: To share your time, talent, and resources, with everyone in need.

This is a life well-lived. This is a life sent to serve. This is selfless over selfish. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and none come to The Father except through him. Go be bold in testimony, take the word to the shadowy streets where the sun doesn't shine. Go and blind the bad until all you can see is the goodness of God in all people, free of all judgment. Go represent your king by laying your lives down for others, denying yourself, walking in love, and carrying your cross daily. Boldness, grace, peace, and mercy be yours in abundance.

OVERCOMING INSECURITY

Don't be baited into battles you were never meant to fight. The insecurities of others can only be conquered through self-reflection and prayer. When you find yourself pitted against the insecurity of another person, you tend to be forced into a position with two options:

1. Water down the truth to ease yourself out of harm's way. (this is detrimental in the long run)
2. Be forced to combat with self-loathing. (this is a losing battle)

Insecurity tends to directly pick up on any emotional response or body language that seems even a little out of place. Once it's noticed, the person with the spirit of insecurity has a tendency to indirectly engage you in conversation through passive remarks or pestering. This will be ongoing until the spirit gets the intended answer or result in which it desires. Sadly, the individual with the spirit of insecurity often states they are unaware of what they are doing, and oftentimes unknowingly victimize themselves by immediately setting up an emotional defense mechanism as a response to justify their own reactions. Sounds complicated, but here are some tell signs that you are dealing with the spirit of insecurity:

1. Aloofness
2. When engaged in conversation they choose to make sly, underlining snarky remarks.

3. A lack of self-confidence.
4. They talk badly about others' character or self-image in an attempt to belittle that person's platform or self-image.
5. Immediately target personality characteristics in others they feel threatened by.
6. When feeling they can't make headway, they either continue in a relentless attack out of anger with no end goal in mind, destroying everything including relationships.
7. Or, they blame themselves by speaking poorly about their actions in a way to get you to edify them as if it wasn't so bad. This allows them to self-loathe and regroup to attack at a more opportune time.

Have you ever met people like this?

I've been around it my entire life, and you have to understand that the battle is not the person, but the spirit that they have allowed into them. It seems like 2, 4, and 5 normally occur when the spirit is in a comfort zone and it feels it can speak openly without fear of rejection. But, 1, 3, 6, oftentimes occur when confronted with a different perspective. Then a reverse effect occurs, and the spirit then becomes victimized, reasoning its basis on the reactions of your emotional response. It then has a

tendency to push people away, continuing in a path of destruction without an end goal.

Counter: Love through the word of God and prayer.

The spirit of insecurity is a self-destructive spirit that hides itself within the person's self-image. No matter if it attacks others or victimizes itself, the destruction is the same. Its goal is to break the individual down into a self-defeatist mentality until it can get the individual isolated and alone. Once alone it looks to steal, kill, and destroy. If it can steal the individual's happiness, it can destroy relationships, which leads to isolation. Isolation in extremities has the ability to lead to death.

Oftentimes the spirit plays a cop and robber technique. In this case, the cop is the spirit of insecurity and the robber is you. The robber can never make a mistake because if he messes up once he gets caught. The cop on the other hand has the ability to make continuous mistakes because it only takes the robber messing up once for him to catch the robber.

The point is, you will become ineffective if you find yourself approaching the spirit outside of love and the word of God. It only takes you messing up once and you add ammo to the arsenal of the impure spirit. Remember the spirit's defense mechanism is to isolate the individual and make them feel unworthy, unappreciated, undervalued, and unnecessary. So if you act outside of love or the word of God, you are setting yourself up to become ineffective.

The only way to combat this spirit is to speak life into the individual on the basis of only what God thinks of them, and the value he has for their life. If you speak how valuable they are to you, they will find times when you made them feel unappreciated or counter you on the basis of how you responded to their actions at some point.

According to the relentlessness that is found in the individual, you will only have the ability to speak life and love for so long, until you yourself feel a change in your heart due to their lack of care, or constant negativity. At this point, you have to walk away. You have done what you can do up to the limit that you are capable of. Before you allow yourself to slip and be held captive or fall in defeat to impurity, it's best to walk away and cut the connection.

Though your intentions are pure in wanting to show them what God has created them for and expose the spirit of insecurity at its core. You cannot in any way walk outside of the line of scripture. The second you do, you've caused more harm than good. It's best to say nothing and go to God in prayer, then feel confident in your flesh to take on your adversary. If the spirit leads you then you will only proceed with love and encourage them to continuously speak the word of God over their life.

Oftentimes this is a long and arduous battle, but one worth fighting only through the word of God and God

alone. If at some point this spirit continues down the path of division you must follow scripture and “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.” Titus 3:10-11.

Don't allow a spirit of insecurity to bring division amongst you and stir up the insecurities of others, causing bitterness and resentment to take root. The spirit only wants to duplicate how it feels into others. It often leads to a spirit of rejection, which can be even more toxic, but we can talk about that at another time. But for now, focus on rejecting falsehood and negativity, through gently reminding each other through the encouraging edification of God's word, how Christ sees us, and the love shown through his completed works.

3:27 AM

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch.” Simon answered him, “Master, we worked all night, and caught nothing; but at your word, I will let down the net.” When they had done this, they caught a great multitude of fish, and their net was breaking. Luke 5:4-6.

It’s all gonna happen at the right time. Not by your own volition or free will, but when God calls it to be it will be. It’s our job to believe we have already received it when we ask, without doubt, knowing that His timing is perfect timing! He allows us to increase patience and understanding through the perseverance of overcoming shortcomings in everyday life.

Here we’re skilled fishermen that by their own free will decided to hone the craft of fishing for a living. They were skilled in their knowledge and understanding of how to catch fish, yet even in all their understanding, this particular night they had caught nothing.

How could it be possible to be fully skilled in a craft, work all night, and still come up short? Seems to happen in life all the time for some of us. Yet, through the obedience of faith, these followers of Christ decided to let down their nets one more time out into the water. Now what you have to have to understand is after fishing, nets have to be cleaned and hung up to dry. They’re specific tasks that have to be done before you get off

that boat. Naturally, they could have said, “Jesus we are fishermen, what do you know about fish?” Or, “my nets are drying and I’m tired. I don’t want to have to pull everything back out and put it into the water.” Instead, in God's timing, one act of obedience led to a catch that was so large, they had to ask for help because the nets were breaking!

How many of you want to keep fishing and not catching anything in life? How many of you want to continue to live a life based on your own free will, and end up continuously coming up short? At what point is a good enough time to submit your will to God's will, and follow him in obedience? The answer is definitely different for everyone. As for myself, I was tired of continuously coming up short. It was only until I realized God's timing is the right timing. When it's his word that says he works all things towards the good of those who love him, I'm gonna make a conscious effort to be in line with His will for my life. I want to catch so many fish that my net starts breaking, don't you!?

I'm challenging you today, to see past foggy ways of the world, into a clear perspective. One that is honorable and noble, one of the righteous decrees. I'm asking you before you begin to make your own way to submit to God's way through walking in a personal relationship with him daily, every step of the way. Today is the day that you can stop and say:

“Not my will, but your will Lord. Put me where you want me to be, to do what you want me to do; say what you want me to say, to who you want me to say it to. Lord today I submit my entire life to you, and I ask that you come and guide me every step of the way, with every word I say, and every action I make, so in everything I do, I do to glorify you.”

If you have the stones to proactively pray this prayer every day, and then go on your way pursuing His will for your life, you will be absolutely amazed at how much can change in just one year. Some might ask, well how do I go about pursuing his will? You do so by walking in a relationship with him through His word. That means going after it like a newborn craves milk. Once you read it, you will realize it is a call to action. So don't just talk about it, take action. This is what is pleasing to him. This is where you will see the results of real change.

That's a life worth living. That's worth having something to talk about. Through prayer and supplication, make your request unto The Lord. Without a doubt in your heart believe you have received it, and in the meantime take action knowing that God's timing is perfect timing. Then, when the time comes that He says to let down your net, know that it's time for an increase! Be blessed brothers and sisters, stay strong, stay focused, and be diligent in taking the words of God and applying them into your life daily.

POSER

Treating people badly, and going to read your Bible isn't following Christ, it's called religion. Last time I checked, the only religion God, himself honors, is those who look after widows and orphans in their affliction and keep themselves from being polluted but the world. So, if you aren't doing that, or walking in love, what are you actually doing? I'm sure we all can come up with a couple of ideas. Point is, you're not acting in love, which makes people who want to know God, run further away from him because you're setting the example of what they believe a Christian to be. Sounds a lot like Judas and less like Jesus.

I mean, sure you didn't just throw some shekels to have him arrested, but you're claiming to follow him yet operating using his word outside of the context of love. If God is love, and what you are doing is the opposite, who are you really following? Let's see what it looks like to claim God, yet not have love in our hearts. Scripture plainly says,

“If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed

my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.”¹ Corinthians 13:1-3

“Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless. When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned like a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.”¹ Corinthians 13:4-13

If you spent the rest of your life reading these two verses and putting it into action, you would have lived a life worth living. This is the love God wants, this is what he requires of his servants. Christ literally said, “By how you love one another, they will know you are my followers.” So let's get to love and stop with the hate. Leave

the judgment for God, let's operate in mercy, grace, and sacrifice. We only have one life to live, it's already hard as hell for most of us, so why not lighten the load.

Here are a few steps:

1. If it doesn't involve you, stay out of it.
2. If you're not gonna be mad about it 5 years from now, don't waste your time on it.
3. Stop complaining, no one cares at all. Literally
4. Be a giver and not a taker, you'll thank me for this later.
5. God doesn't remember their sin, so why do you? Discernment is for building others up, not tearing them down. Calling judgment discernment is a wack way to try and prove your point.
6. Shut up and walk away. If their mind is made up, you're not changing it. If you rebuke a mocker you will incur harm.
7. Don't honk and yell. Smile and wave, and then under your breath quietly whisper, "God bless you, you baby angel, that doesn't know that God sent you to me, to make my day better" :)

HELL TO THE NAW

Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but only what is good for building others up as the need may be, that it may give grace to those who hear. Ephesians 4:29

First off, I didn't write it...

Second off, is it even possible? Scripture also says, "But no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison." (James 3:8) But, if read in another part I see, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Now, I can keep throwing scripture back and forth, but it ultimately comes down to, am I going to make excuses, or change my ways? One leads to repentance, and the other a death sentence.

Let's think about it for a second, if we really applied Ephesians 4:29 into our lives, what would most of us have left to talk about? Don't shrink back now homie, be honest and ask yourself, "Does most of what I say glorify God?" Like.... really though? Think about it, next time you go to talk about somebody else, complain, choose to rant on politics or your personal opinions on how things should be, ask yourself, "Does this glorify God." One might say, "Bro let me just live my life, don't judge me, not everything's gotta be about Jesus. Seriously, this is why I left the church in the first place. Bunch of hypocrites."

Again, I didn't write the book, so don't kill the messenger, just watch this... "And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak." Matt 12:36

Idle? Oh you mean, if I'm not speaking only what is good for building others up as they need? But wait, I thought I've already passed from judgment into life, so why on judgment day will I have to give an account for idle words? Is it possible it's because we have died to self and now live through Christ, and that scripture says, "We will do the same things Christ did and far greater?"

I mean, even Jesus says: "For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken." So, if you pay close attention to what scripture is saying to us, it's saying that the same spirit that was in Jesus is now in us, and we should only be speaking what God tells us to speak in the spirit! Maybe I'm wrong, but scripture also says, "If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God." 1 Peter 4:12

It's heating up now boys! I feel like Terrance Howard in the movie Get Rich or Die Trying. That man Bama says, "It's like when I'm right I'm right, when I'm wrong I could be right, so I'm still right cause I coulda been wrong, you know, and I'm sorry cause I could be wrong right now, I could be wrong, but I'm right..."

I mean come on brother, is it that hard for us to shut our mouth and not talk trash? Of course, it is! I grew up that way! If I didn't talk trash then I didn't fit in. But, as the word says in Proverbs 14:12 "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end, it leads to death." I don't know about you, but why live this life just to die, and then die again in the second death? We have trashed this place enough, I ain't trying to end up in hell, or have to stand before God, cause I couldn't shut up.

Game plan: Let's make it our best effort to hold each other accountable not in judgment, but in gentle correction to stop talking trash about stuff that doesn't glorify God. God says it in scripture, Matt 12:30 "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters." That's Jesus talking! I hope you get what he's saying, bro. There ain't no 50 shades of grey. No such thing as halfway disciples. You either gather or scatter.

For all you thinking differently, check Revelations 3:15-3:16 "I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth!

Is that gonna be you? Ain't gonna be me, in the late words of YouTube sensation Bishop Bullwinkle, "Hell to the naw, to the naw naw naw. Hell naw"

WHY WISDOM

“So teach us to number our days, so that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Satisfy us in the morning with your loving kindness, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.”Psalm 90:12,14

How often do you think about death? Ever had some kind of near-death experience that gives you a quick rush of reality? Maybe you were scared of a diagnosis from the doctor at some point in life? If any of the above ever applied to you, in those moments you probably felt a little different.

Sadly, I've seen a lot of people on their deathbeds. But oddly enough, those become times of reflection, and where you hear some of the most amazing transformations and turnarounds in the spirit that you may ever hear of on earth. It's almost like everything else gets so small and purposeless, and love takes center stage.

These moments have led to friendships being rekindled, true emotions being shown, and oftentimes that person gets to realize who they always wanted to be, but couldn't find time to be because they sought the world and became entangled in the ways of everyday life. They got busy and forgot how to love.

Well lucky for you brother, that doesn't have to be the case! If you have breath in your lungs, you have the opportunity to learn the lesson to apply this to your life for the rest of your days! God himself teaches us to number

our days so that we can have a heart of wisdom. Anyone lacking wisdom should ask God, and he will supply them abundantly. So if wisdom is what we need, where do we find it?

Scripture says the beginning of wisdom is the fear of The Lord. The Lord himself says, “Learn to number your days, to gain wisdom.” Wisdom herself has a lot to say about how you can walk in relation with her, in the book of Proverbs. Also, some Christians refer to other books in the Bible as wisdom literature, and those books are: Proverbs, Psalms, Job, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes. So there’s a bunch of places to go seek out, but for now, let’s just focus on the verse for today.

We see in the very next line, what seems to be a request to The Lord, “Satisfy us in the morning with your loving kindness, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.” It’s pretty obvious why you would want to start your day off like this, who doesn’t want to be glad for all of their days. But how often is that the case? Well, how often are you applying wisdom as the foundation of how you start your day?

All too often we get swept up by responsibilities and forget who we are, what we do, and why we have come to do it. Some neglect people who need them the most for worldly priorities that they have taken on and this causes them to fall short in the relationships that they also need the most. Oftentimes we find ourselves doing less for those who need us the most, but cover it with an ex-

cuse to justify our reasons why we continuously come up short.

But if God himself is in ultimate control, imagine what life would be like taking time in the morning to put him first. The Lord might just show you what's important vs what is a distraction. He might just remind you of what he has put in your life to nurture, and what you should get rid of. So, what do you do to create the change?

Remember who is in control and give it to him. To answer with scripture it says, "The way you get wisdom is fear of The Lord." Fear of The Lord comes from faith, and faith comes from hearing the word of God. So we now have a connection as to how we can find joy in our lives in accordance with his will! Is it starting to make sense? Let's continue to read some more about wisdom!

Scripture says in James 3:17 "Wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere." Isn't that how you would want people to treat you? Is this not a great reminder to start your day with so you know how to be able to treat others in your walk with Christ? Every day we are faced with opposition on all sides. Instead of succumbing to it, we can oppose it. We can literally deal a fatal blow to hate, with a response of loving calmness that comes only from Christ's Spirit living within us.

My encouragement for you today is to walk into every interaction you have with others, with love and compassion that supersedes anger, frustration, lack of understanding, or fear. We shine brightest when we go through trials and tribulations just like other people, but we have a conditioned response of love when faced with adversity. People see our peace in the presence of turmoil, and can't understand how we are so calm and able to address and assess the situation with love, care, and compassion. That is what makes them attracted to our testimony. When you react like everyone else, you lose it because you are now responding no differently than the world.

We all make mistakes, but it's the training we go through that helps us become better at representing Christ. One of the wildest verses I've ever seen in scripture is, "Even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered." Christ himself learned obedience, that obedience was wisdom working itself out through love, action, and truth! So don't ask for life to be easier, ask for the wisdom to represent God's love in the face of adversity daily. This will attract many souls to the kingdom of heaven, making you productive, efficient, and effective for God's kingdom.

In closing, I just want to leave you with one last verse that I think may bless you in your walk. Proverbs 3:13-18 "Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than

gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

Pay The F.E.E.

Some time ago God gave me this acronym to put into action on a daily basis. A simple reminder that allows me to relentlessly pursue God's calling in my life through the finished works of Jesus Christ. That acronym is F.E.E. It stands for Faith, Effort, Expectation. It's best used in the order as seen, and to understand it properly we should go ahead and break down each category through the world's understanding vs the word of God.

Faith by definition is:

1. Complete trust or confidence in someone or something
 2. Strong belief in God or in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof.
- But what does the Bible say about faith?

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1 And without faith, it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. Hebrews 11:6
So faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17

Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to

pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Mark 11:22-24

Though each verse is different I choose these specifically to show you exactly what God considers faith, how you continue to receive it, and how to implement it to get the intended results your heart desires. Psalms 37:4 says, "Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

God is always working, and we live in a world where faith is taught, but the effort of that faith isn't reinforced. So we have people praying with seeds full of opportunity that they are too lazy to plant. They have been taught to expect from God a harvest, but refuse to work the field. Which according to scripture results in:

"The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied." Proverbs 13:4
"In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty." Proverbs 14:23

It needs to be said over and over again because it's one of the leading reasons people lose their faith. They are taught to pray, but never taught to put in the work to make that prayer a possibility. **In steps Effort.**

An effort by the world's definition is a vigorous or determined attempt. But let's take effort and filter it through the word of God and see what we come up with:

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
Matthew 6:33

Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established. Proverbs 16:3

The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, without painful toil for it. Proverbs 10:22

But what are the results of lacking effort?

Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys. Proverbs 18:9

The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labor. Proverbs 21:25

The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor. Proverbs 12:24

A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. Proverbs 10:4

Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty. Proverbs 28:19

Just these verses alone should provide enough insight to see the dynamic between effort and lacking it. I always say I could write a book on each topic, and maybe

one day I will, but this is some of the most important stuff that I think many are never taught to see.

The way that most of us gather together in the western world tends to leave a dependency on a preacher instead of the word of God. So, what we end up with is a bunch of dopamine worship junkies putting money in a jar to get a quick fix, instead of people who are being taught how to use the word of God and put it into action.

Regardless, the one thing we all can come into agreement on is that to have faith we have to have expectations of what's to come. When we plant a seed, we are expecting God to bring the rain for the harvest to grow. Many say they have faith, but now we can clearly see that those who truly have faith, will walk in it by putting it into action through effort. Their effort is a bi-product of their faith. They would not put in the effort if they didn't believe it would result in an intended outcome. Their belief is the expectation of what's to come. In closing, let's see what the Bible has to say about having expectation on God through the finished works of Jesus Christ:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.” John 14:12-24

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19

I hope you didn't think this was a way to use the Bible to get what your fleshly heart desires. When we accepted Christ we denied ourselves to pick up our cross and follow him daily. Following him means doing what he does. What he does, is make disciples. If you aren't dedicated to being disciples and/or making disciples are you even following Christ? Does $1+1=2$, does $2+2$ not equal 4? Can you subtract one and the remainder be the same? No. So why try to use the word of God for only personal advantage, and be missing out on the very reason it was written?

See a man can pay the F.E.E. daily and still receive the results of the world. Scriptures say God brings rain on the righteous and the wicked. Also, ruthless men only gain riches. So you will see men of the world who pay the F.E.E. and reap worldly riches. But they only supply the needs of themselves and their family, always forgetting to share their first fruits with where they were taught to walk, as to inform and replenish others in the same way they themselves have been. Don't be like these men, the Bible says "Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith." The end result will be that they will have pierced themselves with many griefs.

It's my prayer that all of you truly seek the heart of God through Christ, abounding in great efforts that produce

some 30,60,100 fold! May God bless you and keep you in all ways, all of the days of your life! Now get out there and truly pay the F.E.E.

I DID IT AGAIN

Jesus replied, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.” Luke 9:62

Ever watched followers overcome hurdles and then what they overcame comes back worse than it was before? Take for instance someone who had a drug addiction or alcoholism that they had overcome, but after a year or so they become entangled in the same addiction and end up in the same position or worse than before? That’s an easy example, but what about someone who always has underlying issues with judgment, pride, or expectation, things that aren’t always exposed to the surface? Why is it that some believers are devout in faith, yet still struggle with carnal desires that wage war within them? Why is it that even with the best of intentions, some of us still make excuses for our shortcomings instead of allowing God's power to reign supreme in every aspect of our life?

It’s because instead of identifying with our identity as a new creation, we hold on to the old man, and are focused on the things that are passing away instead of boldly chasing after the new things to come. Read that several times.

Just in case you don’t, I’ll write it again, “It’s because instead of identifying with our identity as a new creation, we hold on to the old man, and are focused on the

things that are passing away instead of boldly chasing after the new things to come.”

When this happens, our focus is not set on the things above, but the things below. The more that we are focused on the things below, the more we try to hold on to them and they continue to flee from us. The harder we grasp, the further they flee from our reach. Instead of looking up, we look out and around, expecting reciprocation, but instead finding unfulfilled desires.

This leads us to a life of addiction, depression, anxiety, and excuses. Excuses that seem natural to the world, but are unnatural for a new creation. For example, If you share your woes with the fallen man, he may point you to an uplifting quote, say it's ok, we all go through this sometimes, and you'll eventually get better.. Maybe even tell you it's not that bad, you're too hard on yourself, just live life and relax. It may provide some temporary relief, but it doesn't help solve the issue, it just pacifies the problem.

Yet, you have the same conversation with a devout believer who knows the truth of your identity, and he will point you away from an excuse, to the power of God in you through the finished works of Jesus Christ. Read that part again also. Pay close attention, because this is where people make the choice to either settle for comfort by surrounding themselves with people who make excuses or to be empowered through the Holy Spirit to

make the change through God's Spirit living within them.

Oftentimes when people choose comfort over their calling, they will remove themselves from those who are empowered through the spirit, saying they feel they are being judged. They would rather settle for comfort and excuse than the accountability of someone who is willing to help them. Some go as far as asking for accountability, but then blame their partner for falling short of helping them stay accountable. Ultimately, it all boils down to the individual personally choosing comfort or their calling, choosing to settle for excuses or sacrificing what it takes to get real results.

The issue with most of us is we live for the here and now, and instead of focusing on what's to come, we grasp for the creature comforts that are available today. But once you have given your life to Christ, you have been given everything you need to live a productive and fulfilling life in Christ. It's when you choose the route of the flesh, that you are left unhappy, resentful, desiring, unfulfilled, and fearful. It's because the old things have gone and the new have come.

You're digging up the corpses of your past, and expecting to get the same pleasure out of them that you used to. You may feel some temporal effect, but it's not the same because God has placed conviction in your heart. That conviction can be heeded and you can commit to change, or you can ignore the conviction and stay the

same. If the aim is progression, then learn the lesson by changing your ways. But if you stay consuming the old, your heart becomes cold and calloused to the calling, and you'll end up falling into a worse position than before.

In scripture, it says, "anyone in Christ is a new creation, the old has gone and the new has come." 2 Corinthians 5:17 We know we are in the world but not of the world, and are here to represent Christ and Christ crucified. Yet for some of us, during the process, we let human desire cloud the vision of the greater things to come and they stifle our progressions with The Lord. We become weighed down by personal wants, and these wants are all relevant to the here and now, but they have nothing to do with our eternal inheritance. So what do we do?

Scripture says, "To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." Ephesians 4:22-24

Why put off our old self? Because it belongs to your former life. Your former life has no place in a new creation. The new creation has not been corrupted by the old, but the free will of choosing to mix the two is still available to you, and many do it daily without even recognizing it. What do I mean? Pay close attention to why

we put off our old self, scripture says it is corrupt through deceitful desires.

When most people think of deceitful we think of very negative things involving sinful nature. But, deceitful by definition actually means “misleading.” Misleading opens us up to a much broader spectrum of potential issues. “Put off anything that can mislead you from the path of pursuing God's best for your life.” Or, “Lord reveal and replace everything in me that is not of you.” Might help us reveal some underlying issues we may not have approached in the past.

Now on the surface, you may be able to clearly see some things that need adjusting, for some it will take deeper understanding, and isolation with The Lord to reveal places that need change. No matter the circumstance it boils down to you choosing God's best for your life in every situation. Thinking before you speak, being proactive and not reactive, having expectations set on God, not people, knowing that God is working all things for your good. Etc.

What it comes down to in the end is, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20.

If this isn't the motive behind every aspect of your life, you're probably still trying to hold on to the things that

are passing away. The comforts of this life are fleeting, they are only temporary, and will all soon be gone. No matter if they provide temporary relief or not, they are literally keeping you from God's best. Sooner or later, you will be standing before God himself with either a handful of excuses, or a life of results that bear much fruit.

Knowing these truths, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Romans 12:2

Why?

Because, “To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.” Romans 8:6

Who doesn't want to have life and peace?

The motto should be, “Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order 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 comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— Philipians 3:7-9

If so, then, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”

2 Timothy 2:15

“And put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

Ephesians 4:24

Knowing that “Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.” 2 Corinthians 7:10

“For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” Colossians 3:3

Therefore, “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” Ephesians 5:15-17

Saying consistently as a reminder, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13

So, remember what we have to look forward to! Remember what Christ said to us!

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare

a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me so that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” John 14:1-4

“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. “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.” John 14:23-27

Instead of crying out and doing the same thing over and over again, remember this word from God, and you will find the strength to overcome whatever trial you are faced with.

“Since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this, they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you, but they will give ac-

count to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does. The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange was happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.

Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is

time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And “If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.” 1 Peter 4:1-19

“The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.” 1 Corinthians 10:13

Excuses or Results? Comfort or calling? The decision is yours and yours alone. You got this. Christ, in you the hope of glory!

NO FEAR

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love - 1 John 4:18

This is one of the biggest statements in the Bible when it comes to a person walking their faith out through action and in truth. I've personally never heard a more clear-cut answer to how we have been called to operate as followers of Christ. Could you imagine what living a life without fear would actually look like? Have you ever taken the time to break down what fear is and why it should not exist in your daily life?

Fear by definition is: "An unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain or a threat."

Almost daily I hear a comment come up about fear. During my time with FTP, it has become a recurring theme in the lives of people that I encounter. I would go so far as saying it is the number one problem I have seen people have over and over again. It keeps them from stepping out of their comfort zone, it keeps them from taking risks, it keeps them from serving God in accordance with his will for their life. But to put it in the words of Franklin Roosevelt, "There is nothing to fear but fear itself."

If we as servants of Christ have been called to love, we can not operate in a spirit of faith and fear at the same time. The lack of faith produces fear, and fear cannot produce the proper responses of love. Fear makes you unproductive, ineffective, and inefficient when it comes to the word of God. Why? Because fear teaches selfishness and the word of God teaches selflessness. The only fear that we should have is fear of the Lord! That means to hate what he hates, and love what he loves. That's being in accordance with his will so that you will be productive in finishing the works to which you have been called.

The Bible says, "God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." 2 Timothy 1:7

That's the opposite of what we see in the world when we turn on our tv. That's oftentimes the opposite of what I hear people saying they feel like on a regular basis. So, what's stopping us from walking in God's spirit at all times? The scripture says that fear comes from punishment.

The bi-product of fear is punishment, and the one who operates in a spirit of fear is someone that has not been perfected in love. If you have not been perfected in love and that's what God has chosen for you to represent to others, why do you choose to live in fear of man over fear of God? The odd answer is still punishment.

Instead of being ineffective in spirit, why not take ownership of your mission and call on God through the finished works of Jesus Christ? If you truly believe that Christ died for your sins past, present, and future, then why do you still walk around in fear of punishment? Christ himself took on all of our sins and God through the memory of them as far as the east is from the west. Our transgressions are remembered no more!

If God himself doesn't remember, what excuse do you have for still walking in them? Excuses are void when you are employed by God to represent Him through Christ Jesus. You do not have the time to allow what is old to be a part of what's new. Your sin debt was due, and Jesus paid the price that you couldn't pay, so he made a way for you to have life and life more abundantly. He did so by laying his life down for you as an example for you to lay your life down for others. But you can't operate in a spirit of fear and faith at the same time.

This is why God gave you the Holy Spirit. It's said in scripture that the spirit and the flesh are always at war keeping you from doing what it is you want to do. If our natural temptation is fear, God always provides a way out of temptation so that you may endure it. (These two verses can be found in Galatians 5:17 and 1 Cor 10:13) So, ultimately we are void of excuse when we stand before God on the day of judgment. Though we have moved from death to life through Christ, we are still called to follow Christ. Those that love him will walk as he walked, and Christ did not walk in a spirit of fear.

In my studies, I've read that the only two natural fears you were ever born with were the fear of falling and the fear of loud noises. Anything else has been taught by man! As scripture says, "There is a way that seems right to a man that leads to death." Fear is that way, and the world is full of it. When we fear we have a lack of faith.

When we lack faith, we lack belief in God and in ourselves. When you choose fear, you become unproductive and lack the ability to take risks. When the risk is gone so is the reward, and most of us are left living a hollow self-serving life of bitterness, resentment, depression, gossip, and deceit.

So how do we change it? By taking the word of God and putting it into action:

The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? Psalms 118:6

The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe. Proverbs 29:25

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me? Psalms 56:3-4

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” Romans 8:15

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. John 14:27

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalms 23:4

The fear of the Lord leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm. Proverbs 19:23

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28

For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who says to you, “Fear not, I am the one who helps you.” Isaiah 41:13

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. Psalms 34:7

The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.” Exodus 14:14

I'd suggest posting these scriptures as reminders on your phone, on the hour of every hour. Seems a bit much? What do you think the cost is of living another unproductive second of fear? Do as you want, but I personally have had reminders set for years. It's like getting a personal text from the word of God going, "Hey, I know you're at war right now, but remember I'm here, even if you forgot about me." I can't tell you how many times I forgot that I set those reminders, and they popped up at just the right time.

I pray today that blessings and courage rest on you and your household. That the spirit of God sends boldness into your heart and in doing so, you step out of your comfort zone to serve God in all that you do.

I believe everyone reading this message will receive divine courage and confidence. I believe a good report will be sent out into the world, and that the word of God will be made manifest in ways never seen before. You will be blessed in all that you do, putting God first in all of your ways, for all of your days. In Jesus' precious and Holy name. So it is so.

I QUIT

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. 1 John 4:4

The enemy has no business in your head, in your heart, in your thoughts, or in your ways. For all of your days, the only place he belongs is under your foot. For God has given you a spirit not to be timid, but strong and courageous. It is your opportunity to display his works and far greater! You have been commissioned with the power of love to break every stronghold in your life, and to help lead others out of the dominion of darkness, into God's restorative love, light, and freedom that very few have ever known.

Why not burst forth from man's traditions and typical presets, into a thunderous roar of righteousness!? A bar set too high for the world to climb. A power that only the Holy Spirit can comprehend. To speak a word of knowledge and truth, saturated in love, grace, and mercy. A message of overcoming evil with good. A message of greater is he that's in you than that which lives in the world. A seat shaking, get on your feet, go out the doors, and don't come back until you've reached somebody with the gospel!

How long will we set and pray for a harvest, when God has given us the seeds of blessing to go plant into the world? Some say bring others in, but we should be

sending others out, and not let them back in until the work is complete. What does that mean? It means good leaders duplicate leaders. Scripture says, Though Christ was Son, He learned obedience through suffering. What do these two have in common?

God SENT his only begotten son into the world. Meditate that for a hot minute. God bankrupted heaven for us, and SENT his son, as we are to GO and SEND others into the world. Christ set the very example of how we should be living, and we can view it throughout the whole New Testament.

The Christ I follow didn't stand in a pulpit every Sunday and say come to me. His earthly ministry wasn't built around a building, it was built around his body in motion, out spreading the gospel, and thousands followed him daily. He didn't say, "Come here, be a bringer." He said, "Follow me," as he set the example of what being a follower of the way was to look like. 2000 years later this is what we have? Busy preachers, running church business, not going out to spread the gospel, just praying for a harvest increase to walk through the doors. Man's tradition, or God's will?

Does your heart not burn with the prompting of the Holy Spirit? Turn to 1 Corinthians 11:1 "Be imitators of me, as I imitate Christ." Paul himself basically told people, "Yo, you wanna see Christ, and live how he lived, do as I do, livid how I live, and then you will know him." Does your life confidently reflect Christ enough, that you would

stand before God himself and say, “I told them to live how I live and do as I do, so they would know who you.” Isn’t that what being an ambassador of Christ is all about?

Isn’t that why we have been given his spirit to “GO ” spread the gospel and baptize in the name of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. Isn’t that why Christ said we would do the same in the world as he did and far greater? Truthfully, how many of us are pursuing a life we want to live and asking God to bless it, instead of living the life God has intended for us all along? Read that question again.

How many of us filter the gospel through the framework of our comfort and traditions? Read both of those questions three more times and take at least a few minutes to really be transparent with yourself and think about it. Do you ask for his blessing yet settle for comfort and complacency when Christ himself said FOLLOW me? Do you think Abraham wanted to uproot his family to wander the desert? Did he choose comfort and complacency, or the discipline of God? What about 40 plus years in the desert Moses spent, or when Elijah was being provided food by ravens? Did our ancestors have easy roads? Stop playing yourself. What’s the real truth of our faith?

The truth is that Jesus Christ set the example of what a follower of Christ looked like, and it had nothing to do with our traditions, comfort, or complacency. It had

everything to do with boldness and reliance on faith in Christ to do his will and to finish his mission here on earth. If you read your Bible you will see a reoccurring blueprint set out by God, through Christ, that he put into action, that can clearly be seen in Paul's ministry as well. A clear-cut set of steps that when implemented, had world-shaking results on every place they would venture. A power so incredible that 12 guys in the middle of the desert, with no internet, no cell phones, no social media, no cars, no electricity, and barely any resources accomplished, and we are talking about it some 2000 years later.

What are those steps? Without writing a full book on it, I tried to condense it into 5 easy steps, and here they are:

1. GO into a lost and dying world. Keyword here is "GO". A prophet doesn't receive a prophet's reward in his own hometown or in his own family. Are you running around your hometown expecting a massive hand of God to move, because Christ himself (God in a body) was limited to even what he could do around his own family and own hometown due to their lack of faith? Why do you think Christ said, "GO" and see what God does outside of your comfort zone and traditional customs?

2. Spread the good news and the gospel. Where? Anywhere! Immediately some think, "Ohh we gotta go build a building to church plant." When you could take an al-

ternative route and use that same money that would build a building and pump it into the local community you are looking to refresh. What's the difference? One is another building on another road with another steeple, vs being a blessing to the local people. This refreshment can help thousands of families. Christ would go into a town and be a blessing and heal people and go into their community and spread the word through love, action, and truth. He didn't go into a community building and say, "Come see me on Sunday and Wednesday at these specific times, as for most of the time I'll be busy with church meetings and other business. Some might say, "Where are we going to meet? A park, in homes, in street corners, coffee shops! Well, what if it gets too big!? Widen your reach and use the resources you already have available to you. If the people you help disciple want a building, they will build it. Your focus should be focused on number three.

3. To those that listen, you gather them. Gather them where? Reread step two. "Where two or more or gathered in my name, I am in the midst," Jesus said that, so it only takes two. You don't need pews to have circles. You don't need a building to have blessings. You don't need massive overhead to have ridiculous success with the gospel. You just have to have the will and determination to serve God. As for gathering, We have way too much technology to be able to reach thousands of people. Covid should have taught you that. We can meet in groups, and do life with one another in a number of ways. I'm not gonna write a list here, but what I will say

is, no matter how you plan on meeting, don't forsake the assembly. Gathering together face to face, not being controlled by worldly fear, is a powerful move of faith, and I personally believe without judgment, it should never be supplemented by a screen. Moving on.

4. Those that you gather you, disciple. How? By following Christ's example. Start a Fight Club with FTP, and go into this lost and dying world and spread the good news and the gospel through action and truth. Looking after widows and orphans in their affliction, looking after the homeless, remember those in prison as if we were there with them. Being a blessing to as many as we can, as often as we can, by showing love, care, generosity, and compassion.

Did Jesus say, "Place yourself higher than the people on a pulpit, speak to them the word of God, and then walk off stage and go about your business? Oh, and make sure to answer emails from congregants on how they think the church should be and what they want to be changed?" No! Christ said "Follow me," as he set the example of how his followers should love one another. Pastors have a ton on their plates, let's help carry the load as a collective!

Gather together and let's go be a blessing to others. Let's show the world the love of Christ through our daily actions, helping provide resources that help people know God without having to build a dependency on man. Let's get together and worship, and walk out disci-

pleship through putting the word into action. Let's take our tithes and put it into spreading the gospel, helping groups that are already in motion, by blessing them with resources through our abundance, so that we can share in the mission, as partners in the harvest.

5. Once you have created disciples, you appoint leaders. Then you rinse and repeat the process!

As you read scripture, look intently at the key example Christ set. The blueprint of his actions is these five things. The blueprint that Paul himself follows is exactly in line with Christ and these steps that have been laid before you. If you read the New Testament you will clearly see scripture is a call to action. For God's people to become so powerful through his spirit that they would do what Christ did and far greater. That his people would become ambassadors of his word, and be commissioned by God through Christ, to spread the good news of the gospel and baptize in the name of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. Then he would be with them until the end of the age.

“For this, you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might FOLLOW in his steps.” 1 Peter 2:21

And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and FOLLOW me. Mark 8:34

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should GO and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you so that you will love one another.

If anyone serves me, he must FOLLOW me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. John 12:26

And he said to them, ``FOLLOW ME and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. And he went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people... After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, “Follow me.” And leaving everything, he rose and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at the table with them. And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Luke 5:27-33.

What did he leave? Everything.

Go therefore and make disciples of, ALL THE NATIONS, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

These are but a few examples that I hope you find encouraging. The days of man's tradition are about to be laid to waste. The ways of old are passing with respect to their generation, the torch is being passed. A ragtag motley crew that the world has rejected has been given the torch by God almighty, to finish the mission. The line is drawn in the sand between those who proclaim his name and those who live out his will through action and in truth.

STEADFAST

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:58

No matter what you are going through in life, you can be sure that a life that is fully submitted to God's work through Jesus Christ will be a progressive successful one. In these times, it seems more and more darkness tends to surround us, but that's when a true disciple's light will shine brighter than ever. It's our testimony not by words, but by actions that create such an impact on the world around us. Now is not the time to lose hope, but to realize we have been made for such a time as this. Unity in the body is paramount and that only comes through esteeming others higher than yourself, walking as an example of Christ, by putting love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness to the forefront of all that you do!

Paul said in Romans, 12:-1-21; "I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the

measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

So it's time to put that measure of faith into action in apportion to what has been given to you. The word of God will not return to him void, and we have an opportunity to participate in his harvest by stepping out into the field and working on it! We do not know who will follow suit, but we must go anyway. To those that listen to us, they are those who are being led to eternal life. To those we are a smell of death, those are the ones that are perishing. We have the ability today to walk in the same spirit of Christ and represent him to the fullest of our ability.

Our time, talent, and resources should not be set on just the job we work, and the provisions that the world has to offer. We have been taught to seek the world first and God second. Of course, working is important, of course, your family and provisions are extremely necessary, but when you put his kingdom first, all these things are added to you! When we lack this understanding we are missing out on God's best in our lives. When we know it but choose to put the world first, we short-change ourselves on what it really means to live lives the way God has intended.

In a world full of distractions we are the city set on a hill for all to see. Judgment will come, fingers will point, tri-

als and tribulations will surface. But, with a heart fully set on serving God through the finished works of Jesus Christ, your work will always prevail.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. John 3:16-17

Now that we know we have been saved we can apply these simple steps to discipleship. These should always be at the forefront of our mind because this is the very reason why God gave us breath, to finish the mission!

1. We are to go into a lost and dying world. 2. Speak the gospel of truth and show what it looks like being walked out through action. 3. To those who listen, we gather together to teach God's word and collectively work together to continue to walk it out in action. (This is called discipleship.) 4. We take the spiritually mature and appoint leaders. 5. We go back out into the world and then repeat the process. This allows us to work together as a collective, as we continue to go out into the world and multiply and increase the harvest! This is the way!
(Mando voice)

So, if you're not gathering with a good group of disciples, fix it. If you're sitting in a stagnant church that lacks growth because its aim isn't making more disciples, fix it. The gathering isn't for religious purposes, it's to spur

each other into good works and become a refreshment for one another. It's not a buffet, it's a refreshment, a canteen for the workers.

When you give, your tithes and offerings are a sign of obedience to God, in which he himself will reward. They aren't set up for you to act as if you're now a stockholder, and you're expecting returns out of the church. You are called to be a refreshment to others in the same way others have been a refreshment to you. In your giving, you are making a way to reach others so they can experience the love, freedom, and grace you have found through Christ!

Today is your day to go and be the light you have been called to be. Know that your eternal reward is in heaven's house where thieves, rust, and moths cannot destroy. Your eternal inheritance is in heaven waiting for you when your work is done. Sometimes in the natural world, your work may feel meaningless, but God knows what he has prepared for those who love him. Plus, you never truly know how many people are being impacted. You may be planting the seeds of a harvest that you will never see. But, God sees your work in the harvest and it will never go without a reward. Just trust him and know that he has called you to represent him. Man's opinion is not necessary for you to step out and follow God. There are too many leaders worried about being number one, instead of multiplying the harvest. You have the ability to change that rhetoric. You have the ability to step out and make the change that God has called you to in this world.

Don't sell yourself short on a false sense of humility by trying to follow the example of religious men who put position over the progression. Step forward and let the Holy Spirit guide you in all ways, all of the days of your life. Keep yourself surrounded with a good group of action takers who take the gospel out into the word and continuously multiply it. Put your tithes and offerings into ministries that are creating disciples, that you know do God's work. Partner in the harvest and stay pressing. Before you know it you will be standing face to face with what's to come for eternity. Don't let this world, or the lack of love in it cause you to stumble. Go and be the representative of God you know you have been called to be. Go be FTP.

NOURISHMENT

Psalm 34:8-9 "Oh taste and see that the LORD is good. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Oh fear the LORD, you his holy ones, for there is no lack with those who fear him."

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4

How amazing is it that God created us not only in his image but for us to find nourishment for our souls through his word!? How many of us have actually taken the time to stop and think about the word of God as nourishment?

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. John 6:35

Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. John 6:32

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—1 Peter 2:2

I remember going days without the word, and each of those days was always extremely different compared to the days that I would invest my time into the gospel. I do not find it odd at all that I was having trouble getting through the days, because I was lacking the proper fuel for me to operate correctly. Just as the food is to the body, the word of God is to the soul. Imagine, I only missed a few days and I felt like I was starving. Imagine what kind of lives people have to live that have never had the opportunity to taste and see that the Lord is good?

Well, it doesn't take long to realize what goes on, all you have to do is turn on your tv, or go outside to public places and just observe. Sin nature runs rampant everywhere. You offer some people the word of God and they look at you like you're crazy. But if they were starving and you offered them a free meal, they would happily accept! Why? To the best of my experience, it normally narrows itself down to two main categories. 1. It's either they have never experienced the nourishment that comes from God through the word. Or 2. They were

force-fed a manipulated version or were raised up around horrible examples of people that called themselves Christians. Either way, it's tragic, because, without the word of God, there is no way to operate in the fullness of what you have been called to be.

Think about it, if you were sick, and someone offered you a known cure with nothing but positive side effects, you would probably accept the cure. But when offered the opportunity to have true fulfillment in this life, and eternal life surrounded by love, some choose to run the other way. But, if they've been force-fed it or refuse to try it, do you just pack up shop, give up, and go on your way? Absolutely not! You just keep representing love in their lives through action.

I personally figured out the best way to serve Christ is to walk how he walked, talk how he talked, and do what he did. If he could successfully take 12 disciples and multiply them into 2.4 billion professing Christians, then I think we can endure a little hardship, and evaluate what works and what doesn't.

The best thing I've ever seen is to keep your mouth shut and be available to people who are in need through our actions. Not arguing, grumbling, or complaining about wading through the waste of someone else's mistakes. Instead, being loving, nonjudgmental, and meeting people right where they're at. Loving people unconditionally in their mess, but caring enough not to let them stay that way.

This to me is an amazing way to share your testimony without words. Trust me, people have already heard what they need to do by more than enough people.

They've probably had a ton of people already give up on them, and they also are probably their own worst critic/enemy. The last thing they need from you is adding insult to injury, it's pointless. They do not care if you have all the right answers and can point them in all the right directions if you cannot find enough love in your heart to meet someone where they're at, you need to be spending more time reading the word, instead of telling people the way you would choose to do things over the way God would.

I believe it all starts with feeding yourself the word of God daily. As you eat you will become full so much that you will have an abundance. Out of your abundance, you will be able to supply other people with their needs. If you are hungry, what good will you do to help someone else needing nourishment? If you yourself are full and have food to spare, you will be able to help those who are in need? I say read the word as often as possible not for some religious reason, but because of the amazing benefits, it will have on you. If you will allow me to be so bold, I would go so far as saying it's as important as sleep, food, and water is to the human body, I would say the word of God is 100x as important.

Why? Because the human body can operate on its own in many ways. Your digestive tract, your brain, your

heart, the blood running through your veins. It all is going on in the background. But, what is always at the forefront of our minds is our social interactions and how they make us feel. Our communication is something that we all have the ability to control if we learn. In all these social settings we are faced with either being an influencer or the one being influenced. The word of God is a filter that helps us know what is good to intake, and what is bad to intake. It teaches us how to control our tongue, our emotions, the basis of our morality, our discernment and understanding. It's literally the most vital part of all communications.

Without it, we are left to a way that seems right to a man, that ultimately leads to death. Once we taste and see what is good, it's very difficult to turn away from God's way. The only way to turn back from God's way is when someone is so selfish that you would choose their fleshly desires, over the way God would want them to go. They trade what's temporary for eternal.

I don't want you to take my word for it, but at least take the time to challenge yourself if you're willing. Create an amount of time each day, and dedicate it to reading or listening to the word of God every day, for the next 30 days. Just see how it affects your life. If you feel it's not for you and did nothing, then do your own thing. If it is for you, and you feel like you've progressed because of it, then find a way to implement it into your daily life! I've never met anyone that actually dedicated themselves to reading the word, that didn't progress mentally, physi-

cally, financially, or relationally. After 30 days, assess so you can progress!

Today I pray that each and every one of you accepts the challenge of reading the word of God daily, in some capacity. I truly believe that the implementation of the word will help nourish your soul in so many ways you may have never known to be possible. I pray that God instills a fiery desire of servitude within you and that you accomplish the mission that has been set before you. I pray God gives you the wisdom and the guidance to bring his will into full completion in your life! That you will know Christ and know the truth and know that the truth sets you free for all of eternity. In Jesus' holy name, amen! Victory is yours, now go out and get it!

REPRESENT OR RE-PRESENT

God's love through action and truth, based on the finished works of Jesus Christ.

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” 'Mark 8:34-38

Christ was walking to his death, knowing that what was to come was far greater than what he was leaving behind. He came to save the world from its wickedness, by setting the captives free. Those he sets free are free indeed. But free to do what? If you think it’s free to live however you see fit and then ask for forgiveness, then you have missed the point of Christ entirely.

See Christianity is us denying ourselves and picking up our crosses to follow God daily. Religion is, “I was broke so I stole a bike and then asked God for forgiveness.” The latter was the example set for me most of my life. It wasn’t until I personally read the Gospels to understand who Christ actually was, and the lives we have been called to live.

If you notice it says, “For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.” This is referring to people who see Christ and make a conscious effort to deny him as lord and savior. Those that have understood the truth but choose to deny its power by living a life contrary to what God has called them to live. Someone might ask, well what about the people who have never heard the gospel, isn’t it unfair for them if they don’t know Christ?

Scripture says:

“For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.” Romans 1:20

See, the ways of a man's heart were made wicked by man choosing flesh over God. But, we have been designed to walk in relation with God regardless if you have ever heard the gospel. You can look around and see that there is something much larger at play than what we ourselves have been able to create. In having this awareness there is a conscious choice being made to either pay homage or serve self.

Now, that answer might not settle well with you, but it’s the very reason why Christ came is so that we have an example to follow. It’s our opportunity to take that example and become imitators of it. Scripture says those

who love him will live how he lived. So, how did he live here on earth? He lived out his days in servitude, spreading the good news of the gospel through actions and truth. This is the example set, and this is what we should dedicate our time, talent, and resources to doing.

There is a lost and dying world out there that is praying and hoping for a savior. That savior already came and his name is Jesus Christ. He came and set the example for us to follow, so much so that when he left, God himself commissioned us in the place of his son. Not only did Christ sacrifice fill the gap between God and humanity, he did so in such a way that God put the same spirit that was in Christ in us so that we would do the same works Christ did here on earth and far greater. This spirit in us allows us to be one in Christ, as Christ is one in the Father. (Read John 17)

So, in reference to the beginning scripture in this lesson ask yourself, are you ashamed of God and his word in this day in age? Are you living out your life as a imitator of Christ? Are you choosing to stay quiet and not share the gospel through your life lived in accordance to God's will? People will know you by the fruit you bear, so when someone thinks of you do they think of Jesus? That might be a really good question to ask people that have known you for a while. I wonder if some of you would be surprised at the answer, especially if you gave people the opportunity, to be honest with you.

Imagine asking people, “If I was to die today, what would be the three to five things that you would remember about me? Or, if you had to sum up what I do on a daily basis, what would it be?” Wouldn’t it be amazing to get true unadulterated answers to those questions? Do you think God would be brought up at all in the questions being asked? Scripture says, they will know you by the fruit you bear, what fruit is on your tree?

It’s easy to fake generosity, it’s easy to proclaim Jesus but not walk out his love through action and truth. It’s really easy to claim God, then go do what you want to do and pray for forgiveness later. Ohh It’s really easy to appear godly and deny his power by using your position to entertain the lust of your flesh. But, when Christ looks at you what does he see? When you look at yourself in the mirror, what do you actually see? Do you see a warrior sold out for the gospel who has died to self and lives through Christ? Or do you see another man, claiming God and still walking in the ways of the world, doing what you actually desire, and saying “I’ll be better one day?”

Do you think people don’t see the truth? Do you actually think you can deceive people walking in the spirit? The world may fall for half-hearted attempts, but the sheep know the Shepherd’s voice. Those that truly follow Christ will live how he lived, walk how he walks. So why try and fake it, hoping to make it? There’s no reason to take on a form of godliness but deny its power.

You have the ability to decide for yourself, but the time is coming when God will reveal that you either lived for him, sold out and unashamed, or that you shrunk back like a coward. Calculate the cost Jesus said. Calculate the cost between fleshly desire and serving God. Hot or cold, if you are lukewarm he will spit you out of his mouth.

Today we have a choice to be the torchbearers of our generation. This can be the time where the greatest warriors ever known to man live, or it can be the generation who failed to represent God. Obviously we stand judgment for our own actions, but we can still spur each other into good works. Have we really come this far not to finish strong? Isn't this the generation that needs to see love, care, generosity, forgiveness, and compassion, reign supreme? Don't we have the same power Christ has in him to do what he did, and far greater? Then we are without excuse.

Today is the day, the second, and the hour, we make the conscious choice of life or death. Life, being a servant of God through living out the finished works of Jesus Christ. Death, having a form of godliness but denying its power through our actions. We have this choice every second of every day. The power entrusted to you through the spirit is to set the example of what true love looks like by freeing the captives of this world. That true love has a name and that name is Jesus Christ. It's time that we individually and collectively start serving him well.

I pray all of this finds a place in your heart, and that your actions represent Christ in all ways all of the days of your life. We all fall short of the glory of God daily, so don't focus on your behavior and focus on your savior. When you believe right you will live right. God will give you the understanding necessary to complete your mission and finish strong.

THE THIEF

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
John 10:10

It's time to stop blaming God for the shortcomings in your life and come to know the actual truth. God, through Christ alone, has come so that you have the ability to live an abundant life through faith. Scripture says, "in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 2 Cor 5:19.

That means while there is still a portion of time called today, you have the ability to turn from your ways and seek God through the finished works of Christ. "If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9

There is no greater message for a time like this. Evil and corruption run rampant in the streets. We all are seeking justification for our actions, but people stuck in their flesh are solely driven by their lustful carnal desires. They find no peace because they have no sense of moral law. Their law is the appetite of their flesh. They deny the power of the one true moral lawgiver, by the actions they choose. Just listen to the words coming out of people's mouths in the last days.

Scripture says:

“In the last days, there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.” 2 Timothy 3:1-5

Well, if we are being honest with one another, the things listed above are starting to appear everywhere. It isn't hard to tell that the actions of the flesh are causing hell on earth. Because of these things, the wrath of God will come upon the earth. Until that time comes, we are faced with dealing with the hardships until departure or his arrival. But, the more turmoil and hardship we face as followers of Christ, the brighter we shine!

As unrighteousness increases, so does the hardness and the bitterness of the hearts of those who walk in the flesh. So, what do we do? Do we sit back and hide, go make little communities out in the woods to stay far away from the terrors of what's outside of our front door? Or, do we gladly lay our lives down for one another out of love, knowing that Christ set the example we should follow? Obviously the latter!

It's our God-given opportunity to serve Christ with all that we have in this life. When you finally come to the

end of yourself and your carnal desires, you realize all your pleasure and fulfillment in this life are wrapped up in serving God through the finished works of Jesus Christ. When you taste and see that the word of God is good, and apply it to your life, you will never want to trade righteousness for unrighteousness, clean linen for filthy rags.

We have been clothed in righteousness as co-heirs and ambassadors of Christ. That means God lives in our bodies through the spirit he placed in us, to finish the work that he has called us to do. What in the world can compare to that? Nothing! But, when you are not surrounded with people that are edifying you in the word of God, you are left with people who are in the world pursuing the ways of the flesh. This leads to constant temptation and the opportunity to fall short due to a lack of commitment. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Today is the day to be mindful of Christ's sacrifice, be strategic in your movements, and walk-in love in all situations. Don't become emotionally reactive as one who is still subjected to the weakness of carnal desires. Instead, learn to proactively control your emotions for the benefit of others, creating experiences of love seasoned with grace. Those with understanding can control their environment, shaping culture and ethics through forgiveness, love, grace, and mercy. Don't shrink back! To those that are saved, boldly declare the finished works of Jesus Christ through love, action, and truth! Do not shrink back from doing good, break free from the

ways of the world to pursue God's righteousness through your actions. Now is not the time to lose your zeal, instead be fulfilled by the power of God that lives inside you. Spur one another unto good works through meeting together regularly, replenishing each other through the word of God. Make joyful praise unto The Lord knowing that he himself will soon reign justice on the righteous and the unrighteousness. Until that day comes, it's our God-given opportunity to pull others back that are running towards the flames.

To the unbeliever, you have the ability to have life and life abundantly through the finished works of Jesus Christ. Today is the day, now is the hour to humbly submit yourself before your creator and put on the clothes of righteousness. You have entertained the desires of your flesh to only come up empty-handed. The hole that is inside of you that you keep trying to fill with the ways of the world only gets bigger. That hole was only designed to be filled by God's spirit through the finished works of Jesus Christ! That whole is called fulfillment, and when consumed by the spirit of God, it leads to eternal life.

You have forgiveness of sins, past, present, and future. You don't have to get yourself right before you come to God. No one can get themselves right and that's why we need God through the finished works of Jesus Christ! Stop beating yourself up over what you have done, how bad your past is, and all that has happened thus far. Instead, give it to God and turn from your ways

to pursue him. Then you will trade in your guilt, shame, and condemnations, for conviction, forgiveness, love, grace, and mercy!

You have the ability to choose death or life every second of every day. Let your will be his way, trading the old for the new, and you will reign over your pain. You will find the peace and comfort of a sound mind, knowing that the finished works of Jesus Christ is now your mission. Now is the time to dedicate your gifting, talents, and calling to freeing others from the chains of unrighteousness that you yourself were once bound by.

Today is the day for both saved and unsaved to make a choice. Choose the world and it's carnal desires, or choose to help save others by pulling them back from the flames. Will you be walking in selfishness, or laying your life down to selflessly serve others through love?

GODFIDENCE

Have you ever seen someone who operated in faith that was able to consistently manifest their dreams into reality? What about a time where you may have seen someone speak faith-filled words without doubt, and then saw it come to pass in their lives? When this happens in people's lives unexpectedly, it's oftentimes written as coincidental or by happenstance. What's really going on more often than not, people are unknowingly activating what I like to call, "Spiritual laws of faith." Let's see an example of what I'm talking about:

Scripture says, "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Mark 11:24

The verse you see above is a spiritual law. When you operate in faith, you are given access to these spiritual laws through the word of God. Once revealed, you are able to apply the principles of these spiritual laws into your life and reap the reward of them. Take the aforementioned verse right above this paragraph for instance. That's literally the word of God being made manifest through Jesus Christ. If we believe in God and God's word, then there is no reason to doubt it right? I mean what does the word say about the word of God? "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever." Isaiah 40:8

The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations. Psalms 33:11

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Hebrews 13:8

If His words are truth and the truth is never changing, then His spiritual laws are the same. If both have been brought about through his word in which we trust, then why would we not use our faith to activate them to the fullest extent possible? There's a laundry list of other verses I can show you, but these verses alone should suffice. Each verse here provides you with enough understanding that if God said it, then it's true, and it's been given to you to use! You have complete and total access to each of God's spiritual laws when you choose to put them into action through faith. But how do you do it?

You pay attention to scripture! Don't let people take verses out of context and make up a fairy tale story for fiction. No, you allow scripture to interpret scripture, by reading it in its proper context. That means you need to read the first verse before, and the last verse after, at a minimum! Now that we have included the first and last verse in addition to the verse previously referenced, let's go back to scripture to see how we receive what we pray for!

“And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up

and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." Mark 11:22-25

The result we want is to activate the spiritual law to receive what we pray for, right? Then let's break it down!

1. "Have faith in God." Without faith how can you expect to receive anything?
2. Say. "whoever says to this mountain" You must actively use your faith through your words. Don't just think it, proclaim it in Jesus' name by saying it!
3. "Do not doubt in your heart, believe it will come to pass"
4. "Ask for it in prayer, and believe you have already received it."
5. Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

Boom! Scripture is properly being broken down to activate the spiritual law of receiving in 5 easy to under-

stand steps! Did we create a magical formula for success? No, we simply read the word of God in proper context, without watering down scripture. Doesn't sound like much of a secret to me. No need to write watered-down books to sell half-truths to the masses for mere monetary gain. That's deception.

Sadly, many people buy those books with hopes that what's written will work. Yet, when they try to activate the formulas many of them fail because they took spiritual principles of God and removed the author of life who spoke them into existence! These watered-down formulas have an appearance of Godliness, but deny the power of faith in God. Good luck trying to activate God's spiritual laws without having faith in Him, it ain't happening.

If you've exposed yourself to these types of teaching, don't lose faith because of misinformed or manipulative men. The word of God is alive and well, sharper than any double-edged sword! He had you in mind before he laid the foundations of the earth. Since before your birth, he had created physical laws and spiritual laws for you to abide in accordance with his goodwill and pleasure. He gives richly to those who seek out his wisdom to understand. Scripture says,

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.” Matthew 7:7-8

See! There's another spiritual law! Scripture is filled with them, and now you know how to break them down to properly apply them to your life! It makes scripture the greatest pursuit on the planet when you understand that you have access to change your life mentally, physically, financially, and relationally, through the word of God. All of these spiritual laws are waiting on you to be activated through faith, resulting in living a life you could never imagine. As crazy as it sounds, all you have to do is believe.

My prayer today is that you realize you are loved more than you can ever imagine. That you stop being duped by watered-down half-truths, and pursue the righteousness of God through faith. I pray you will come to the knowledge of who you are, what you've been called to, and that you come into the full knowledge and understanding of how to take God's word and apply it into your life! There is more love, grace, freedom, and wisdom waiting for you than you can ever imagine.

The Tongue

The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. Luke 6:45

Ever wonder why being around some people charged you up and being around others brought you down? Don't act like you haven't ever had that feeling. You can say whatever affirmation you need to keep the positive vibes going, but what I'm talking about is true. There are some people you get around and no matter how you spin it, they end up draining you of your energy. I used to not understand it until I started running across scriptures like:

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits. Proverbs 18:21- Meditate on this!

Or

There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Proverbs 12:18

My conclusion: People I liked to be around that gave me energy, were positive people that talked about goals, aspirations, accomplishments, strategies, and ways to stay positive. They talked about ways to stay positive

mentally, physically, spiritually, and financially. They looked to add value and provide solutions, not make excuses or increase problems. Those people are givers! However, the people that drain me, (aka takers) are always talking about other people and their problems. They are focused on gossiping, lying, trying to make excuses, and appear better than they are. They are always complaining, creating more problems than solutions.

What does scripture have to say about individuals who operate in that way?

“There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.” Proverbs 6:16-19

You could make a case that three out of the seven, possibly more, have to do with that mouth! These are the things God hates and finds an abomination! So if we know that “It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person,” Matt 15:11 **Then why do we keep running our mouths?**

“I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your

words you will be justified, and by your words, you will be condemned.” Matt 12:36-37

If you have read/believe in God's word, then you already know what's coming. Why not focus on letting “no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. Ephesians 4:29

Putting, “Away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 1 Peter 2:1

Knowing that “A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies will not escape”
Proverbs 19:5

I'm not here to pass judgment, I make mistakes on a daily basis. I'm just here providing some knowledge from the scriptures and asking you to help hold me accountable as well! Better act like you know! “No human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.” James 3:8 But, “Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.”
Proverbs 21:23

So what do we do? Either stop running our mouths or when we do, let it be edifying and for building one another up in love!

For, “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; 1 Peter 3:10

So let’s do it, let’s hold each other accountable to speaking life and love. Let’s forgive transgressions and be of use to one another through edification through the spirit that lives within us. If God himself keeps no records of our wrongs, we should do the same for one another, so that neither one of us falls into judgment! If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

So let's hold each other accountable by keeping one another in check. Here's a couple of scriptures that actually read really well as a prayer when put together. Pay attention to the inserts I've placed and you'll see what I'm saying:

Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips! Psalms 141:3 Let (my) your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that (I) you may know how (I) you ought to answer each person. Colossians 4:6 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Psalms 19:14

Now, this might help us along the way! I'd encourage you, that if you have anything that helps you keep you in check, feel free to share it with me on social media. I

would love to see what you guys come up with! I know stuff is hard out there in the world, but that's why God gave us each other. We are here to help spur each other on into the good works God has prepared for us and to hold each other accountable, by uplifting each other through love. So let's get out there and be the change we want to see, let's go be FTP!

HUNDREDFOLD

“Yes,” Jesus replied, “and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property—along with persecution. And in the world to come that person will have eternal life.” Mark 10:29-30

Once you're sold out for the gospel nothing else really matters. Sure, some stumble and fall off the path along the way, but once you've tasted and seen that the Lord is good, you don't ever want to go back to the way things were before. The way of the world has nothing to offer you any longer. Of course, the persecution becomes weighty at times, but it's nothing that you can't handle through the spirit God has placed in you. Yet, one heavy roadblock always seems to stand in the way of your ministry once you're saved. It's trying to walk in the full power of Christ in your own hometown and own home.

This is a topic that I used to struggle with for a long time until God revealed to me in scripture that, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” Mark 6:4. See Jesus knew what I was struggling with, he too had the same issue in his earthly ministry. Christ Was able to do miraculous signs and wonders, but when it came to his

family and hometown, scripture says he couldn't do much because of the people's lack of faith.

Can you imagine that all of the power of God manifests in Christ's body, and they still choose to not believe it? Doesn't sound much different than what happens nowadays though does it? Think about it, scripture says that we have the same spirit that lives in Christ, in us.

Through that spirit we can do the same works he did in his earthly ministry and far greater. Have you ever wondered why you haven't seen the power of God move in your life the way he did in Christ's life while he was here on earth? Might be a tough one, but have you ever fully decided to dedicate yourself to the gospel in such a way that you decided to live how Christ lived here on earth? Christ knew the issues we would face dealing with the comfort zones of our families and hometown.

He knew it would be such a huge problem that he gave his word that those who left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, would not fail to receive a hundred times as much and eternal life.

If that's the case, why aren't we all jumping up and going on our way? I mean really, why would you not go? Is it because you doubt the word of God? Is it that you are so comfortable where you are, you decided not to live dependent on the great comforter to guide you?

I can only speculate, but I personally believe it's probably because most people choose their comfort over their calling. The comfort of their family and hometown is really all that some people know. Maybe, they feel like because they have belief in God that they will go to heaven. So they have faith, and they try to do some of the Lord's work, but they are limited because of the lack of faith in their home/hometown. Why doesn't it work?

It's kinda common sense that the people you grew up around knew who you were while you were growing up. Some of them remember your past better than you do. Some of them have wild stories they like to bring up to make themselves feel better. They already have heard your "Once was lost but now I've been found story." Some of them changed your diapers, some of them beat you for being a wild child.

How do you expect those same people to believe you have all the power of Christ living in you, and that you're going to do what he did and far greater? Sure they will be proud of you, and give God praise that you follow him, but are you happy with not operating in the full power of the spirit? Staying in His hometown didn't work for Christ, how are you gonna accomplish things Christ was unable to when it's his spirit that lives in you? It's worth taking some time to think about.

Say what you want, argue what you will, but it just isn't happening. I'm not talking as one who doesn't know, I've experienced it several times through my walk. As

hard-headed as a person could be, I tried and tried over and over again, kicking at the goads like a madman. Almost always coming up empty-handed. I'd see someone healed, I would lay hands on the sick, but that's about it. Oddly enough that's the extent of what Christ accomplished in his hometown.

I don't expect you to take my word for it, but I do have some experience in this department. I became so sold out that I wanted to follow Christ to the best of my ability. So I made the conscious effort to sell all of my possessions including my home, to pursue the will of God. I am in no way boasting, all glory be to God he has allowed me to live fully dedicated to his mission for my life, for over seven years. From sleeping on a cot in a car to rooms smaller than a prison cell, garages, in and out of hotels alike. I've literally experienced what it is to have about as little as you possibly can have and live for Christ.

Out of all of it, the greatest thing I've learned in the past eight years is that when you are 50 miles outside of your hometown, in places you are unfamiliar with, around people you don't know, the power of God moves in your life in ways you could never imagine. You become immersed in the spirit when all you have to rely on is your faith in the word of God. Distractions become minimal when you are living solely to spread the word. The apostles said if they had just water and clothing that it would be enough. When's the last time you took that approach in life? When's the last time you even left your

state to go represent God in an unfamiliar place? I don't want you to answer me, I want you to search your heart and make sure it's in line with the will of God for your life!

My prayer for you today is to search your heart on what it means to have faith in God, vs living faith out through love, action, and in truth. I pray that God reveals your hidden areas of comfort, and exposes them to you so that you can deal with them in accordance with God's will for your life. I pray you don't miss out on a single opportunity to represent him to the best of your ability. I pray that when you read the word, you don't read it in such a way that it entertains your comfort through the lens of complacency. Instead, I hope it is read and interpreted only through the spirit of God that lives within you.

As scripture says, no man should have to teach you, God himself writes his laws on your head and in your hearts. This is the time God gave you to be the torch-bearer of your generation. He takes no pleasure in a timid spirit, or in those who shrink back. In fact, cowards are the first to enter into the lake of fire, in the second death. (Rev 21:8)

Since you know the truth, let it set you free from the chains that seek to bind you. Do not let the comforts and complacency of this world cause you to live a life of mediocrity when you were created to be so much more. Don't forget who you are, and whom you belong to!

Keep yourself around the brethren, spurring each other to do the good works God has had planned for you to do since before he laid the foundations of the earth. Never lose your zeal, It's time to get out there and slay some giants. May you find everything you need from God through the finished works of Jesus Christ.

Until next time!!!

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