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INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLICAL COUNSELING DATABASE

The *Biblical Counseling Database* provides scriptural resources on common issues faced in counseling. It presents God's Word as the ultimate resource for how and what to counsel.

The introduction and opening chapters of the guide provide a biblical approach to counseling. The database provides scriptural guidelines for common topics of concern in counseling. The contents are organized alphabetically and each listing includes a definition of the topic, basic facts concerning it, guidelines for dealing with it, and what the Bible says about the subject. The Appendices provide practical guidelines for establishing a counseling ministry, selecting a biblical counselor, and additional scriptural resources. The material contained in this database is based solely on the Holy Bible, the Word of God. All scriptures are from the NIV version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

This database is designed for those seeking biblical counsel for their lives; professional Christian counselors; ministers; chaplains; and believers desiring to counsel and help others. The database can also be used by new believers as a primer to familiarize themselves with biblical guidelines for living in the Kingdom of God.

Use this database to guide the discussion of relevant issues during counseling. At the conclusion of the session, the data for the topic(s) covered can be given to the counselee--either in the form of a hard-copy print-out or through a follow-up e-mail. The counselor may also add action steps that the counselee has agreed to take, and notes on additional scriptures or subjects discussed.

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This site is not intended to replace legitimate medical treatment or professional biblical counseling, as we believe these are good gifts provided by God to assist in achieving a state of total well-being (James 1:17).

The authenticity of this site is verified by an Almighty God who has declared:

*"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."
(Isaiah 55:11,NKJV)*

*"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."
(Joshua 1:8)*

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INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLICAL COUNSELING DATABASE

Harvestime International Network presents

"An Introduction To The Biblical Counseling Database."

The Biblical Counseling Database is a free internet resource provided by Harvestime at:
<http://www.biblicalcounselingdatabase.net>

The Biblical Counseling Database provides scriptural resources on common issues faced in counseling. It presents God's Word as the ultimate resource for how and what to counsel.

The introduction and opening chapters of the guide provide instruction in a biblical approach to counseling.

Chapters include:

Chapter One:	Biblical Counseling
Chapter Two:	The Biblical Counselor
Chapter Three:	The Basis And Basics
Chapter Four:	Dealing With Root Causes
Chapter Five:	Raising The Spiritually Dead
Chapter Six:	Prayer In Biblical Counseling

Chapter Seven: Basic Counseling Strategies

Chapter Eight: The Goals Of Biblical Counseling

The database itself provides scriptural guidelines for common topics of concern in counseling.

The contents are organized alphabetically and each listing includes:

- A definition of the issue.
- Basic facts about it.
- Guidelines for dealing with it
- What the Bible says about the subject.

Here are some of the subjects covered by the database:

Abortion
Abuse
Addictions
Adultery
Alcoholism
Anger
Anxiety And Worry
Assurance
Attitudes
Authority
Backsliding
Baptisms
Bitterness
Blasphemy
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Unpardonable sin

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Weakness

Wisdom

Worldliness

The Appendices of the database include:

- How to establish a telephone counseling ministry
- How to establish a lay-counseling ministry
- Biblical guidelines for behaviors that should be put off and put on
- Guidelines for selecting a biblical counselor.
- Guidelines for new believers.

This database is designed for those seeking biblical counsel for their lives; professional Christian counselors; ministers; chaplains; and believers desiring to counsel and help others.

The database can also be used by new believers as a primer to familiarize themselves with biblical guidelines for living in the Kingdom of God.

Use this database to guide the discussion of relevant issues during counseling. At the conclusion of the session, the data for the topic(s) covered can be given to the counselee--either in the form of a hard-copy print-out or through a follow-up e-mail. The material is in MS Word format, so the counselor may also add action steps that the counselee has agreed to take, and notes on additional scriptures or subjects discussed.

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Note: This Microsoft Word document, and PDF documents made from this document, have, in the Table of Contents, clickable links to chapter starts or topics. Place the mouse cursor over a blue colored topic, hold down the Ctrl key on the computer keyboard and add a left click of the computer mouse. In the PDF version, when one moves the mouse cursor over a link, a hand icon appears. One can simply left click the mouse to go to the expanded topic.

CHAPTER ONE

BIBLICAL COUNSELING

It was a dismal time in the lives of God's people that was described by the Prophet Jeremiah. The people were backslidden, they refused to repent, and they rejected the Word of the Lord. The conditions were so dire that death was preferred to life (Jeremiah 8).

In the midst of these tragic circumstances, significant questions are raised:..*"Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"* (Jeremiah 8:22). Gilead was a region east of Jordan that was famous for its medicinal salve. The questions--applied spiritually--were seeking answers as to why there was no cure for a suffering people. Where was the balm? Where was the physician who would apply the cure? Why were God's people continuing to live in defeat and bondage? The Old Testament King Jehoshaphat raised a similar query: "Is there no prophet of the Lord?", he asked as he faced a tremendous challenge from enemy nations (2 Kings 3).

Similar questions are echoing around the world today. Why are so many believers in bondage to addictions, harmful emotions, and sinful practices? Is there no "balm in Gilead" to heal their wounds? Are there no "spiritual physicians" to apply the healing ointment of the Word of God? Is there no prophet of the Lord to speak the Word of Life that will set them free?

There is a desperate need for the ministry of what may be called prophetic counseling--counseling that is wholly based upon the Holy Bible, the authoritative Word of God. We need counselors who believe that God means exactly what He says and that the Word has within it the inherent power to meet very need--spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, and financial.

We need men and women of God who will boldly declare, "Thus says the Lord" to a lost, hurting, and spiritually dying world. Where are the spiritual leaders who will counsel prophetically, speaking forth the Word of God in answer to human need? Where are those who, instead of referring people to secular professionals, believe God's declaration...

...so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.
(Isaiah 55:11, NIV)

As born-again believers, we believe that the Bible reveals salvation through Jesus Christ as the only way to obtain forgiveness from sin and guarantee eternal life. If we are staking our eternal destiny on the promises of redemption and salvation, then why do we hesitate to believe God's Word concerning deliverance, healing, and miracles? Why do we seek something other than the scriptures for answers to our problems?

Many pastors and church leaders today are referring people to secular psychologists, counselors, and clinics instead of dispensing the life-changing Word of God that will meet every need--

spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically. God's command is not "refer my people", "institutionalize my people", or "put my people on medication". His Word is "*Comfort, comfort my people says your God*" (Isaiah 40:1).

SECULAR PSYCHOLOGY

Secular psychology studies behavior and attempts to meet the needs of hurting people through scientific methods and theories developed by observation, experimentation, and experience. While psychology can help someone understand their negative behavior and enable them to acknowledge their problems, such issues can only be properly dealt with in the life of a believer through application of scriptural principles. How can an unbeliever, who does not acknowledge God or His Word, counsel a believer whose whole life and destiny is rooted in faith?

God declared: "*The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and trapped. Since they have rejected the word of the Lord, what kind of wisdom do they have?*" (Jeremiah 8:9). Is this the kind of counsel that you, as a believer, want to seek? Is this the type of "professional help" that you want to refer your family, friends, or followers to receive?

Many basic tenets of psychology are at odds with the scriptures. For example, secular psychologists may say, "It will take a long time to deal with this problem. You need extended counseling." But that is not what we see in the Word of God. When Jesus spoke the prophetic Word of God to hurting people, they were immediately healed, delivered, saved, and set free. Jesus never referred anyone to a secular professional for help. He never told anyone it would take "extended counseling" to deal with their issues. The Word was spoken and--if the recipient responded positively to it--they were immediately made whole spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally.

Consider the case of the Gadarene man who was possessed by a legion of demons (Mark 5:1-20). A legion in the natural world at that time consisted of five to six thousand foot soldiers under Roman rule. This man had mental issues so great that he lived in a graveyard! He had supernatural strength from a host of demonic spirits. He was alienated from society and engaged in self-destructive behavior--cutting himself. Jesus spoke eight words: "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!"--and this man's life was changed (Mark 5:8). No long-term counseling needed. No referral to a mental facility. Just eight powerful Words from the lips of the Master.

For another example, consider the psychological model of the stages of grief. In response to tragedies such as death, terrible accidents, terminal illness, etc., psychologists say you will pass through stages of grief that include denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally acceptance. They say these stages can occur in any order and last for varying lengths of time. But where does it say this in God's Word? Is not the Holy Spirit who is resident within us our Comforter, and can we not call upon Him to fulfill this purpose when we are faced with tragedies?

The Bible does indicate there is a time to mourn (Ecclesiastes 3:4), but the immediate mourning following a death or tragedy is not the same as prolonged grief. Jesus bore your sin and shame

on the cross, so you do not have to bear them. He also bore your grief so you need not bear it:

Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:4-5, NKJV)

So if Jesus bore your grief, just as He bore your sin and shame, why must you go through "stages"? Why must you continue to grieve months or even years after a tragedy or loss? Is there no spiritual "balm in Gilead" to heal your wounds (Jeremiah 8:22)? Does not the Bible say "*He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds*" (Psalm 147:3). Will you take God at His Word, or will you follow a psychological model that says you must go through stages of grief?

Secular psychologists also talk much about self-esteem, but there is a difference between self-esteem and Christ-centered esteem. It is not who you are, but rather who He is and what He can do in you and through you. Christ-centered esteem recognizes you are no longer who you were, and acknowledges who you are as a born-again believer. You are a child of God, forgiven and redeemed from sin, adopted into the family of God, and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ.

Secular psychologists claim that "the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior." For the biblical counselor and his counselee however, this is not true. God says: "*Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?*" (Isaiah 43:18-19).

Your past does not predict the future when you become a new creature in Christ because "*...if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*" (2 Corinthians 5:17, NKJV).

The goal of counseling is not a "patched up version" of the old person, rather it is a new creature in Christ. The purpose of biblical counseling is not for rehabilitation, rather the goal is transformation--total change:

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)

The "patterns of the world" in secular psychology do not bring transformation. Psychological theories and models cannot change people. Only God can change a person from the inside out, give them a new mind, a new heart, and make them a new creature in Christ.

A biblical counselor believes God has the answer to every problem--not secular psychology. We are not adversaries of secular psychology, but we simply believe relying on it for answers is denying the sufficiency of scripture to meet every need.

People with tremendous needs came to Jesus from Galilee, Judaea, and Jerusalem, and the power of the Lord was present to heal them physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally (Luke 5:17). That same power is resident within a biblical counselor who speaks the prophetic Word of God into the lives of those seeking help.

WORDS WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE

The Bible warns about walking in the counsel of the ungodly (Psalm 1:1). A true believer who is walking by faith cannot be helped spiritually by a person who has refused to acknowledge God. The psalmist declared:

The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. (Psalm 33:10-11, KJV)

Sometimes, even counselors who are believers don't get it right. Large sections of the book of Job are filled with advice given by Job's friends. Generally speaking, Eliphaz spoke from experience, Bildad spoke on the basis of human authority, and Zophar emphasized legalism. If you want a manual on how not to counsel someone who is suffering, the book of Job is it!

From their counseling we learn that not all advice is good advice, even that given by well-intentioned friends. We learn from Job's friends that we should not pass judgment on those who suffer. Rather than giving theological dissertations, we should share in their grief, provide comfort, and speak the Word of God into their lives. We must be willing to acknowledge that we do not have all the answers as to the depth or extent of their suffering (Deuteronomy 29:29).

Like Job's counselors, some people may know the Word but may misapply it because of their traditions, experiences, prejudices, or perceptions. These counselors are speaking "words without knowledge (Job 38:2). Only the scriptures, properly interpreted and applied, can bring healing and deliverance to a struggling soul.

The *New American Commentary* aptly summarizes the faults of Job's counselors:

"A review of the speeches of Job's associates shows that they were poor counselors. They failed in several ways: (1) They did not express any sympathy for Job in their speeches. (2) They did not pray for him. (3) They seemingly ignored Job's expressions of emotional and physical agony. (4) They talked too much and did not listen adequately. (5) They became defensive and argumentative. (6) They belittled rather than encouraged Job. (7) They assumed they knew the cause of Job's problems. (8) They stubbornly persisted in their views of Job's problems, even when their ideas contradicted the facts. (9) They suggested an inappropriate solution to his problem. (10) They blamed Job and condemned him for expressing grief and frustration. Counselors today do well to be sure they do not fail in similar ways."

AN ANSWER FOR EVERY NEED

A biblical counselor believes that a person does not have to undergo years of therapy. We believe the Bible has the answer to every problem and, when acted upon, the scriptures will manifest true change in the life of the counselee. The only time factor involved in this process is the length of time it might take someone to accept and act upon God's Word.

At some point in scriptural counseling, a counselee must either accept or reject what God has to say regarding their problems. When the Word of God is rejected, no further progress can be made in terms of biblical counseling. How sad it is when we turn elsewhere for peace, comfort, and release from sin, guilt, grief, and shame when Jesus Christ suffered and died to secure these blessings for us.

Believers experience many of the same conflicts as unbelievers, but they also have additional spiritual conflicts between their new nature and the old nature (Galatians 5:17). Only biblical counseling can deal with these issues from a scriptural perspective and guide a believer in spiritual growth. This is not to discredit any valid contributions by the field of psychology to counseling. It is merely to establish that--as in the case of all secular data--these contributions must be viewed through the lens of scripture.

We serve Jesus Christ, the Wonderful Counselor who has promised that *"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds"* (Psalm 147:3). When Jesus returned to Heaven, He sent "another counselor" to be with us and dwell within us (John 14:16-18). Biblical counseling is simply learning to release the supernatural power of this resident Counselor through application of scriptural principles.

A DEFINITION OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Here is a definition of biblical counseling developed by and agreed upon by experts in the field of biblical counseling:

"Biblical counseling endeavors to build a relationship with another person in which God's work of change can thrive. It is therefore dependent on the Word of God, the work of the Holy Spirit and the grace of Jesus Christ. It seeks to build a contextualized understanding of the counselee (past and present) and will view that data through the lens of Scripture. The Biblical counselor rests in the knowledge that he is not the change agent, but a tool in the hands of the One who is. The biblical counselor does not ignore physical issues or emotional data, but seeks to integrate them into a holistic understanding of the person and where change needs to take place. The biblical counselor is not adversarial in his relationship to the psychologies of his culture, but examines research and insights through the lens of Scripture. In his work with the counselee the biblical counselor always recognizes the sovereignty of God, the transformative grace of Christ, and the insight-giving and conviction-producing ministry of the Holy Spirit. In all of this the biblical counselor sees himself not as an isolated

instrument of change, but one whose work is intimately connected to God's primary tool of change; the church, with all of its God-ordained, duties, structures and means of grace."

Biblical counseling relies upon the Word of God rather than theories that are rooted in a worldly, defective understanding of human nature (John 17:17). Any method worthy of the name "Christian counseling" must address the root problem of sin and present God's solution--the redemptive work of Christ and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.

While there may be conditions that warrant legitimate medical treatment, biblical counselors reject the assumptions of the therapeutic culture that offers a pharmacological solution for every problem. Too often, medications only alleviate the symptoms and do not deal with the root causes of issues.

Unfortunately, some believers have lost confidence in the power of God's Word to change lives because they do not understand and know how to apply the scriptures. Others do not believe the Word actually works for them or they claim miracles are not for today. Such unbelief hinders the work of God in their lives (Matthew 13:58).

Reading the Bible and memorizing verses are good practices, but change will not occur unless the Word of God is understood, believed, and applied. Before the people of Nehemiah's day experienced a change of heart, Ezra read the Word of God and helped them understand it. They heard, understood, believed, and acted upon the Word, and then change resulted. A biblical counselor must share the scriptures, make certain they are understood, and then direct the counselee in the appropriate response.

Jesus told the Pharisees, "...*You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God*" (Matthew 22:29, NKJV). Biblical counseling combines the Word of God with the power of God to effect true change in the lives of hurting people.

Jesus said:

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy-laden and overburdened, and I will cause you to rest. [I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls.] Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls.
(Matthew 11:28-29, AMP)

The appeal to come has not changed. Jesus is still calling hurting humanity to come, just as they are--with their burdens, addictions, issues, sins, and failures. He still offers rest, refreshment, and re-creation--new life--as we learn of Him.

Some professional chaplains are counseling in difficult situations where they are forbidden by

their employer and/or by law to say things like "homosexuality is a sin," etc. In such delicate situations, establish with the counselee that the counsel you are providing is not an opinion that you formulated, but it is the Word of God, the Holy Bible. The counselee is seeking biblical counseling, that is what you are providing, and that is what your counsel is based upon. They must make their own personal decision to accept or reject God's Word.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BIBLICAL COUNSELOR

One of the names of Jesus is "Wonderful Counselor" (Isaiah 9:6). Jesus counseled prophetically while here on earth, speaking the truth of God's Word into the lives of those who came to Him seeking help.

Christ's ministry of counseling was limited geographically while He was on earth, and eventually it was limited by time when He returned to Heaven. Upon His departure from earth, however, Jesus promised to send another Counselor to fulfill this purpose in our lives:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. (John 14:16-17)

The Holy Spirit is the biblical counselor without limits. He is not limited by time or distance, because He dwells within each true believer. He is not limited by knowledge because as part of the Trinity of God He is all-knowing. The Holy Spirit within you can provide proper counsel in times of need and give you the ability to counsel others biblically.

Many times believers turn to counselors before they turn to God for help. As a believer, you already have a resident Counselor and intercessor within you. The Holy Spirit is your Counselor, and Jesus is the intercessor between you and God (1 Timothy 2:5). When a believer turns to the world for counsel, the question is similar to that raised by the Prophet Micah: *"Now why do you cry out aloud? Is there no king in you? Is your counselor perished?" (Micah 4:9, KJV)*. Much counseling would be unnecessary if people would take their concerns to God first and search His Word for answers.

For a believer, the Holy Spirit is the true biblical counselor. The person providing guidance based on the Word of God is simply a facilitator, speaking forth the counsel of the Holy Spirit. Biblical counseling is the work of the Holy Spirit accomplished in believers and through believers--whether they are a professional counselor, minister, chaplain, or simply a born-again, Spirit-filled believer.

Biblical counselors must be led by the Holy Spirit. Counseling apart from the Word of God and the power of the Spirit is ineffective. At times, the Holy Spirit may direct you to say something different than what you planned. At other times, the Spirit may caution you to remain silent at the very moment you were going to speak.

If you remain sensitive to the Holy Spirit, He will direct you as to what to say regarding every issue. Jesus promised that in difficult situations you are not to *"...worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit" (Mark 13:11, NKJV)*.

The Holy Spirit makes you, as a believer, competent to counsel. The Apostle Paul told the Romans: *"Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another"* (Romans 15:14, NKJV).

No counselor can know the truth about situations without supernatural revelation by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the "spirit of truth" (John 14:17). It is the revelation of truth by the Holy Spirit based on the truth of Word of God that sets people free. Jesus said, *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free"* (John 8:31-32).

The Holy Spirit bestows special spiritual gifts that enable biblical counseling--discernment, words of knowledge and wisdom, the gifts of healing, exhortation, discerning of spirits, prophecy, and miracles. The reason why some Christian counseling fails is that some counselors do not believe these gifts are for today. These spiritual gifts were bestowed *"...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ"* (Ephesians 4:13). Have these purposes been completely fulfilled in the Body of Christ? No. So why would these spiritual gifts be withdrawn without fulfilling God's purposes?

If you do not hear, accept, and act upon the Word of God regarding salvation, you will not be saved. If you do not hear, accept, and act upon the Word of God concerning healing, deliverance, miracles, etc., then most likely you will not experience these blessings. The Bible states that the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells in you (Romans 8:11). If that Spirit was powerful enough to raise a dead body, is it not powerful enough to meet every difficult circumstance and problem in our lives?

The Holy Spirit--with His accompanying powerful spiritual gifts--is the biblical Counselor that the whole world needs. It is because He resides within you, revealing all truth, that you--as a believer--are competent to counsel.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BASIS AND BASICS

As we look at scripture, there is no "book of counseling". The basis and basics of biblical counseling are formulated from scriptural precepts and examples, including the greatest example of all, that of our wonderful Counselor, the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are three Hebrew words translated "counsel" in scripture. Taken together, they mean to deliberate, resolve, advise, guide, determine, purpose, consult, instruct, and plan. There are five Greek verbs for the word "counsel" which, when summarized, mean to beseech, exhort, encourage, comfort, admonish, and warn. All of these are components of biblical counseling.

There are basically three approaches to counseling:

- Expert knowledge: Based on research, education, and the work of secular psychologists.
- Common or traditional knowledge: Based on experience, observation, or knowledge passed down by traditions or previous generations.
- Divine knowledge: Based on God's Word.

Although the first two may have some merit, it is divine knowledge based on God's Word that provides the basis and basics of biblical counseling. This type of counseling is rooted in what the Word of God teaches regarding acceptable behavior, positive relationships, problem-solving, and conflict resolution.

THE BASIS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

The principles and examples provided within the pages of God's Word provide the basis for biblical counseling. These include scriptural models of biblical counselors.

Jesus is the greatest model of a biblical counselor. As we look at Christ's ministry, we see that His goal in every encounter was to effect change that would result in abundant life. At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus declared:

The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon Me, because He has anointed Me [the Anointed one, the Messiah] to preach the good news (the Gospel) to the poor; He has sent Me to announce release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to send forth as delivered those who are oppressed [who are downtrodden, bruised, crushed, and broken down by calamity], To proclaim the accepted and acceptable year of the Lord [the day when salvation and the free favors of God profusely abound.] (Luke 4:18, AMP)

The following, qualities vital to effective counseling, were evident in the ministry of Christ:

- He loved people: John 3:16.
- He confronted people when necessary: Matthew 8:26; 18:15; John 8:3-11.
- He did not condemn people: John 8:11.
- He sought to save those who were lost: Luke 19:10.
- He ministered abundant life: John 10:10.
- He destroyed the works of the devil: 1 John 3:8.
- He spoke only what God told Him to speak: John 12:49.
- He spoke with authority: Matthew 7:29.
- His ministry was empowered by prayer: Luke 5:15-16; 6:12-13.
- He had compassion: Mark 1:41; 6:34; 8:2.
- He ministered in power: Luke 5:17.
- He made people take personal responsibility for their problems: Luke 5:24; John 5.
- He dealt with root causes: In Mark 2:5 He forgave sins first, then dealt with other needs.

Volumes have been written on counseling, from both Christian and secular viewpoints, and much of it is quite complex. As we look at the ministry of Jesus, however, we see that His encounters were simple, powerful, direct, and the results were immediate. He never referred people to secular resources, nor did He tell them it would take a long time for them to receive help.

The Apostle Paul is another great example of a biblical counselor. He said, *"For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory"* (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12).

Paul's efforts were successful because, as he continues to explain, *"...when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe"* (1 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

This is a perfect model of biblical counseling: A counselor who dispenses the Word of God as tenderly as a father deals with his own children and counselees who receive and act upon what is shared from the Word of God.

And again--if you read through Acts and the Epistles--every person to whom Paul ministered received immediate help. There were no long-term counseling sessions and no referrals to secular sources of help. Many people believe it will take a long time for them to receive help simply because someone has told them it will take a long time.

Old Testament Principles: Here are some references in the Old Testament directly related to counseling.

- The counsel of God comes through the Word: Psalm 119:24, 105.
- God is mighty in counsel: Jeremiah. 32:19; Psalm. 16:7.
- God's counsel shall stand forever: Psalm 33:11; Proverbs 19:21; Isaiah 46:10.
- Jesus Christ is called the Wonderful Counselor: Isaiah 9:6; 11:2.
- The Holy Spirit is our resident counselor: Isaiah 40:13.
- The counsel of the Lord directs the path of the believer: Psalm 73:24; 85:13; Proverbs 3:5,6.
- The believer is not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly: Psalm 1:1.
- It is beneficial to seek counsel from godly people: Proverbs 11:14;15:22; 24:6.

New Testament Principles: Here are some references in the New Testament directly related to counseling.

- The Scriptures were written for our counsel: Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11; 2 Timothy 3:10,17.
- God's counsel is immutable--meaning it does not change: Hebrews 6:17.
- Jesus, the Counselor, prayed that the Father would send another Comforter, the Holy Spirit: John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7.
- Part of the ministry of pastors is to counsel their people: 1 Thessalonians 5:12.
- Believers are to counsel one another: Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16.
- Children are to be counseled in the ways of the Lord: Ephesians 6:4.
- Exhortation is one of the responsibilities of the church: Romans 12:8.
- The word "admonition", meaning counsel, is used in 1 Corinthians 10:11; Ephesians. 6:4; and Titus 3:10.
- The term "to admonish" is used in Acts 20:31; Romans 15:1-4; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Colossians 1:28; 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:12,14.

THE BASICS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

The following are basic premises of biblical counseling:

The counselor must be a believer. You cannot provide adequate scriptural counsel if you have not been born-again as detailed in John chapter 3. As a believer, your mind is renewed so you can understand the things of God that unbelievers cannot comprehend. You are then empowered to counsel with the ability of the mind of Christ:

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things...For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:14-16)

The counselee must be a believer. Unbelievers cannot understand, receive, and act upon

scriptural counsel with an unregenerate mind. A personal relationship with Jesus Christ is fundamental to the biblical resolution of problems.

Biblical counsel is based on God's Word. It is not your experiences, ideas, or expertise that will help a counselee. It is not applying secular psychological models that transforms lives. It is the Word of God that effects true change:

... so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11)

Biblical counseling is done by believers who base their counsel on God's Word, as opposed to counselors who--though they may be believers--base their counsel on secular philosophies. The Apostle Paul said that he had not neglected to proclaim the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). What was the counsel Paul gave? The entirety of God's Word.

Biblical counselors believe that the Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and that it is the final authority regarding faith and practice:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (1 Timothy 3:16-17, NKJV)

Biblical counselors do not view the Bible as something to try to see if it works, nor do they view it as an option among others to be explored. It is the inspired Word of the one and only God. It is the answer to every need.

The Bible is profitable for:

-Doctrine--by which one can know truth, and it is the truth that sets people free.

-Reproof--by which we become aware of our sinful condition through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, without which there will be no real and lasting change.

-Correction--by which we learn how to overcome sinful habits, failures, and weaknesses, putting off the old, sinful life-style of the flesh.

-Instruction in righteousness--adapting a lifestyle which includes continuous study of God's Word, regular prayer, and involvement in a fellowship of true believers.

Secular counseling is void of this life-changing Word of God.

The counselee must agree to the authority of God's Word. The person you are counseling

may be a believer, but may reject a portion of the Word of God because they don't want to act upon what it says. They may want to retain sinful emotions such as anger and unforgiveness, continue harmful habits and addictions, or refuse to sever sinful relationships

Others want to do things their own way. Good advice for them is: You got to where you are today by doing what you have done. How has that worked for you? If you want things to change, you must do something different!

The Bible warns that:

...the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (2 Timothy 4:3-4 , KJV)

Some people will not endure--receive and act upon--sound doctrine. They do not want to hear the truth. Many people seek counselors who will agree with what they want to do rather than tell them what God says they should do.

The biblical counselor can provide only limited help to those who do not agree to the authority of the Word. The Bible is quite clear that because...

...they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. (Proverbs 1:29-32, KJV)

Even Jesus could not minister effectively in His own home town because of unbelief (Matthew 13:58). People continue in their problems because they reject the Word of the Lord. If a person refuses the Word, they are not rejecting the counselor. They are rejecting God Himself (1 Samuel 8:7).

Biblical counseling is not done on the basis of human wisdom. We counsel on the basis of divine wisdom from God *"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"* (Colossians 2:3, KJV).

The Apostle Paul declared:

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. (1 Corinthians 2:4-6, KJV):

This supernatural wisdom is based on the fear of the Lord: *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding"* (Psalm 111:10). The fear of the Lord is loving reverence for God, His person, His Word, and His actions (Malachi 1:5-6).

When you fear God, you obey His Word (Ecclesiastes 12:13); walk in His ways (Deuteronomy 8:6); serve Him (Joshua 24:14); and depart from evil (Proverbs 3:7-8).

Biblical counseling does not require a certified counselor. Training in biblical counseling is advantageous, of course, but because the Counselor dwells within, certification is not necessary in order to help yourself or others. When David needed encouragement, he encouraged himself in the Lord (1 Samuel 30:1-6). As New Testament believers with the Counselor resident within us, we can do likewise.

When Daniel was burdened, he did not seek counseling, talk to his friends, or call his spiritual advisor. He prayed to God (Daniel 9). The psalmist David turned to the Word acknowledging that: *"Your testimonies also are my delight and my counselors" (Psalms 119:24, NKJV).*

This is not to discount the value of trained biblical counselors. The Bible declares: *"Where there is no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14, KJV).* But if you cannot find a Christian counselor who counsels biblically, you can still receive the help you need because the divine Counselor is resident within you and your answers are readily available in the inspired pages of scripture.

Biblical counsel aims for complete change. When David came to God seeking forgiveness for sin, he didn't ask for a patched up version of his old self. He prayed, "Create in me a clean heart"--the word "create" means something new (Psalm 51:10). The Bible assures:

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17, KJV)

The counselor is not the one who effects change. The counselee does not change himself through self-effort. It is God that supernaturally changes a person from the inside out, creating a new creature in Christ. Not a patched-up version of the old person, but a completely new person!

Biblical counselors believe people are responsible for their actions. God is not interested in excuses for sinful behavior. He judges mankind on the basis of their response to Jesus Christ and whether or not their names are inscribed in the book of life:

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:12-15, KJV)

Biblical counseling deals with sin which is the root of dysfunction. Secular reasoning would

suggest that we have "problems" instead of sins. Many problems, however, are actually sin issues--either the sin of the counselee or the sins of others committed against them. Biblical counseling will identify sin issues and deal with them scripturally.

The Bible says: *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9, KJV)*. The solution to the sin problem is not rehabilitation, education, or legislation. It is regeneration through Jesus Christ:

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6, KJV)

Do not settle for tears of sorrow from a counselee who was caught in sin and is reaping the results. Don't accept excuses such as "that is just the way I am" or "I am this way because of my parents." Don't allow counselees to shift blame for their behavior to others. We are not *invited* to deal with sin, rather we are *commanded* to deal with it. The precepts given by God in His Word are not suggestions to consider. They are commandments that, when accepted and acted upon, have the power to change a person's life and eternal destiny.

Biblical counseling equips you to counsel others. The difficulties you experience for which you receive and act upon biblical counsel prepare you to help others:

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4, KJV)

All of the challenges you have experienced in your journey through life have prepared you to be competent to counsel. It is time to pass on to a needy world the comfort, encouragement, and help you have experienced through God and His Word. You have come into the Kingdom for such a time as this (Esther 4:14).

CHAPTER FOUR

DEALING WITH ROOT CAUSES

The Bible speaks of a spiritual root that bears bitterness (Deuteronomy 19:18). Jeremiah was told to "root out" sin (Jeremiah 1:10), and the prophet Malachi shows God dealing with the root of transgressions in the lives of His people (Malachi 4:1).

An important aspect of biblical counseling is dealing with the root causes of negative behaviors or situations. Dealing with root causes is aptly illustrated in the story of a man named Joash, an Old Testament king, who was facing a formidable enemy and came seeking advice from the Prophet Elisha.

Elisha made a powerful prophetic declaration and demonstration to Joash. He told him to take a bow and arrows in his hand. The king obliged, and Elisha placed his hands over those of the king. He told Joash to open the window towards the enemy nation of Syria. Then he commanded: "*Shoot*"; and he shot. And he said, "*The arrow of the Lord's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed them*" (2 Kings 13:17, NKJV).

Next, Elisha commanded the king to take the arrows and strike them on the ground. Joash complied, hitting the ground three times and then stopping. Elisha told him, "*You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed it!*" (2 Kings 13:19, NKJV). What Elisha was declaring prophetically was that the king should have persevered until the enemy was totally defeated. If you do not deal with the root causes of issues, then like an unquenched fire they will flare up again. Destroy the root and you will kill the fruit.

From this encounter, we learn several important strategies for dealing with root causes.

Win first in the secret chamber. What happened between Elisha and King Joash in the secret chamber determined the outcome of the battle with Syria. It is what happens in the "secret chamber" with the Lord that determines the effectiveness of your counseling ministry as well as other areas in your spiritual life.

Use the Sword of the Spirit. Elisha told King Joash, "Take up the bow and arrows." The Apostle Paul said, "Take the sword of the Spirit." It is the Sword of the Spirit--which is God's Word--that makes your counseling effective and truly Christian.

Put your hands on the weapon. Elisha told the king to put his hands upon the bow, then Elisha laid his hands upon the king's hands. The biblical strategy is your hand upon the weapon of God=s Word and His hand on yours as you minister to the counselee.

Open the window. Israel's foe was to the east, so Elisha told the king to open the window eastward. God wants you to open up the "windows" of every area of the counselee's life to enable them to confront the failures, problems, and bondages caused by the enemy. Open the windows towards the enemy and prepare to attack every issue with the Word of God!

Shoot. Elisha told the king, "Shoot," and the king shot. The open window towards the enemy is not enough. The weapon in your hand is not sufficient. Even God's hand upon your hand will not win the battle. You must follow the command of the Lord of Hosts to "Shoot!" As you speak the prophetic, powerful, specific Word of God to the counselee, you will execute preemptive strikes against the work of the enemy in their lives. And God's Word does not return void. It accomplishes its supernatural purposes (Isaiah 55:11).

Persevere to the root of the issue. Elisha told the king to take the arrows and hit them on the ground as a symbol of his victory over Syria. The king did this, but only struck the ground three times and then stopped. Elisha told him that because he limited God by hitting the ground only three times, his military victory would be limited. Elisha said the Lord wanted the enemy to be totally consumed. By striking the ground only three times, the king settled for partial victory.

The Lord's objective for you and the person you counsel is total victory in every area of life and ministry. You must attack the root causes of problems and battle spiritually until you have achieved 100% victory.

THE POINT OF DECISION

The New Testament records two powerful stories about people who came to a point of decision, but refused to deal with root issues in their lives. The first is that of a rich young ruler.

A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good--except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.' 'All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said. When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth. (Luke 18:18-23)

This young man was a good, moral, law-abiding person. He had kept many commandments of the Word of God faithfully, but he had a root issue in his life that needed correction. He valued money more than His commitment to the Lord. This was evident when Jesus told him to sell what he had and come and follow Him. Sadly, the young man rejected Christ's counsel, went his own way, and missed his divine destiny.

The second story is that of a multitude of disciples who were following Jesus. They were excited about the miracles they were witnessing and the anointed teaching they were receiving. But when the Lord shared truths that they did not want to accept, many of them turned back and no longer followed Him (John 6:66). The root of the problem was that they rejected the Word of the Lord and this resulted in them turning back to the old life.

In every counseling situation, there is a root cause of problems that must be exposed on the basis of the scriptures. It is at that point that the counselee will either accept or refuse God's Word. Sadly, many are like the rich young ruler and these followers of Jesus. They refuse the Word, go away sorrowing, and return to their old life.

Do not perceive responses like this as personal rejection or failure in your ministry of counseling. The Bible states: *"Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 4:8).*

WHAT IS THE ROOT CAUSE?

It is vital that you persevere to discover the root cause of every problem. For example, the root cause is not drug addiction, it is what is fueling the drug addiction. The root cause is not immorality, it is the lust resulting in the immoral behavior.

The Bible commands us to diligently seek and destroy the roots of sinful behavior:

Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. (Hebrews 12:15)

If the root causes of problems are not dealt with, then problems will only intensify. When Israel invaded the promised land, God told them not to allow any of the enemy to remain. But the Bible records that Joshua spared giants in three cities: Gaza, Ashdod, and Gath (Joshua 11:21-22). Later, the Bible relates that Samson got in trouble in Gaza (Joshua 16); the ark of God's glory was lost in Ashdod (1 Samuel 4-5); and Goliath paralyzed the troops of Israel in Gath (1 Samuel 17). None of these tragedies would have occurred, had not the giants been left in the land. Israel left a root, and it bore fruit. Giants beget giants in both the natural and spiritual worlds. Eliminate the spiritual giants of sin and they will no longer reproduce.

Deal with the root causes, and the surface manifestations will cease. As in the natural world, so it is in the spiritual: Cut the root and you will kill the fruit of the root.

CHAPTER FIVE

RAISING THE SPIRITUALLY DEAD

People come for counseling because they have experienced some sort of death. It may be the actual death of a loved one, the loss of a meaningful relationship, or lost dreams. It may be the death of hope that things can change in their lives, or they may be experiencing the terrors of the spiritual death of sin.

The Bible provides an excellent example that is applicable to counseling, in that it provides strategies for raising the spiritually dead to new life. The story is found in 2 Kings 4 where the Prophet Elisha raises a young boy from the dead.

Elisha was a frequent guest in a special room prepared by a Shunammite woman and her husband. Despite the fact that this woman did not have a child and her husband was elderly and beyond child-producing years, Elisha prophesied that she would conceive and bear a son (2 Kings 4:16).

Just as Elisha declared, the woman gave birth to a son. Years passed, and then one day when the boy was out in the field with his father, he became sick and died. The Shunammite woman took her dead son to Elisha's room and laid him on the prophet's bed. She quickly saddled a donkey and set out with her servant to go to Elisha at Mt. Carmel. Imagine the thoughts that flooded her mind: *Why had this terrible thing happened? Why had God allowed the son He had given her to die?* Very often, similar questions are asked by hurting people: "Why did God allow this to happen to me?"

Although she knew her boy's lifeless body lay upon the prophet's bed, this woman did not focus on her tragic circumstances. She believed that if she could just get to Elisha, the prophet of God would be able to help her. She hurriedly prepared for her journey and told her husband, *AY It is well*, in answer to his questions regarding her journey (2 Kings 4:23).

When Elisha saw the woman coming at a distance, he sent his servant Gehazi to meet her and ask if everything was alright. The woman told the servant that all was well, but when she saw Elisha she ran to him and fell at his feet. Gehazi tried to push her away, but Elisha told him to leave her alone.

ADid I ask you for a son? Didn't I tell you, 'do not deceive me'? the woman cried out in anguish as she shared her tragedy with Elisha (2 Kings 4:28). Elisha immediately commanded Gehazi to take his staff in his hand and run to the Shunammite's house to minister to the boy, but the Shunammite woman refused to settle for that. She was desperate! She was determined to persevere until Elisha agreed to go with her. He was the prophet of God and she wanted him to cry out to God for the life of her boy (2 Kings 4:30). When Elisha saw her determination, he

finally agreed to go with her.

THE POWER OF PERSEVERANCE

This Shunammite woman was determined to persevere in behalf of her son regardless of the seemingly impossible circumstances. There may be tremendous obstacles standing in your way or the way of your counselee, barriers blocking you from receiving help. You must identify and eliminate these through the power of God.

Whatever need you or a counselee may face--whether it be a personal issue, an emotional problem, a financial need, or a physical challenge--you must focus on the faithfulness of God instead of the circumstances. Your faith must not be limited by the need, your own limited abilities, or by what you see with your natural eyes. You must persevere in the Spirit to receive a miracle.

Jesus taught that we should believe we have received what we have asked for when we pray. He said, *AY Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours@ (Mark 11:24)*. By eyes of faith, look beyond the natural circumstances into the supernatural realm where all things are possible with God--including your own deliverance and that of those you are counseling.

The servant, Gehazi, arrived ahead of Elisha and the mother, entered the room where the lifeless body lay on the bed, and placed Elisha=s staff on the boy=s face. Nothing happened. Gehazi went to meet Elisha and told him that the boy had not awakened (2 Kings 4:31). This did not discourage Elisha, however. He did not reverse his direction to return to Mount Carmel. Elisha knew God=s power was stronger than death--and that same power is greater than any need you or your counselee may be facing.

When Elisha reached the house, he went into his room and shut the door. Alone in that room, facing the boy=s corpse, he began to cry out to God with great fervency. Then Elisha spread himself over the boy=s body and the life of God began to flow through him into the boy. The child's body grew warm, but was still lifeless. Elisha got up and walked back and forth in the room.

A second time Elisha stretched himself on the boy=s lifeless body and suddenly--the power of God broke the chains of death. The life of God entered the boy, raised him from the dead, and the child sneezed seven times as the breath of life entered into him. Elisha immediately sent for the Shunammite woman and presented her son to her alive and well.

New life. That is the purpose of biblical counseling.

RAISING THE SPIRITUALLY DEAD

The Bible says the soul that sins will die, that the wages of sin is death, and that sinners are dead in their transgressions. People coming to you for help are dead in sin, have buried dreams, lost hope, and dying relationships. The following spiritual applications, drawn from this account of Elisha, may be applied as you provide counsel to raise the spiritually dead.

Have faith. The mother did not just accept the child's death. The normal response would be to weep, call professional mourners, and prepare the body for burial. Instead, she laid him on Elisha's bed, shut the door, and went to get the prophet. Taking the dead child to the prophet's chamber was an act of faith in itself, as she most likely recalled the well-known miracle previously done by the Prophet Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-24). This woman did not wait for the prophet to take him into the room. She took him there, expecting a miracle. God has raised spiritually dead men from the beginning of time. Your privilege, as a biblical counselor, is to take unsaved and troubled people--just as they are--to the place of a miracle.

Note this woman's faith when she responded to her husband's questions, "*It shall be well*" (verses 23-24). When you begin to act by faith, your faith multiplies. By the time she neared the prophet's dwelling place, her faith had increased (verse 26). When Elisha sent Gehazi to question her, she no longer said, "*It shall be well.*" She said, "*It is well.*" It is not only important for you, as a counselor to have faith, but you must instill faith in the counselee that things can change. Prepare them to receive a miracle!

Make haste. Note in 2 Kings 4:22 that the woman said, "That I may run." You must make haste to raise the dead because souls are perishing. Bright now, today, this very hour. Relationships are shattering. Homes are breaking up. Bondages are engulfing people in a death-like grip. Someone is at the point of suicide. There is no time for years of extended counseling. The miracle is needed now!

Break with tradition. In verse 23, the woman's husband questioned, "Why are you going?" It was not a traditional time to go to the prophet such as on the new moon or the Sabbath. To counsel biblically, you will have to break with tradition. People may tell you, "This is not the way we do things." They may claim your methods are faulty and unscientific. But if your counsel is based on God's Word, it will work! Guaranteed success!

Show compassion. The dead will never be raised by "Gehazis" who have no compassion (verses 25-27). When this woman came in search of life, Gehazi wanted to send her away--which is what many church leaders are doing today--referring people with needs to others so they do not have to deal with their problems. But the Prophet of God did not send her away. He showed concern and asked, "Is it well with you and your husband and the child?"

There are people who have struggled "up the hill" to get to you and are falling at your feet with great needs. Do not thrust them away. Do not refer them to unbelieving counselors, or suggest secular rehabilitation programs. Have compassion for them and do not turn them away. You have the Holy Spirit within you--the same spirit and power of Elijah--and you can minister life to their desperate needs.

Become personally involved. Elisha first sent his staff with Gehazi to raise the child from the dead. But you cannot send powerless men (like Gehazi) or substitute measures (represented by the staff) and expect a miracle. We take practical ideas of secular psychology and lay them upon the spiritually dead, but they have no more effect upon a needy soul than did Elisha's staff. New life will not flow as long as you are placing an indifferent hand upon spiritually dead men and women. Hurting people can settle for nothing other than the power of God that is able to breathe new life into dead souls.

Follow the master's example. In 1 Kings 17:17-24, the Bible records the story of Elijah, who was Elisha's mentor, setting the example for raising the dead. If Elisha had followed that example, he never would have sent Gehazi with his staff to try to do the job. Elijah had personally ministered to the dead child, and Elisha must do the same. In order to raise us from the death of sin, Jesus Christ came into this world. He came where we were. We too must go to hurting people with the message of new life. If you are to raise the dead, you must come into contact with death and the dying. You must go where they are--the streets, the drug houses, the jails and prisons. You must become personally involved with the spiritually dead.

Recognize the seriousness of the condition. Gehazi did not really believe the child was dead. He reported back that "The child is not awakened." Gehazi spoke as if the boy was only asleep, but Elisha knew the child was dead (verse 32). Unbelievers lost in sin are not just sleeping. It is a serious condition. People who are blind to their conditions are dying spiritually, and they will never be raised to new life until you recognize this fact and lead them to recognize and deal with it themselves. Anger is not just a trait passed down from your Uncle John. It is wrong. Abortion is not a personal choice. It is murder. Adultery is not just an affair--it is a deadly sin. If you will raise the spiritually dead and minister to needy people, then you must be able to acknowledge the reality of their desperate conditions.

Do not be defeated by failure. The first attempt to raise the dead child by using Gehazi and the staff failed. When you fail in one attempt at counseling, do not give up. Do not infer from failure that you are not called to the task or that the Word is insufficient to meet the need. The lesson of failure is not withdrawing from the mission, but persevering and changing your methods to follow the Master's example.

Resurrect life in the inner chamber. Elisha went into the inner chamber, the place where he regularly prayed to God. You must go into the "inner chamber" of prayer, shut the door, and intercede for hurting humanity. Prayer is a vital part of preparing for and providing biblical counsel.

Know the source of your power. As he entered into that inner chamber, Elisha already knew the source of his power. The mantle of God's anointing rested upon him and he knew it was tried and proven. The reason counseling sometimes fails is that some counselors do not believe miracles are for today. If you want supernatural answers, you must believe in a supernatural God who can save, heal, and deliver. God's Word has not changed (Psalm 119:89). Jesus Christ has not changed (Hebrews 13:8). The promises of salvation, healing, deliverance, and miracles are still in effect today.

Know the objective. Your objective is not to cleanse a dead body, embalm it with spices, or cover it with fine linen. These are all improvements to a decaying corpse, but you still have a dead body. Your objective is not improvement. Your objective is new life through Jesus Christ!

Be willing to be stretched. One would think a grown man would have to contract himself on a child, but instead the scripture says he stretched himself. Reaching out to hurting men and women is a stretching experience. You must stretch yourself to step out of your comfort zone in order to counsel and help others. When Jesus would raise us from spiritual death, He came into this world of sin and died Himself--arms stretched out upon the cross.

Be alive spiritually. Dead men can't raise the dead. Elisha stooped over the corpse and placed his mouth upon the mouth of the dead child. He placed his eyes upon the boy's eyes, his hands upon the child's hands. The warm body of the man of God covered the cold body of the child. As Elisha covered death with life, the warmth of his body entered the child. If you are dead yourself, this will not happen. Placing one corpse upon another is hopeless. It is vain for dying people to gather around another dead soul and expect resurrection. If you are to counsel effectively, you must have life yourself!

Settle for nothing less than life. The flesh of the child became warm, but Elisha did not just settle for this promising sign. He would settle for nothing less than true life. It is not improvement you are after, but new life! Not mere emotionalism, but true change! Elisha walked back and forth, waiting and no doubt calling upon God. Then he stretched himself upon the child again. This time, the child sneezed seven times. The word "sneeze" as used here actually means "gasped". As the child gasped for breath, new life entered his body and his eyes opened. The young man was resurrected to new life.

When dead men and women gasp into their beings the transforming Word of God and the breath of the Holy Spirit through biblical counsel, they too will experience new life. Using the Word of God, the power of prayer, and the mantle of God's supernatural anointing--you too can raise the dead!

CHAPTER SIX

PRAYER IN BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Prayer is not only the spiritual life blood for all believers, it is vital in biblical counseling. Prayer, along with the Word of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, is what makes counseling truly Christian.

Before the session. The Bible declares that *"... our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but...against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12)*. Spiritual warfare will be waged in every counseling session because you are battling for the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical well-being of counselees.

Ask the Holy Spirit to release the spirit of wisdom and understanding in preparation for the counseling session. Ask God to fight the battle for you. The real battle of spiritual warfare in counseling is won in private in prayer before the session ever begins. Intercede for the person you are to counsel. *"Intercession may be defined as holy, believing, persevering prayer whereby someone pleads with God on behalf of another or others who desperately need God's intervention."* (Full Life Bible).

Opening the session. Pray with and for the counselee when you start the counseling session. This sets the focus, acknowledging that both the counselor and the counselee are looking to God for guidance.

During the session. Prayer can be incorporated during the session as specific problems are discussed. Deal with issues immediately in prayer. This gets the counselee's focus back on God instead of his problems.

Allow the Holy Spirit to speak *through you* in prayer and speak *to you* about the issues you are addressing. He is the resident Counselor and scriptures confirm that...

...the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.
(Romans 8:26-27, NKJV)

It is the will of God that is being sought in counseling, and the Holy Spirit accurately prays that will into being. So allow the Holy Spirit to intercede through you as you counsel.

Concluding the session. The session should always end with prayer by both the counselor and the counselee. The counselor should pray for the counselee and incorporate summary statements regarding issues discussed into his prayer. Inviting the counselee to pray concerning their problems will help them learn to communicate with God for themselves. If a person is uncomfortable with praying audibly, dedicate a few minutes of quiet time before ending the session so the counselee can pray silently about the issues that have been discussed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

BASIC COUNSELING STRATEGIES

The strategies of a biblical counselor are based on the Word of God. Here are some basics to guide your counseling ministry.

Start every session with prayer. This establishes that the interchange is not just to be a discussion of various options or opinions on an issue. Express your reliance upon the power of God, and expect that power to be manifested as you counsel. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance, because what you see or hear on the surface may not be the real problem. Ask for divine revelation of the true issues that need to be addressed.

Ask questions. Jesus did this--not because He didn't know the answer--but to help a person seeking help to clarify their need.

Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord, I want to see," he replied. Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God. (Luke 18:40-43)

If the counselee tends to ramble, questions will help them refocus on the subject of concern. Ask the person to state a problem clearly: "My problem is....." Restate the problem in a manner that you and the counselee can agree on, such as: "As I understand it, you are saying that your problem is....."

Stop, look, and listen. Jesus modeled this when He took time to stop and listen to the cries of desperate people, and to look beyond the surface appearances to identify their true needs. Sometimes, all that someone needs is a person to listen to them, rather than to dispense advice (Job 31:35). Do not judge, criticize, or condemn. Just listen. You do not have to fill a void of silence if one occurs. Allow times of silence in order for the counselee to think and for the Holy Spirit to provide direction. Don't interrupt, rather hear them out (Proverbs 18:13). Pay attention to how they express the facts and their feelings. Sometimes a counselee will actually talk themselves into their own biblical solution!

Deal with root causes. As you have learned in this introductory section, it is vital that root causes be identified and dealt with. For example, a man may appear to be concerned about his marriage, but his appearance may indicate that he has been drinking heavily. His root problem may not be his marriage, but rather his addiction to alcohol.

Dealing with the root problem of sin is a priority. When a bedridden man was brought to Jesus for healing, the Lord perceived that his sin was the priority rather than his physical condition:

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had

come home. So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." (Mark 2:1-5)

Jesus dealt with the sin problem first, then He healed the paralytic man.

When Jesus asked the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda if he wanted to be healed, his answer was not a resounding "Yes!" Instead he said, "Sir," *the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me" (John 5:7).* This man was so busy complaining and feeling sorry for himself that he didn't realize who was standing right there before him. He was looking for a person to help him, rather than looking to God. After Jesus healed this lame man, He told him, "... See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you" (John 5:14). Not all infirmity is caused by personal sin (John 9:3), but apparently this man's disability was a result of his sin.

Identify the problems. Through prayer, attentive listening, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit clarify the issues troubling the counselee.

Ask what the person has done to try to solve their problem. If the methods are unscriptural, point out that there is no need to try these methods again since they did not work. Direct them towards biblical solutions. If they have tried biblical solutions and given up, emphasize the importance of perseverance in securing spiritual victories (Matthew 15:22-28). Do not criticize other counselors, pastors, chaplains, ministries or agencies. Concentrate on responding positively rather than minimizing what others have tried to do or failed to do for them.

Provide counsel based on God's Word. There are two main approaches to counseling, directive and non-directive:

Directive counseling: The counselor tells the person what to do. The counselor assumes more of a dominant role, using the Word of God as the source of authority. Confrontation, challenge, and admonition characterize this approach.

Non-directive counseling: The counselor guides the counselee in arriving at solutions based on the Word of God. The counselor is more of a facilitator than an initiator. Encouragement, support, and empathy characterize this approach.

So which approach is best? It is not an either/or question. Each method has limitations, but both can be used effectively with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul provides a good model of this. In some cases he aggressively confronted and commanded people to conform to God's Word. In others, he guided them as a father does a child to arrive at the proper solution (1 Thessalonians 2:7-12).

Jesus was directive with those who were hard-hearted and rebellious--people like the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 15:1-20). With others, He was non-directive, using questions to draw them out and allowing them see what was in their hearts (John 4:1-26).

Use the Biblical Counseling Database. Use this database to clarify what God's Word says about specific problems. For example, if their battle is with anger, use the "Anger" topic in the database. If they are having an affair, use the topic of "Adultery". Through sharing specific insights from the *Biblical Counseling Database*, a natural flow of conversation will ensue during which you can explain how the scriptures can be effectively applied to their problems. Sharing from your own personal experience, if applicable, may be helpful. But remember: It is not your experiences that will provide solutions to problems--it is God's Word.

You do not have to provide an immediate answer for every issue raised by the counselee. You may have to tell a person that you need to research a certain problem more thoroughly in the Word of God. It is better to say nothing, than to say the wrong thing. Constantly check what you are advising with the *Biblical Counseling Database* and your ultimate counseling guide, the Word of God.

Develop a plan of action. Once a problem has been discussed and scriptural counsel given, a plan of action should be developed on the basis of the Word of God. Do not make this complex. What is a simple first step which can be taken towards the solution to their problem? For example: Do they need to ask forgiveness of someone? Encourage them to do so. Do they need to make restitution? Formulate a plan.

No two problems are exactly alike, so no two plans of action will be identical. All action steps, however, should be based upon God's Word. By the end of a counseling session there should be a plan--even if it is a very small step--that can be made to institute change. To be most effective, the counselor should follow-up on the plan, holding the counselee accountable to take the steps agreed upon in a timely manner.

Conclude the session in prayer. Pray for the counselee. Be specific in your prayer. If they need deliverance, pray a prayer of deliverance. If they need forgiveness for sin, lead them in a prayer regarding this. If they need to forgive others, pray a prayer of relinquishment and forgiveness. Have the counselee pray audibly or silently, whichever they feel most comfortable doing.

Provide the counselee with feedback from the session. Use this database to provide the counselee with feedback on the topic or topics with which you dealt in counseling. This will enable them to study further on biblical principles relating to their problems. Add to the feedback the action steps which you have agreed upon and a realistic timeline in which these might be completed. Print a hardcopy of the document or email it to the counselee.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Whether you are a professional biblical counselor, chaplain, minister, or simply a believer helping others, you must keep counseling sessions confidential.

In the United States, a certified doctor, lawyer, counselor, and minister are protected by law from being forced to reveal confidential information shared by a client. This may be true in other nations as well. Check the confidentiality laws of your nation.

The following are exceptions to confidentiality--legal or moral obligations where you should break the rule of confidentiality:

- Child abuse or molestation: Report this to the proper authorities immediately.

- Suicide in progress: If you receive a telephone call of a suicide in progress, keep the caller on the line and talking with you while you have someone else dial emergency services to dispatch assistance. Use Appendix One of this database for guidelines in handling this type of counseling call.

- Violence in progress: If you receive a counseling call where violence is in progress, keep the caller on the line and have someone else call emergency services to dispatch assistance.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE GOALS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

The immediate goals of counseling are:

- To guide the counselee in identifying and stating his problem.
- To provide scriptural counsel for dealing with the problem.
- To help the counselee find salvation, forgiveness, healing, deliverance, comfort, and answers to problems through application of scriptural principles.
- To promote biblical change that will transform lives.

With this in mind, the following spiritual foundations should be emphasized: Salvation, water baptism, baptism in the Holy Spirit, sanctified living, spiritual warfare, and developing the Fruit of the Spirit. The Word of God, prayer, and membership in a Bible-believing church are also essential.

As a biblical counselor, you are not aiming for self-improvement or rehabilitation. You don't want a patched-up version of the old person. Rather, your goal is total transformation through Jesus Christ:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

As a biblical counselor, you are to lead people to experience transformation that results in new life, reconciling them to God through Jesus Christ. You are Christ's ambassador, and He is making His appeal through you to a lost and needy world.

The end results of biblical counseling can be summed up in three phrases. The counselee must eventually:

- Admit it: Admit that what they are doing is wrong or that what was done to them was wrong.
- Quit it: If what they are doing is sinful, they need to ask forgiveness from God and quit doing wrong. If what was done to them by others was wrong, they need to quit nursing it and rehearsing it, and they must forgive their offender.
- Forget it: When God forgives, He forgets. The counselee must do likewise--forget the wrongs they have done and those they have suffered from the sinful actions of others.

The bottom line is, on the basis of God's Word: Admit it, quit it, forget it.

Before concluding counseling, be sure the counselee is involved in a local church. If not, refer them to a church where further Christian growth, fellowship, and spiritual counsel can continue.

At some point in biblical counseling, a counselee must either accept or reject what God has to say regarding their problems. When the Word of God is rejected, no further progress can be made in terms of biblical counseling until the counselee agrees to what God says about his issues. Jesus asked His disciples, "*Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and do not do what I say?*" (Luke 6:46). A person cannot truly acknowledge Jesus as Lord unless they totally commit to doing His will.

The Old Testament leper, Naaman, initially rebelled against the Word of the Lord from the Prophet Elisha. Eventually, however, Naaman obeyed that Word and he received total restoration. No more leprosy. New skin. A new life! As a result, Naaman acknowledged that there was no other God in the world other than the one who had just made him whole (2 Kings 5:15). That is the testimony of those who receive and act upon the Word of God you deliver in biblical counseling.

DO NOT SEND THEM AWAY

When a weary, hungry, weak crowd gathered around the disciples, these men asked Jesus to send the multitude away:

Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here." (Luke 9:12)

But Jesus replied, "*You give them something to eat*" (Luke 9:13).

There are multitudes of spiritually hungry people who are too weak to go any further down the road of life. Will you send them away, or will you give them something to eat?

Like the disciples, you may feel inadequate for the task--they only had five loaves of bread and two fish. But these weren't just any loaves of bread and fish. These elements were supernaturally multiplied because of the blessing upon them. You hold in your hands the Holy Scriptures--the supernaturally infused nourishment that is blessed by God and desperately needed by a spiritually hungry world.

God's cry through the Prophet Hosea was "*I would have healed them...*"--but His counsel was rejected (Hosea 7). The balm of Gilead is only effective when applied (Jeremiah 8:22).

As a biblical counselor, your purpose is to apply the spiritual balm of God's Word and share the bread of life with hurting men and women.

God's stated purpose is that... "*...My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return*

to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11,NKJV).

ABORTION

DEFINITION: Abortion is the termination of the life of an unborn baby.

FACTS ABOUT ABORTION:

Abortion is sin. The Bible says "*You shall not kill*" (*Deuteronomy 5:17*). It is wrong to take the life of an unborn child because the child is a living soul from the moment of conception. The only exception would be in order to save the life of the mother. Despite this exclusion, many have opted to trust God for the lives of both mother and child instead of aborting.

The fetus is a living being. God knows a child in the womb (*Jeremiah 1:5*). God creates every part of the unborn child (*Psalm 139:13-16*). What right do you have to terminate God's workmanship? Who are you to say that even a deformed child cannot live and/or even be healed by God? A heart is detectible in a fetus at 18 days, brain waves at 43 days, and all systems are formed by eight weeks and functioning at eleven weeks. Except for size, by 20 weeks a child is fully developed.

A child in the womb is capable of emotional responses. John the Baptist leaped with joy in his mother's womb when he heard Mary's voice, the mother of the Messiah to come (*Luke 1:41,44*).

You do not have a right over your own body. Pro-abortionists claim a woman has a right over her own body. God's Word says "*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body*" (*1 Corinthians 6:18-20*). If you want to control your body, exercise self-control over your passions so you do not get pregnant if you do not want a child.

There is an alternative to abortion. Adoption would bless a couple who are incapable of having a child. Choose a Christian adoption agency to assist with this option.

DEALING WITH ABORTION:

Seek forgiveness from God. When you abort a child, you are consenting to its death. The Apostle Paul (Saul) consented to the death of Stephen, yet God forgave him and called him to a tremendous ministry. If you have aborted a baby, confess your sin and ask forgiveness from God.

Know that abortion is no greater than any other sin. God views any transgression as sin whether it be gossip or murder! If you confess your sin, God forgives you (*1 John 1:9*) and forgets your iniquities (*Jeremiah 31:34*).

Forgive yourself. Your sin is forgiven. Jesus bore your sin on the cross, and He also bore the shame of your sin (*Hebrews 12:2*). Do not live under the shame and condemnation of abortion.

Consider adoption if you are pregnant with an unwanted child or one for whom you cannot

provide. You will be greatly blessing a childless couple.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT ABORTION:

You shall not murder. (Exodus 20:13)

From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother's womb you have been my God. (Psalm 22:10)

Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast.
(Psalm 22:19)

From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you. (Psalm 71:6)

Your hands made me and formed me. (Psalm 119:73)

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body (Psalm 139:13-16)

This is what the Lord says--he who made you, who formed you in the womb. (Isaiah 44:2)

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart. (Jeremiah 1:5)

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. (Luke 1:41)

ABUSE **(Domestic, Child, Sexual)**

DEFINITION: Abuse is mistreatment of another person. It includes child abuse, spousal abuse, physical, emotional, mental, and sexual abuse. The term also applies to the misuse of legitimate authority, for example a government official or religious leader who abuses their power.

FACTS ABOUT ABUSE:

Abuse takes many forms. It may be domestic abuse, child abuse, sexual abuse, or physical, emotional, and mental abuse.

Abuse is not tolerated in God's Kingdom. Certain types of abuse--such as domestic abuse--is permitted in some countries, but we are not citizens of the nation in which we live. We are citizens of the Kingdom of God, and we are governed by God's laws that prohibit any kind of abuse.

Abuse is against the law in the US and many other nations. See God's mandates regarding believers abiding by the law in Romans 13:1-3; 1 Peter 2:13-14; and Luke 17:2.

Abuse is against God's law. One of the two greatest commandments is to love others (Matthew 22:37-39). Abuse is not love.

Abuse can be learned behavior--for example, a person sees their Dad abuse their Mom and models similar abuse in their own relationships.

Causes of abuse. The root cause behind abuse is often uncontrolled anger. It also stems from a low self-image which makes a person abuse others to try to elevate their own status.

Abusers tend to justify their behavior. They blame others for making them so angry that they are forced to respond in this manner.

DEALING WITH ABUSE:

If you are being abused, remove yourself from the situation. Remaining in an abusive situation may cost your life or that of your child. In many nations, you are legally responsible for removing a child from an abusive environment. Move in with a relative or friend or seek help from a Christian shelter. If you are being abused by an employer, seek a new job. If you are experiencing abuse by a spiritual leader, find a new church.

If you are the abuser, admit your problem. As long as you are in denial, you cannot change.

Ask God for forgiveness if you have abused someone. Abuse in any form is a sin and violates God's law of loving others (Matthew 22:37-39).

Ask forgiveness of those you have abused. God requires it. Your own gifts, prayers, and worship won't be accepted until you do this: *"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift"* (Matthew 5:23-24).

If you tend to be abusive, ask God to develop the Fruit of the Spirit in your life. Love, patience, and self control will replace your abusive behavior.

If you have suffered abuse, the first step towards healing is to acknowledge that the abuse happened. Maybe your abuser warned you not to tell anyone, or maybe your family didn't believe you when you told them what happened. Healing starts when you admit the truth about the abuse, whether or not others believe you. As you admit the abuse, you may experience feelings of confusion, hurt, blame, and shame. You might be tempted to drown those feelings with alcohol, drugs, food, anger or sexual addictions. Instead, replace these negative thoughts with the truth of God's Word. God made you in His image (Genesis 1:27). He loves you so much that He sent His only Son to die for you (John 3:16). He has a plan to give you a future and a hope. Admit that what was done to you was wrong, sinful acts committed by sinful people, Whether or not you are able to confront your abuser, you must forgive them. When anger or shameful thoughts over past abuse try to return to your mind, reject these immediately. You will never have a future as long as you are living in the past.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT ABUSE:

Abuse in general.

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:37-39)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23a)

Sexual abuse.

No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. (Leviticus 18:6)

Do not have sexual relations with your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter; that would dishonor you. (Leviticus 18:10)

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

Child abuse.

See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. (Matthew 18:10)

Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. (Luke 17:1-2)

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

Spousal Abuse.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church--for we are members of his body. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. (Ephesians 5:25-32)

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. (Colossians 3:18-20)

ADDICTIONS **(Drug, Alcohol, Gambling, Sexual)**

DEFINITION: People with addictions have lost control over what they think, what they do, or what they ingest into their bodies. The term "addiction" can be applied to harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes. It can also be applied to harmful behaviors such as compulsive gambling, sex, or mutilating your own body. People can also develop addictions to things that in themselves are not harmful--such as food, hobbies, sports, etc.--but that are addictions when used in uncontrolled excesses.

FACTS ABOUT ADDICTION:

So you think you aren't addicted? If you answer yes to any of the following questions, you need help:

- Are you using drugs other than those required and prescribed for medical reasons?
- Can you get through the week without using alcohol or drugs?
- Has your drug/alcohol abuse interfered with relationships with your parents, children, spouse, relatives, or friends?
- Has your drug/alcohol use caused you to miss days at work or school?
- Have you been dismissed from school, a job, school, or other positions due to drug/alcohol use?
- Have you had a fight when under the influence of alcohol or a drug?
- Have you done anything illegal in order to obtain alcohol or drugs?
- Have you been arrested for possession of illegal drugs?
- Have you been arrested for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol?
- Have you had medical problems (like memory loss, hepatitis, convulsions, blackouts, flashbacks etc.) as a result of using drugs or alcohol?
- Do you feel sick when you try to stop using drugs or alcohol?

You are a slave to whatever controls you. *"A man is a slave to whatever has mastered him" (2 Peter 2:19).*

You cannot please God if you are controlled by addictions. *"Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you" (Romans 8:8-9).*

Anything that harms your body spiritually, mentally, or physically is sin. The Bible declares: *"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple" (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).* Your body is a temple and you should treat it as a sanctuary.

Addictions cause you to lose control. When you are under the influence of an addiction, you

lose control of your will, your body, and your mental processes. If you are not in control and God is not in control, guess who is? Your enemy, Satan.

Drugs are related to sorcery. Revelation 18:23 speaks of the "sorceries" of evil men. The Greek word for sorceries is "pharmakeia", meaning "enchantment with drugs". Revelation 9:21 indicates that those that do not repent of their "sorceries" (enchantment with drugs) cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

Legitimate drugs, when not abused, are not sinful. Every good gift comes from God, and legitimate medications are gifts that help restore health and alleviate pain.

There are many kinds of addictions. A person can be addicted to food, drugs, alcohol, gambling, sex, or pornography. One may also be addicted to an activity that in itself is not wrong, but because of overindulgence in it becomes wrong.

God wants you free from all addictions. *"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1).*

DEALING WITH ADDICTION:

Admit that your addiction is sin. As long as you refuse to admit your addiction, you will be unable to deal with it. *"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).*

Cut the root, kill the fruit. Addiction is a surface manifestation of a deeper need or problem in your life. Think about why you take drugs, drink, smoke, gamble, etc.? Do you feel better about yourself when you do it? Do you do it to try to escape heartache and difficulties in your life? Whether it be heartache, difficulties, or negative emotions, etc., cut the root that is supporting your habit and you will kill the fruit--the addiction itself.

Ask God for deliverance. Pray not only about your addiction, but the root causes behind it--your hurt, pain, rejection issues, etc. Rebuke any generational spirits that would foster addictions. Bind the spirit of addiction from operating in your life: *"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18).* Renew your mind by the Word, prayer, and meditation.

Seek biblical rehabilitation. If you need assistance in dealing with your addiction, find a biblical rehabilitation center or program. The Salvation Army, Teen Challenge, Dream Centers, and Celebrate Recovery are excellent biblically-based programs.

Resist the devil. *"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you..." (James 4:7-8a).* You resist the devil and his temptations by prayer and the Word of God which enables you to draw near to God. You are not resisting the devil when you have cigarettes or drugs in your pocket just "in case it doesn't work" and you need them. Use your access to God to secure help in time of need (Hebrews 4:15-16).

Change your lifestyle. Do not hang out with people who use drugs or alcohol. Do not frequent

parties or places where drugs or alcohol are used or gambling is done. Do not watch television programs that promote drugs, alcohol, gambling, etc. through either the screenplay or advertising. Do not return again to the bondage of addiction (Galatians 5:1).

Form a support network. Form a personal support network of people who have successfully recovered from addictions and can help you do the same. Celebrate Recovery and Teen Challenge provide excellent Christian support networks for addictions.

Know that you will be tempted. Temptation is common when overcoming an addiction, but you can overcome it in the power of the Lord. When you are tempted by the enemy to engage in your habit again remember that... *"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it"* (1 Corinthians 10:13). There is always a way out. Take it!

Remember that you never fail until you quit trying. If you return to your addiction, do not give up in defeat. Ask God to forgive you and strengthen you to take control over the addiction, then begin again. Rather than condemning yourself, think about ways you can respond better next time you are tempted.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT ADDICTION:

I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. (John 8:34-35)

For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. (Romans 7:18)

For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep doing... What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:19 and 24-25)

Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. (Romans 8:8-9)

For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (Romans 8:13-14)

Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. (Romans 13:14)

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

Everything is permissible for me-but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for

me-but I will not be mastered by anything. (1 Corinthians 6:12)

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

For we are the temple of the living God. (2 Corinthians 6:16)

Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God. (2 Corinthians 7:1)

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage ... For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. (Galatians 5:1,13)

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of a sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. (Galatians 5:16-17)

And be not drunk with wine (or high on other drugs), wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:1-5)

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16)

A man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. (2 Peter 2:19)

(See also "Alcoholism" and "Habits" in this database.)

ADULTERY

DEFINITION: Adultery is sexual intercourse with someone other than your lawful spouse. It is sin and a flagrant violation of the covenant of marriage.

FACTS ABOUT ADULTERY:

Adultery has many negative consequences. Broken homes, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and negative emotions like guilt, fear, shame, and anxiety.

Adultery is sin. According to the Bible, adultery is sin and stems from your own selfish desires. It is not a "weakness". It is not an "affair". It is sin, because God says it is sin. The very thought of it by lusting is sin (Matthew 5:27-28).

God's plan is one man and one woman for life. *"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate"* (Matthew 19:4-6).

DEALING WITH ADULTERY:

Reject lustful thoughts. Lusting after someone is considered the same as adultery (Matthew 5:27-28). Adultery begins in the mind.

Avoid temptation. Avoid compromising situations that put you in a place of temptation, alone with a handsome man or a beautiful woman. If you are never alone with someone of the opposite sex who is not your spouse, adultery will probably not become an issue.

Confess adultery as sin. *"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy"* (Proverbs 28:13).

Break ungodly relationships. Break the relationship with your adulterous partner. Make a total break: No more communication in any form. *"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty"* (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).

Seek forgiveness from those you have wronged. This would include your spouse and your adulterous partner.

Ask God to restore your marriage. If both parties are willing--with the help of God--your marriage can be restored. If you are the offender, you must realize that your spouse may opt not to take you back. You must be prepared to face this possibility and graciously accept it if it happens.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT ADULTERY:

Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor's wife and defile yourself with her. (Leviticus 18:20)

You shall not commit adultery. (Deuteronomy 5:18)

The eye of the adulterer watches for dusk; he thinks, "No eye will see me," and he keeps his face concealed. (Job 24:15)

The lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter gall, sharp as a double-edged sword.. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. (Proverbs 5:3 and 5)

Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house, lest you give your best strength to others and your years to one who is cruel, lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich another man's house. (Proverbs 5:8-10)

Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife? For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths. The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast. (Proverbs 5:20-22)

Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished...A man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself. (Proverbs 6:27-29 and 32)

Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and call understanding your kinsman; they will keep you from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words. (Proverbs 7:4-5)

The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; he who is under the Lord's wrath will fall into it. (Proverbs 22:14)

This is the way of an adulteress: She eats and wipes her mouth and says, "I've done nothing wrong." (Proverbs 30:20)

I supplied all their needs, yet they committed adultery and thronged to the houses of prostitutes. (Jeremiah 5:7)

"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks

at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Mathew 5:27-28)

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." (Matthew 19:4-6)

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. (Hebrews 13:4)

With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed an accursed brood! (2 Peter 2:14)

(See also "Promiscuity" in this data base.)

ALCOHOLISM

DEFINITION: An alcoholic is one who is unable to control drinking alcoholic substances, a person who is controlled by the desire, abuse, and misuse of alcohol. Their drinking is compulsive and out of control. Habitual use results in uncontrolled addiction.

FACTS ABOUT ALCHOLISM:

Alcohol can be addictive. Alcohol in the form of dinner wine is accepted in some cultures and is also used for medicinal purposes, but when used improperly it can become an addiction. When used in cooking, the alcoholic content is destroyed.

Wine in the Bible. The word "wine" in the Bible can mean either unfermented or fermented fruit of the vine. Priests were forbidden to drink wine (Leviticus 10:9) and kings were counseled not to drink it (Proverbs 31:4)--and we are called kings and priests unto God (Revelation 1:6). Jesus refused wine for medicinal purposes while on the cross (Mark 15:23), but drank of the cup at the Last Supper. The water that Jesus turned to wine could have been fermented or unfermented--we are not told. Personal conviction should be exercised in this area when wine is not an addictive issue.

You are not doomed for life. There is a slogan that says "once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic" This statement is not true about a born-again believer who is a new creature in Christ. It does not mean that you cannot be delivered from alcoholism, but it does mean this is an area of temptation where you must continually be on guard. If you are or have been an alcoholic, you cannot drink ever again. Not even one drink!

Alcoholism can be passed down through families. Children of alcoholics tend to become alcoholics themselves--perhaps through learned behavior and/or generational spirits. This does not mean you can blame your alcoholism on your parents, however. You must take responsibility for your own addiction and deal with it so that you will not pass on this tendency to your own children.

Alcoholism is not a disease, it is a choice. If alcoholism is a disease it is the only one contracted by an act of the will; the only disease that is habit-forming; the only disease that promotes crime and brutality; and the only disease that is sold in a bottle in a store, and in some places, taxed by the government.

You are not alone. The temptation you are battling in regards to alcohol is common, but God has made a way of escape from it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

DEALING WITH ALCOHOLISM:

Recognize that alcohol abuse is a work of the flesh. It is listed among the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). It is not a sickness. The Holy Spirit can and will produce the self-control needed to overcome this and other addictions as you allow the Fruit of the Spirit to be manifested in your life (Galatians 5:22-23).

Analyze why you need alcohol. Why do you need it? Are you trying to mask emotional pain? Do you rely on it to enable social interaction with others? If you determine why you drink, then you can deal with the root cause of your problem instead of turning to alcohol.

Admit that you need help. Proverbs 28:13 declares: *"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy."* 1 John 1:8-9 gives both a warning and a promise: *"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*

Ask God for deliverance. Pray not only about your alcoholism, but the root cause behind it--the loneliness, hurt, pain, inferiority, etc., that drives you to drink. Rebuke any generational spirits that would foster a desire for alcohol. Bind the spirit of alcoholism from operating in your life (Matthew 18:18).

Change your life-style. Do not attend events where drinking occurs and do not hang out with friends who drink. Do not watch television programs that promote drinking through either the screenplay or advertising. Do not return again to the bondage of alcoholism (Galatians 5:1).

Form a support network. Form a personal support network of people who have successfully recovered from alcoholism. Celebrate Recovery, Salvation Army, and Teen Challenge provide excellent Christian support network for addictions.

Remember that you never fail until you quit trying. If you start drinking again, don't give up in defeat. Ask God to forgive you and strengthen you to take control over your addiction through the power of the Holy Spirit. Then simply begin again. Rather than condemning yourself, think about ways you can escape the next time you are tempted. Understand that as a recovered alcoholic, you cannot take even one drink.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT ALCOHOLISM:

Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise. (Proverbs 20:1)

He who loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich. (Proverbs 21:17)

Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine. Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. Your eyes will see strange sights and your mind imagine confusing things. You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging. "They hit me," you will say, "but I'm not hurt! They beat me, but I don't feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?" (Proverbs 23:29-35)

Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine. (Isaiah 5:11)

Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks. (Isaiah 5:22)

Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies. You will be filled with shame instead of glory. (Habakkuk 2:15-16)

Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. (Luke 21:34)

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage ... For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. (Galatians 5:1,13)

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of a sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. (Galatians 5:16-17)

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16)

(See also "Addictions" and "Habits" in this database.)

ANGER

DEFINITION: Anger is an emotional reaction to what you perceive to be a displeasing situation or event, one where you have been offended, wronged, denied, or been a victim of an injustice.

FACTS ABOUT ANGER:

Anger can be positive. Anger is not always wrong. Some anger is good. Positive anger is motivated by unselfishness and is directed against an injustice or wrong behavior. Jesus demonstrated righteous anger in cleansing the temple (Mark 11:15 and 17) and in His response to the Pharisees and their attitudes towards the healing of an infirm man (Mark 3:5).

Improper anger is sin. Improper anger results in aggressive acts of violence, rage, fury, and wrath. Improper anger is sin.

You need help with your anger when you are so angry that you are out of control; when you suppress anger and redirect it against others or yourself; or when anger results in bitterness, resentment, and hostility.

Mistaken assumptions often lead to anger. You may be angry about something that really didn't happen the way you think or were told it did. You may also make false assumptions about a person's motivation for doing something.

Anger comes from within. You cannot blame your anger on someone else because "*..out of the overflow of the heart, his mouth speaks*" (Luke 6:45). While you cannot control another's actions, you do have a choice in your own emotional responses

Anger opens the door to other negative attitudes. Anger opens the door for the enemy to come in with other negative emotions and attitudes. "*Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold*" (Ephesians 4:26-28). A foothold is "a firm or secure position that provides a base for further advancement" (*American Heritage Dictionary*). If you don't deal with anger in a timely manner, it opens the door to Satan and leads to other negative emotions like resentment, bitterness, and hatred. Uncontrolled anger gives birth to more anger.

Anger can kill. Anger affects respiration, blood pressure, the heart, nervous system, and the muscular system. Anger can kill you or cause you to lose control and kill or injure someone else. Anger is not only an emotional and health issue, it is also a spiritual issue.

DEALING WITH ANGER:

Confess anger as sin. Confess improper anger as sin and ask God to forgive you. Take personal responsibility. Do not try to make other people responsible for your anger, ie, "I have Uncle Harry's temper."

Spend time praying regarding your anger. Make your anger a matter of serious prayer, asking God to help you at the start of each new day. Surrender your emotions to the Holy Spirit. Ask God to remove the roots of anger that are growing inside you. Be on guard, "*Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled*" (Hebrews 12:15). Ask God to change your heart because "*..out of the overflow of the heart, his mouth speaks*" (Luke 6:45).

Analyze the root cause of your anger. What circumstances tend to set you off? Why are you so angry? Is it a learned pattern of response? Destroy the root and kill the fruit.

Practice forgiveness. Unforgiveness is often a root cause anger. Ask God to forgive you, forgive yourself, and then forgive others who have wronged you. As long as you harbor unforgiveness, the person you are angry with is controlling you. Matthew 6:14-15 states: *AFor if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*@ You may need to confront the person you are angry with by using the steps given in Matthew 18:15-17. Whether the other party repents of wrong or not, you will benefit by knowing you did the right thing

Redirect your anger. Positive directed anger can be a useful tool--for example, anger which motivates a person to strive toward good, like getting laws changed to stop child abuse. Positive anger finds ways to correct wrongs for the good of society. The organization MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) is an example of what can be done with positive anger that is focused on a purpose. If you find yourself becoming angry, ask God to show you ways that your anger can be channeled for good.

Learn how to communicate. Research has proven that when a person is shouted at, he usually shouts back. With patience and practice, you can calm an angry person with your tone of voice. When someone upsets you, calmly talk to them about how you feel. Learn to express yourself better. Don't react before you think. Before speaking, ask yourself if what you are going to say will help or hinder. Ask God to help you remain calm. Expend energy to deal with the problem, not to fuel an emotional response.

Walk away. Remove yourself from the situation or problem until you can respond without anger. Choose to walk away: *ADo not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way*@ (Proverbs 4:14-15).

Do not maintain friendships with angry people. "*Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared*" (Proverbs 22:24-25).

Fix your mind on God. Fix your mind on God instead of what is causing your anger: "*You-- God--will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, whose thoughts are fixed on you!*" (Isaiah 26:3-4). Much that you are angry about is temporal with no eternal ramifications.

Think about situations that have caused you anger or that might arouse your anger in the future and pray about how these should be handled.

Immerse yourself in the Word of God. Memorize scriptures concerning anger.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT ANGER:

In your anger do not sin. (Psalm 4:4)

Refrain from anger and turn from wrath. (Psalm 37:8)

A quick-tempered man does foolish things. (Proverbs 14:17)

A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly. (Proverbs 14:29)

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. (Proverbs 15:1)

A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel. (Proverbs 15:18)

Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared. (Proverbs 22:24-25)

Wise men turn away anger...A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control. (Proverbs 29:8 and 11)

An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins. (Proverbs 29:22)

For as churning the milk produces butter, and as twisting the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife. (Proverbs 30:33)

Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools. (Ecclesiastes 7:9)

But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment...(Matthew 5:22)

In your anger, do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry and do not give

the devil a foothold. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. (Colossians 3:-8)

I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. (1 Timothy 2:8)

Make every effort to live in peace with all men. (Hebrews 12:14)

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. (James 1:19-20)

(See also "Emotions" and "Vengeance" in this database.)

ANXIETY AND WORRY

DEFINITION: Anxiety is the state of being troubled with fearful, distressing thoughts and worrying about real or imagined problems.

FACTS ABOUT ANXIETY AND WORRY:

Anxiety and worry express unbelief. Anxiety and worry are manifestations of a carnal nature expressing doubts in the ability of God to handle situations.

Anxiety and worry do not change anything. Through fretful thoughts you cannot add one hour to your life, so why worry? (Luke 12:25-26).

Anxiety and worry affect your health. Anxious, worried people may suffer nervousness, sleeplessness, headaches, and panic attacks--the long-term effects of which can affect vital organs.

Anxiety causes you to lose spiritual focus. Anxiety changes your focus from the eternal to the temporal. Your focus is to be on the Kingdom of God, not the things of the world (Matthew 6:28-34). The Bible warns, *"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap"* (Luke 21:34). "That day" is speaking of end-time events and return of the Lord.

DEALING WITH ANXIETY AND WORRY:

Ask God for forgiveness. Anxiety and worry reflect unbelief that God is able to handle the situations in your life. Ask forgiveness for unbelief.

Address why you are anxious and worried. Like David, question yourself: *"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?"* Then, whatever the reason for your concern, tell yourself by faith: *"Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you ..."* (Psalm 42:5-6)

Boldly declare that the Lord will help in any situation causing worry. He is your source of strength (Philippians 4:13). *"So we take comfort and are encouraged and confidently and boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not be seized with alarm-I will not fear or dread or be terrified. What can man do to me?"* (Heb. 13:6, TAB).

Cast your cares on God. The Bible says to cast your cares on the Lord (Psalm 55:22). The word "cast" implies a continuous action. You may cast your cares on God, yet anxious thoughts return. When they do, cast again!

Pray and praise God instead of thinking anxious thoughts. The Word says: *"Do not be*

anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7). Turn every anxious thought into a prayer, then praise God for the answer.

Do not worry. This is a command, not an option (Luke 12:22-23). Worry is focused on the future, and Jesus said not to think about tomorrow (Matthew 6:34). God designed the world to run on a 24 hour schedule. Don't violate this principle by worrying about the future.

Replace worry with the Word. The Word of God is effective in dealing with worry and anxiety. Following are some excerpts to get you started. In addition, go through your Bible and mark all of the promises of God and His faithfulness. Review these when you are tempted to worry.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT ANXIETY AND WORRY:

Do not fret--it leads only to evil. (Psalm 37:8)

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you ... (Psalm 42:5-6)

Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall. (Psalm 55:22)

When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul. (Psalm 94:19)

An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up. (Proverbs 12:25)

The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion. (Proverbs 28:1)

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:28-34)

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food and the body more than clothes. (Luke 12:22-23)

Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little

thing, why do you worry about the rest? (Luke 12:25-26)

Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. (Luke 21:34)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

ASSURANCE

DEFINITION: Assurance means to be convinced of something, to have absolute faith in it. Biblically, a lack of assurance causes one to doubt their salvation as well as other spiritual works God has done in their lives.

FACTS ABOUT ASSURANCE:

Lack of assurance is doubt and is generated by Satan. He will even try to make you think you have committed the unpardonable sin, but God's Word says that if you come to Him, you will be received (John 6:37). You also can be assured that:

- Jesus paid your entire sin debt and obtained your full pardon: Colossians 2:13-14.
- Your pardon is based on God's grace, which always exceeds your transgressions: Ephesians 1:7; Romans 5:20.
- God does not hold your past, present, or future sins against you as long as you ask forgiveness: Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:19.
- Forgiveness is extended to all who believe in Jesus: Acts 10:43.
- Forgiveness is available to believers who sin: John 1:9.

God's grace in forgiving is not an invitation or license to continue in sin. Rather, it should instill in you a passion for righteousness and living a holy life: *"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey--whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness" (Romans 6:15-18).*

Assurance is not a matter of applying human logic. It is a matter of faith. You simply believe God's Word and rely on it rather than your own thinking (Proverbs 3:5).

DEALING WITH ASSURANCE:

Believe that you are saved because God's Word assures it. Read John 3:16; Romans 10:9; and 1 John 1:8-10.

Understand that a lack of assurance comes by feeling. But you are not saved by feeling. You are saved by faith. Satan can tamper with your feelings, but he cannot void the work of God in your life. Determine that you will serve God even if you never "feel" anything that confirms your experience. Your eternal relationship with God is not based on feelings, but on faith.

Read the Word of God consistently. The better you come to know God through His Word, the more you will trust Him completely with your salvation and other spiritual matters. See Romans 10:17; John 7:17; and 1 John 5:13.

Confess your sins to God. Disobedience can result in lack of assurance about your spiritual

status in God (1 John 1:8-10 and Proverbs 28:13). Pray the model prayer daily which includes a petition for forgiveness of sin (Matthew 6:9-13).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT ASSURANCE:

Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven. (Psalm 119:89)

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

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16)

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."
(John 5:24)

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. (John 10:27-28)

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39, NKJV)

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Romans 10:13)

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

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

We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. (Hebrews 3:14)

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved. (Hebrews 10:35)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an

inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-5)

And this is what he promised us--even eternal life. (1 John 2:25)

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)

(See also "Doubt", "Faith", and "Unbelief" in this database.)

ATTITUDES

DEFINITION: An attitude is how you think about and respond to something or someone.

FACTS ABOUT ATTITUDES:

Bad attitudes can be learned behaviors. For example, your parent may have been prejudice against a certain race of people and taught you to have the same attitude. If you were raised in a critical environment, you may develop a critical spirit.

Bad attitudes can result from negative experiences. For example, if you are a black man who was assaulted by a Mexican, you may develop a negative attitude towards all Mexicans because of your experience.

God is concerned about attitudes. Christ's teachings in Matthew 5, known as the Sermon on the Mount, confirms this when He declares that we are to be meek, merciful, peacemakers, etc. The Fruit of the Holy Spirit that is to be manifested in your life are attitudes of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Your attitude should always be Christ-like. In any circumstance and towards any person, a believer should always manifest positive Christ-like attitudes.

DEALING WITH ATTITUDES:

Take responsibility for your attitudes. You will never be able to conquer sinful attitudes until you stop blaming them on others.

Ask forgiveness for bad attitudes. Ask God to forgive you and ask forgiveness from those who were impacted by your negative attitudes.

Ask God to develop the Fruit of the Spirit in your life. These include "... *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*" (Galatians 5:22-23). Put off your bad attitudes and put these on!

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT ATTITUDES:

Attitudes in general.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:31-32)

Attitudes in the home.

Wives, submit to your husband as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. (Ephesians 5:22-29)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"-which is the first commandment with a promise--"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1-4)

Attitudes towards Christian brothers and sisters.

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus... (Philippians 2:3-5)

Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity. (1 Timothy 5:1-2)

Attitudes on the job.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him. (Ephesians 6:5-9)

Attitudes towards authority.

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. (Romans 13:1-3)

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

Attitudes towards those who have wronged you.

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matthew 6:14-15)

Attitudes towards those of other races or socio-economic levels.

For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. (James 2:8-9)

Attitudes towards the unsaved.

...snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear-hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. (Jude 23)

AUTHORITY

DEFINITION: An authority is someone who is set over you in a structured environment for specific purposes. Examples are your boss in the workplace, your spiritual leader, the government of your nation, and law enforcement officials.

FACTS ABOUT AUTHORITY:

You are set free in Christ, but still under authority. Christ sets you free from sin, guilt, and condemnation, but not from God's authority and the authorities ordained by God.

Authority provides positive structure. In the home, community, church, the workplace, and government, authority provides structure within which you can live your life confidently.

All authority is from God. When you rebel against legitimate authority, you rebel against God: *"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves"* (Romans 13:1-3).

DEALING WITH AUTHORITY:

You must obey authorities. Because all authority is from God, you are to obey instead of rebel. When you rebel against them, you rebel against God Himself (Romans 13:1-3).

When authorities conflict with God's Word, you must obey God. When ordered to no longer preach about Christ, Peter responded: *"We must obey God rather than men!"* (Acts 5:29).

Pray for those in authority. *"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness"* (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Respect the authority set in the church. Guidelines for functioning under authority in the church are given in 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11-12; and Hebrews 13:17. If you cannot respect the leadership in a church because of their ungodly conduct, find a new church!

Respect the structure of authority set in the home. A godly husband is to be the head of the house, the wife is to follow his lead, and children are to be obedient. The authority in the home is to be loving and kind, not demanding and harsh.

Lovingly exercise authority over those for whom you are responsible. As a parent, spouse, pastor, employer, or public servant, you are to lovingly exercise our authority in a Christ-like

attitude: *"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21).*

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT AUTHORITY:

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. (Romans 13:1-3)

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Ephesians 5:21)

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. (1 Peter 2:13-15)

(See also "Submission" in this database.)

BACKSLIDING

DEFINITION: Backsliding is when a believer deliberately goes back into sin, turns away from God, or becomes rebellious to the will of God. Backsliding starts in the heart and then is expressed through outward actions.

FACTS ABOUT BACKSLIDING:

Backsliding is closely aligned with carnality. One's own desires and devices are acted out in opposition to God's will (1 Corinthians 3:3; Proverbs 14:14).

Backsliding results from a general falling away from God due to conscious rejection of the truth revealed in His Word. Sins of the flesh also lead to backsliding, i.e., deliberately engaging in immorality, addictions, etc. There is an indifference towards God, His Word, and the church, and making other things a priority ahead of the spiritual.

Your own backsliding condemns you. It is your own backsliding that condemns you (Jeremiah 2:19). Jesus did not come to condemn you, but to give you abundant life (John 10:10)

Backsliding is a sin. Like all sin, God will forgive it when you repent.

DEALING WITH BACKSLIDING:

Identify the issues that caused you to backslide. Was it disappointment with God? Did you refuse to do something God asked you to do. Was it because of unanswered prayer? Hanging out with worldly people in worldly places? Unwholesome media through the TV, Internet, videos, music, and literature? Did you continue to engage in willful sin or did you just grow cold in your intimate relationship with God? It is important to identify where you began to backslide so that you will not fall into the same trap again.

Confess backsliding as sin. Ask forgiveness, and you will be forgiven (1 John 1:9).

Pray for restoration. David prayed: *"Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me"* (Psalm 51:12).

Make a new commitment to God. After praying for restoration, David promised to make evangelism, praise and worship, and sacrificial living a priority (Psalm 51:13-19).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT BACKSLIDING:

Can papyrus grow tall where there is no marsh? Can reeds thrive without water? While still growing and uncut, they wither more quickly than grass. Such is the destiny of all who forget God; so perishes the hope of the godless. (Job 8:11-13)

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. (Psalm 32:1-2)

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. (Psalm 51:12)

Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil. (Proverbs 4:25)

If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all. (Isaiah 7:9)

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? (Isaiah 43:18-19)

Let him return unto the Lord ... for He will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:7)

"Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the Lord your God and have no awe of me," declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty. (Jeremiah 2:19)

Return, faithless people; I will cure you of backsliding. Yes, we will come to you for you are the Lord our God. (Jeremiah 3:22)

Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord. (Jeremiah 17:5)

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely... (Hosea 14:4)

Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them...Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. (Mark 4:15-18-19)

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee... (Luke 15:17-18. The story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 is a tremendous example of being restored after backsliding.)

You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? (1 Corinthians 3:3)

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! (1 Corinthians 10:12)

Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

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)

Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place. (Revelation 2:4-5)

(See also "Unfaithfulness" in this database.)

BAPTISMS

DEFINITION: The word "baptize" used in the Bible means to entirely immerse or submerge.

FACTS ABOUT BAPTISMS:

The New Testament mentions four different baptisms. These are Christ's baptism of suffering; the baptism of John; Christian baptism; and baptism in the Holy Spirit. The first two were unique to New Testament times. The last two are experiences for all believers.

-Christ's baptism of suffering refers to His death on the cross (Luke 12:50). This baptism was unique to Christ and His suffering for our sins.

-The baptism of John was performed during his ministry. John made two demands on the people: Repentance and public confession of sins. Those who were willing to meet these God-given requirements were baptized by John in the Jordan River as a public testimony that they had repented of their sins. John's baptism was for those who repented prior to the death and resurrection of Christ.

-Christian baptism is the term used to refer to water baptism of a person who has confessed faith in Jesus Christ. The biblical pattern for this baptism is immersion in water.

-The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an immersion in the power of the Spirit that occurred after the ascension of Christ back into heaven (Acts 2).

Christian baptism should be done by immersion in water, following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:13-17).

Baptism in water is a command. It is not an option. Many believers procrastinate or ignore water baptism because they think it is optional. Jesus commanded his disciples saying: *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"* (Matthew 28:18-20). From that point on, people were baptized upon their confession of faith, fulfilling the Lord's command.

Requirements for Christian baptism in water are:

- Repentance: Repenting from your sin (Acts 2:38-39).
- Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and confessing Him as Savior (Mark 16:15-16).
- Instruction. New believers should be taught the meaning of baptism before they are baptized. This does not have to be lengthy instruction. Most New Testament converts were baptized immediately after conversion (Acts 8:36-38).

Baptism of babies. When Jesus was an infant, His parents brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord, but He was not baptized (Luke 2:22). Jesus was baptized when he was old enough to know what He was doing and the reason why He was doing it (Matthews 3:13-17). Babies can be presented to the Lord for dedication and blessing by the laying on of hands, but a person should not be baptized until they understand the meaning of the act and have met the Biblical requirements. There is no set age at which this understanding comes. It depends on the mental and spiritual development of each individual child.

Baptism does not save you. It is a public confession that you have been saved, you are dead to the old life, and risen to new life in Christ (1 Peter 3:21-22).

The significance of Christian baptism is that you are following the Lord's example by making a public confession of faith (Romans 6:1-4). It symbolizes death to sin as you are immersed in the "grave" of water and resurrection into new life as you come up out of the water.

Words to be spoken at the time of baptism. According to the Bible, baptism "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" or in the "Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" are both acceptable to be spoken at the time of Christian baptism. There is no conflict between either wording because both refer to the Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The following wording is suggested: "Upon the basis of the confession of your faith, in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I baptize you into the Lord Jesus Christ."

Requirements for baptism in the Holy Spirit. You must be a believer: *"Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call'"* (Acts 2:38-39). You receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit just as you did salvation: By faith.

DEALING WITH BAPTISMS:

If you are not saved, accept Christ as your Savior. This is mandatory in order to participate in Christian baptism.

After accepting Christ, be baptized by immersion in water as a public confession of your faith, your death to the old life, and your resurrection to new life in Christ. Water baptism is usually done by a pastor or spiritual leader.

Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit baptism after your conversion. Study the following instances of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in New Testament times:

-Acts 9:17-19 recalls how Saul (Paul) received his healing, baptism in the Spirit, and water baptism all in one day.

-Acts 2:2-4 records what happened on the day of Pentecost.

-Acts 10:44-46 records what happened when Peter preached the Gospel to a man named Cornelius and his family.

-Acts 19:6 describes what happened to the first group of converts at Ephesus.

See also Acts 1:8, Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33, Acts 1:5, and 11:16. For further instructions see the Harvestime International Network publication entitled *"Ministry Of The Holy Spirit"* available at <http://www.harvestime.org>.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT BAPTISMS:

I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.
(Matthew 3:11)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:13-17)

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

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."
(Mark 16:15-16)

The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. (Luke 3:16)

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been

clothed with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)

Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." (John 1:32-34)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. (John 14:16-17)

For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:5)

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

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:2-4)

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

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:38-39)

But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. (Acts 8:12)

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:14-17)

As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. (Acts 8:36-38)

Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord-Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here--has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. (Acts 9:17-19)

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days. (Acts 10:44-48)

"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'" (Acts 11:15-16)

Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. (Acts 13:24)

One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us. (Acts 16:14-15)

Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized. (Acts 18:7-8)

Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. (Acts 18:24-26)

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. (Acts 19:1-6)

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We

died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (Romans 6:1-4)

For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called--one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

...having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. (Colossians 2:12)

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

(See also the Harvestime International Network publications entitled "*Foundations Of Faith*" and "*Ministry Of The Holy Spirit*" available at <http://www.harvestime.org>)

BITTERNESS

DEFINITION: Bitterness is characterized by an unforgiving spirit and accompanying negative and critical attitudes. It begins when you harbor offences by others, allow disappointments to germinate in your heart, and permit resentment to grow.

FACTS ABOUT BITTERNESS:

Bitterness is destructive. Bitterness is a bottled-up feeling that will eat away at you until you finally explode externally or implode spiritually (Galatians 5:19-20).

Bitterness affects others. Bitterness will spread from you to others: *"See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many"* (Hebrews 12:15)

Bitterness affects how you talk. Paul said that the mouths of unrighteous men are filled with "cursing and bitterness" (Romans 3:14).

Bitterness is sin. Peter told a man named Simon: *"You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin"* (Acts 8:20-23).

Bitterness will hinder your ministry. Peter told Simon that he had no part of the ministry because of the sin and bitterness in his heart.

DEALING WITH BITTERNESS:

Determine what caused your bitterness. What event, circumstance, disappointment, relationship, etc., planted the root of bitterness in your heart? Go to the root cause and identify it so you can deal with it.

Repent of your bitterness. Repent and ask forgiveness for bitterness and the unforgiveness, anger, etc., that caused it.

Extend and ask forgiveness. You may need to ask forgiveness of others who have been affected by your bitter spirit. You may also need to forgive someone who hurt or failed you which led to your bitterness. The Bible commands: *"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you"* (Ephesians 4:31-32).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT BITTERNESS:

Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked, From the rebellion of the workers of iniquity,
Who sharpen their tongue like a sword, And bend their bows to shoot their arrows--bitter words,
That they may shoot in secret at the blameless; Suddenly they shoot at him and do not fear.
(Psalm 64:2-4, NKJV)

"You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin" (Acts 8:20-23).

There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one. Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes. (Romans 3:10-18)

Love... is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.
(1 Corinthians 13:5)

Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. (Colossians 3:19, NKJV)

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:31-32)

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of man; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. (Hebrews 12:14- 15)

Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? (James 3:11, NKJV)

But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. (James 3:14-15, NKJV)

BLASPHEMY

DEFINITION: Blasphemy is disrespect shown towards God, His Word, or something that is deemed holy.

FACTS ABOUT BLASPHEMY:

Blasphemy can occur in various ways. You can blaspheme not only by what you say, but also by your conduct. Riotous, sinful behavior does not show respect towards God and His Word and is a form of blasphemy. Using God's name in vain as a curse word is blasphemy.

Blasphemy starts in the heart. Jesus said that blasphemy--as other sins--begins in the heart (Mark 7:20-23).

Blasphemy is sin. Jesus said one who blasphemed needs forgiveness (Mark 3:18).

DEALING WITH BLASPHEMY:

Identify your blasphemous behavior. Are you committing blasphemy by what you say or do?

Repent. Blasphemy is sin (Mark 7:20-23). As in all sinful behavior, it requires repentance.

Ask God to create a new heart in you. Since blasphemy comes from the heart, your heart needs to be changed. Claim this scripture: *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws"* (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT BLASPHEMY:

I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. (Mark 3:28)

And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man." (Mark 7:20-23, NKJV)

But now you yourselves are to put off all these: Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, (Colossians 3:8-10, NKJV)

And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. (Luke 12:10) (See the "Unpardonable Sin" in this database.)

CHASTENING AND DISCIPLINE

DEFINITION: Chastening means to discipline in order to correct errors or faults.

FACTS ABOUT CHASTENING AND DISCIPLINE:

Reasons for chastening and discipline. It is the nature of sin to rebel against authority. This is what caused the original sin of Lucifer (Satan) and of man (Adam and Eve). Because of this basic sin nature, we all rebel and need correction at times.

Pastors or spiritual leaders have the authority for discipline within a church or ministry because they have the responsibility for the spiritual welfare of followers (Hebrews 13:7). You are to respond positively to your spiritual leaders so it will be a joy for them to lead you.

God expects parents to discipline their children. The Bible says that a person without discipline will die without instruction--spiritual death for sure, and maybe even physical death (Proverbs 5:23). Proverbs 23:13 says "*do not withhold discipline from a child.*" Moses commanded Israel to teach their children to observe all of God's words (Deuteronomy 32:46). The Bible says: "*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:4, NASU).

God disciplines believers through His Word, trials of faith, and adverse circumstances.

The purposes of chastening and discipline. It leads you to repentance and corrects sin (1 Corinthians 8:9; 2 Corinthians 7:9). It keeps you humble (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). It teaches you spiritual discernment (1 Corinthians 11:31-32) and to obey God's Word (Psalm 119:67). It encourages you to be faithful (1 Corinthians 5:6-7); protects the testimony of the church (1 Timothy 3:7); and is restorative (Galatians 6:1; Matthew 6:14-15).

Chastening and discipline confirm God's love for you. It confirms that you are a child of God and that He cares about you (Hebrews 12:8, Psalms 94:12; Proverbs 3:11-12).

DEALING WITH CHASTENING AND DISCIPLINE:

Consider chastening a reason to examine your life. As the Apostle Paul admonished, "*...let a man examine himself...*" (1 Corinthians 11:28). Examine your life for sins of commission (things you should not do) and sins of omission (things you should have done but didn't).

Confess any known sin. Chastening sometimes occurs because of sin, so confess any known sin. When you do, God will cleanse you from all unrighteousness, meaning even sins of which you are not aware (1 John 1:8-9). Pray the prayer of David: "*Cleanse me from secret faults*" (Psalm 19:12).

Do not be discouraged by discipline. Know that through chastening, God confirms His love for you (Hebrews 12:7-11). You are actually blessed when you are disciplined by God (Psalm

94:12)

Remember what has been called the "golden rule" if you deal with situations that require discipline: *"Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them"* (Matthew 7:12, RSV).

Always ask yourself:

-What does God's Word say about this?

-How would Jesus handle this?

-How would I want to be treated in this situation if our positions were reversed and I was him and he was me?"

Use these biblical guidelines for discipline:

-Go first to the erring brother and solve the matter individually and personally if possible. If the erring believer will not listen to you and repent, go again with witnesses. If he still refuses to hear you, take the matter before the entire Church (Matthew 18:15-17).

-Discipline should be with a proper spirit. Spiritually mature believers are to first judge themselves and then deal with offenders in a spirit of meekness, love, and helpfulness (Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 15:1-2; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8, and Galatians 6:1-4).

-Correction should be done with the purpose of restoring the offender who has been taken captive by Satan (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

-Opportunity should be given for the erring brother to respond. If he repents, the leader can restore him to fellowship and ministry. If the offense is serious, the offender may need to be removed from active ministry until he sets his own life and home in order. If he is rebellious and does not repent, he must be removed from leadership and possibly, the church fellowship.

-Private problems and public sins should be handled differently (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 2:1-14; 1 Timothy 5:20). In the passage from Matthew it seems the problem was between two individuals. It was to be dealt with by enlisting the aid of other believers and, if the offender would not listen, by excluding him from fellowship. In the other passages, the problems were matters of public record so they were dealt with publicly.

-Exercise discipline only on the basis of factual knowledge. "Hearsay" evidence is not sufficient, and there must also be two or three witnesses to an offense (Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1 and 1 Timothy 5:1,9).

-If correction is totally refused, discipline may include exclusion from the fellowship. One of the greatest gifts God has given believers is fellowship with other believers. One of the most severe punishments is withholding such fellowship (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; 2 John 7-11; and 3 John 9-11).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT CHASTENING AND DISCIPLINE:

Blessed is the man you discipline, Oh Lord, the man you teach from your law. (Psalms 94:12)

Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. (Psalm 119:67)

My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. (Proverbs 3:11-12)

But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:31-32)

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:7-11)

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

DEFINITION: The New Testament defines the Church as the physical manifestation of Christ, also called His Body and the Bride of Christ. The word actually means "the called out ones" or "dedicated to the Lord." The church is the spiritual body through which Christ works in the world.

FACTS ABOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:

Becoming a church member does not save you. Salvation only comes through confessing, repenting, and accepting Jesus Christ as Savior (John 3:16; Romans 10:9).

There are two dimensions of the Church. The universal Church and the local Church.

- The universal Church is composed of all true believers in Christ--those now living and those who have preceded us in death.
- The local Church is composed of a local congregation living in a specific area and meeting together regularly, whether it be in a church sanctuary, a home, or even outside under a tree!

All born-again believers are automatically members of the universal Church. Believers become part of a local church through meeting together with them and/or a formal process of joining the local congregation. Various groups of churches have organized into what is called "denominations". Although this was not done in New Testament times, modern churches have opted to do this for purposes of administration and organization.

The Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ are other names used in the Bible for true believers who are part of the universal Church.

Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. *"And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way"* (Ephesians 1:22-23). Jesus loved the church and gave His life for it (Ephesians 5:25).

The Church fulfills Christ's mission to the world. The book of Acts and the epistles record how God worked through members of the first Church to extend the Gospel around the world.

Christians are directed to assemble with other members of the Body of Christ. The Bible warns: *"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching"* (Hebrews 10:25).

Which local congregation one should be a part of is between you and God. The question is where does He want you--both for your spiritual benefit and for the benefit of others? This may change from time to time. You may fulfill your purpose in one church and move on. When you leave one congregation for another, however, it should be because of the direction of God and for accomplishing His purposes in and through you. Always leave a church right--that is with a good reputation and without making accusatory statement regarding the congregation from which you are departing.

There is no perfect church. If you are looking for a perfect church, you will not find one. The church is composed of men and women just like you--people who are imperfect. The "perfect" church is one where believers are following the mandates of God's Word, seeking to mature spiritually, and fulfilling the Great Commission to the world.

Responsibilities of church membership include faithful attendance, service for God, and financial support. Each member of the Church has a specific purpose to fulfill (1 Corinthians 12).

God sets the leadership in the church. Apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelists, teachers, and those with various other spiritual gifts are set in the church by God (1 Corinthians 12:27-28).

God's purpose for the church is that *"...through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:10-11).*

The church of God is the pillar and ground of the truth. That is why it is so important to be part of a Bible-believing church (1 Timothy 3:15).

DEALING WITH CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:

Do not remain in a church where scripture is being violated. If the teaching or leadership of a local congregation do not line up with the truth of God's Word, find a new church.

Recognize the importance of attending church. Hebrews 10:25 warns about abandoning meeting together, especially in the end-times. The church is important to your spiritual growth and development and provides a place where you can serve God with your talents and gifts. It is also the foundation of truth which will keep you from deception (1 Timothy 3:15).

Find a church. Become part of a Bible believing, Spirit-filled, proof-producing church.

Pray and ask God to guide your decision. Your choice of a local church is not about your preferences. Rather, it is about the best church for you to attend where you can grow spiritually and your gifts and abilities can be effectively used to bless others.

If you believe God is calling you to start a new church, do so without causing disruption in the church you are presently attending. God is not pleased with those who cause division among His people.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:

Read through the book of Acts and mark each time the word "church" is used. You will note that the church was the agency through which the Great Commission to reach the world is fulfilled. The epistles are letters written to the church under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and provide guidelines for it in faith and practice.

And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47)

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. (Romans 12:4-5)

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. (1 Corinthians 12:27-28)

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. (Ephesians 1:22-23)

His (God's) intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Ephesians 3:10-11)

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (Colossians 1:16-20)

... you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:15)

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

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the

firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

COMMUNICATION

DEFINITION: Communication is the act of giving or exchanging information through speech, writing, various forms of media and the arts, or through a common system of signs or behavior.

FACTS ABOUT COMMUNICATION:

The most important communication is that between God and man. God communicates through His Word and the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as prophecy and teaching.

The Holy Spirit communicates to convict us of sin (John 16:7-11) and to guide us into all truth (John 16:13).

Our primary mode of communication with God is prayer. In prayer, we speak with God and He speaks to us.

God has given you the ability to communicate. He has also declared that you will give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word you have spoken (Matthew 12:36).

Your tongue is powerful. The Bible says it has the power of life and death in it (Proverbs 18:21). Your own words can be a snare to your soul (Proverbs 18:7).

Your mouth, speaking God's Word, expedites the work of angels. The angels of God are released or hindered to work in your behalf by the words that come out of your mouth. Hebrews 1:14 reveals that angels are "ministering spirits" sent from God to minister in behalf of the heirs of salvation. They are released by God to minister when you speak God's Word instead of murmuring and complaining (Psalm 103:20).

The tongue is difficult to control. James 3:1-3 explains that the tongue is impossible to tame, apart from the Holy Spirit. The Bible compares the tongue to a fire (James 3:5); a world of iniquity (James 3:6); a beast that needs taming (James 3:7-8); a fountain of either fresh or bitter water (James 3:11); a tree bearing either good or evil fruit (James 3:12); an unruly evil (James 3:8); deadly poison (James 3:8); a sharp razor (Psalms 52:2); a sharp sword (Psalms 57:4; 59:7); a poisonous serpent (Psalms 140:3); and a deep pit (Proverbs 22:14).

What you speak comes out of your heart. If your heart is filled with negative thoughts--hatred, anger, jealousy, pride, bitterness, and strife--that is what will come out of your mouth. If your heart and mind are filled with carnal thoughts and lusts of the flesh, this will be manifested in your words. If your heart and mind are filled with positive thoughts--thoughts of faith, love, joy, peace--what you say will reflect this.

Controlling your tongues is mandatory because:

-You can be snared with your own words: *"You are snared by the words of your mouth; You are taken by the words of your mouth" (Proverbs 6:2, NKJV).*

-Your words can separate you from God: *"Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?" (Psalms 12:4, KJV).*

-Your words can create a breach--an opening--in your spirit: *"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit" (Proverbs 15:4, KJV).*

-Satan uses your lips to affect your soul: *"A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul" (Proverbs 18:7, KJV).*

-Your tongue can cause calamity: *"He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity" (Proverbs 21:23).*

-Your tongue affects your whole body: *"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell" (James 3:6, NKJV).*

-Your tongue affects your whole life: *"He who guards his mouth preserves his life, But he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction" (Proverbs 13:3, NKJV).*

DEALING WITH COMMUNICATION:

Ask God to forgive you. Evil communication is sin, and as all sin, must be dealt with by confession, repentance, and seeking forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Get your heart right with God. The first step in gaining victory over the tongue is to get your heart right with God because...*"the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander" (Matthew 15:18-20).* Your mouth speaks what is in your heart. If your heart is not right, your tongue will reveal it.

Recognize that you are responsible for the words that come out of your mouth, so take control! *"But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37).*

Keep your words few and simple. The more you talk, the greater the opportunity to sin with your words. *"When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise" (Proverbs 10:19).* Jesus said: *"Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one" (Matthew 5:37).*

Set a good example by your communications. Your conversation reflects on the Lord, so you should set a good example by what you say: "... *set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity*" (1 Timothy 4:12).

Think before you speak. Take time to think about what you are going to say. The Bible warns:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear; slow to speak, slow to wrath.
(James 1:19, KJV)

If you have played the fool and exalted yourself, or if you have planned evil, clap your hand over your mouth! (Proverbs 30:32)

The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.
(Proverbs 15:28)

Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue.
(Proverbs 17:28)

Think on these verses before you speak.

The wise in heart are called prudent, understanding, and knowing, and winsome speech increases learning [in both speaker and listener]. (Proverbs 16:21, AMP)

The mind of the wise instructs his mouth, and adds learning and persuasiveness to his lips.
(Proverbs 16:23, AMP)

A man has joy in making an apt answer, and a word spoken at the right moment--how good it is!
(Proverbs 15:23, AMP)

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. (Proverbs 25:11, KJV)

He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity. (Proverbs 21:23)

He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin. (Proverbs 13:3)

Ask yourself these questions before you speak.

- Will what I am about to say bring glory to God?
- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?
- Will it edify others?
- Have I talked to the person I am talking about?
- Is what I am saying a fact that needs to be shared or is what I am saying based on rumors and does not need to be said?

-Is it absolutely necessary that I share this?

Separate yourself from those who cannot control their tongues. The Bible warns: *"Stay away from a foolish man, for you will not find knowledge on his lips" (Proverbs 14:7).* Do not hang out with them and allow them to pour their filthy, godless conversations into your spirit.

Learn the power of peaceful words. *"Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone" (Proverbs 25:15).*

Recognize your tongue is a weapon. Your tongue is a weapon you can use to overcome the enemy instead of being defeated by him: *"And they overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony..." (Revelation 12:11, KJV).*

Avoid these communication errors which the Bible warns against.

-Murmuring and complaining: Complaining is actually a form of rebellion against God. When the nation of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, God said they were actually complaining against Him. When you complain, you are rebelling against the way He is doing things and the circumstances He is allowing in your life. Rebellion is compared to the sin of witchcraft in the Bible (1 Samuel 15:23). As He did with Israel, God will execute judgment against those who murmur and complain (June 15-16).

-Profanity: Profanity is language or behavior that shows disrespect for God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit including misuse of their names. It is vulgar and irreverent language or behavior, including jokes or innuendos that mock that which is holy.

-Covetous words: *"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have..." (Hebrews 13:5).* See also "covetousness" in this database.

-Idol words: *"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36, KJV).*

-Foolish words: *"The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly" (Proverbs 15:14).*

-Unprofitable words: *"Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen" (2 Timothy 2:14)*

-Fables and commandments of men: *"Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth" (Titus 1:14, KJV).*

-Evil about things you do not know: *"But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption" (2 Peter 2:12, NKJV).*

-Flattering words: *"You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed--God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else" (1 Thessalonians 2:5-6).*

-Vain words: *"They speak vanity every one with his neighbor" (Psalms 12:2, KJV) .*

-Proud words: *"...with their mouth they speak proudly" (Psalms 17:10, KJV).* See also "Pride" in this database.

-Enticing words: *"And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words" (Colossians 2:4, KJV).* Enticing words are words that sound wise and plausible, but are not.

-Boastful words: *"How long shall they utter and speak hard things? And all the workers of iniquity boast themselves" (Psalms 94:4, KJV) .*

-Words that misuse God's name: *"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name." (Exodus 20:7).*

-Cursing and bitter words: *"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" (Romans 3:14, KJV).*

-Lies: *"Let the lying lips be put to silence, which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous" (Psalms 31:18, KJV).*

-Malicious words against others: *"So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us" (3 John 10).*

-Backbiting words: *"...and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman" (Psalms 15:3).*

-Words of discord: *"...one who sows discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:19, NKJV).*

-Contentious words: *"A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calls for blows" (Proverbs 18:6, NKJV).*

-Words of strife: *"You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues" (Psalms 31:20, NKJV).*

-Devouring and deceitful words: *"You love every harmful word, O you deceitful tongue!" (Psalms 52:4).*

-Froward and perverse words: *"Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips" (Proverbs 4:24).*

-Mischievous words: *"They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my*

hurt speak mischievous things and imagine deceits all the day long" (Psalms 38:12, KJV).

-Tale-bearing words: "A talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter" (Proverbs 11:13, NKJV).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT COMMUNICATION:

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. (Exodus 20:7, NIV)

You have tested my heart; You have visited me in the night; You have tried me and have found nothing; I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. (Psalms 17:3, NKJV)

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer. (Psalms 19:14, KJV)

Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. (Psalms 34:13)

I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. (Psalms 39:1, KJV)

"Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; And to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God." (Psalms 50:23, NKJV)

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10, KJV)

You love every harmful word, Oh you deceitful tongue! (Psalm 52:4)

Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. (Psalm 103:20)

Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips. (Psalm 141:3)

Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. (Proverbs 4:24)
Hear; For I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.

For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. (Proverbs 8:6-8, KJV)

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but overwhelms the mouth of the wicked. (Proverbs 10:11)

When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise. (Proverbs 10:19)

The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of judgment. (Proverbs 10:21)

The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, but the speech of the upright rescues them. (Proverbs 12:6)

From the fruit of his lips a man is filled with good things as surely as the work of his hands rewards him. (Proverbs 12:14)

Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (Proverbs 12:18)

The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly. (Proverbs 15:2)

A man finds joy in giving an apt reply--and how good is a timely word! (Proverbs 15:23)

The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil. (Proverbs 15:28)

Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. (Proverbs 16:24)

Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out. (Proverbs 17:14)

A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered. Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue. (Proverbs 17:27-28)

A fool's mouth is his destruction, And his lips are the snare of his soul. (Proverbs 18:7)

He who answers before listening--that is his folly and his shame. (Proverbs 18:13)

From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied. The tongue has the power of life and death. (Proverbs 18:20-21)

He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity. (Proverbs 21:23)

A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. (Proverbs 25:11)

Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone.

(Proverbs 25:15)

A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.
(Proverbs 29:11)

Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him.
(Proverbs 29:20)

Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God.
God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. (Ecclesiastes 5:2)

Do not let your mouth lead you into sin...(Ecclesiastes 5:6)

The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which
are given from one shepherd. (Ecclesiastes 12:11, KJV)

Do not pay attention to every word people say. (Ecclesiastes 7:21)

The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools.
(Ecclesiastes 9:17)

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall
accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11,
NKJV)

Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from
the evil one. (Matthew 5:37)

Men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they
have spoken.

For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.
(Matthew 12:36-37)

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live
when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air,
the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived
among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its
desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because
of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even
when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. And God
raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,
(Ephesians 2:1-6)

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. (Ephesians 4:22-25)

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. (Ephesians 4:29, KJV)

Let all...evil speaking be put away from you...(Ephesians 4:31, KJV)

But now also put off...filthy communication out of your mouth. (Colossians 3:8, NKJV)

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. (Philemon 6, KJV)

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. (James 1:19-21)

Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. (James 3:6-12)

...be holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, be holy; for I am holy. (1 Peter 1:15-16)

For, Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. (1 Peter 3:10)

If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. (1 Peter

4:11)

(See also "Profanity" and "Gossip" in this database.)

COMPULSIVENESS

DEFINITION: Compulsiveness is the irresistible impulse to do irrational, repetitive, sinful, or unnecessary actions.

FACTS ABOUT COMPULSIVENESS:

Examples of compulsiveness include compulsive gambling, addictions, sex, eating, talking, hoarding, drinking and working. These are examples of uncontrolled works of the flesh. An activity may be harmless in itself, but may become compulsive behavior when it is done excessively and repeatedly.

Compulsiveness is a lack of self-discipline. As a follower of Christ, self-control should be one of the spiritual attributes apparent in your life. *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).*

An anxiety disorder called obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) is characterized by obsessive thoughts that lead to compulsive and repetitive behavior.

The root cause of compulsiveness is anxiety. People often eat because they are stressed. They talk excessively when they are upset. They gamble and drink to find relief from their anxieties. Such behaviors reflect a lack of trust in God and His promises of care and provision. This leads to compulsive behaviors such as sex, overeating, alcoholism, etc., to attempt to deal with the complexities of life.

Compulsiveness is sin. You are commanded to refrain from worry, so therefore compulsive anxiety over the circumstances of life is actually sin (Matthew 6:31-34; Philippians 4:6). You are also commanded to show self-control, and when you are acting compulsively and out of control, you are not doing so

DEALING WITH COMPULSIVENESS:

Repent of compulsive behavior. Compulsiveness is a lack of self-control. Confess it to God as sin and ask forgiveness.

Ask God to give you strength to deal with compulsive behavior. Whether your problem is compulsive anxiety, gambling, sex, eating, talking, hoarding, drinking--God will give you strength to conquer these.

Pray about your concerns instead of worrying about them. Philippians 4:6-7 commands you to pray about everything instead of worrying.

Flee temptation. Do not put yourself in a place where you will be tempted. For example, if you are a compulsive gambler, do not go to a gambling casino. If you have problems with compulsive eating, a restaurant with a buffet is probably not the best choice for you.

Put off the works of the flesh and put on the Fruit of the Holy Spirit. See Galatians (6:19-25). Learn to live in the Spirit instead of according to the dictates of your flesh that lead to compulsive behavior.

Do not allow yourself to be brought under the power of anything other than God. Paul said that everything was permissible, but that he would not permit himself to be overpowered by anything (1 Corinthians 6:12). For example, eating is good because it maintains life, but gluttony means your eating is out of control.

Renew your mind in the Word of God. As with most issues of spiritual life, the battle begins and is fought and won in your mind. Transform your mind by studying the Word of God. (Romans 12:1-2). When obsessive thoughts try to return, rebuke them in the name of Jesus using the Word of God. Take control of your thought life. Cast down vain worries and anxieties (1 Corinthians 10:4-5)

When you find yourself engaging in compulsive behavior again, stop immediately! Ask God for forgiveness and stop doing what you are doing. Use your spiritual weapons to defeat Satan right then and there!

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT COMPULSIVENESS:

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:31-34)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)

Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. (Romans 13:14)

Everything is permissible for me-but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me-but I will not be mastered by anything. (1 Corinthians 6:12)

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, (1 Corinthians 10:4-5)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way

out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23).

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:6)

(See also "Anxiety And Worry", "Addictions", and "Habits" in this database.)

CONFESSION

DEFINITION: Confession is acknowledging your transgressions to God and agreeing with what He says about your sin. Biblically, it is also verbally and mentally agreeing with the promises of God's Word.

FACTS ABOUT CONFESSION:

Confession is necessary in order to receive forgiveness. *"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives" (1 John 1:8-10).*

You are not required to confess to another person. Jesus Christ is the mediator between you and God, so you can confess directly to Him. Some people find it helpful, however, to confide in a spiritual leader to help them confess and deal with their sins. If you do this, prayerfully select someone who will keep your confidences. You should, of course, confess and ask forgiveness of anyone you have wronged.

Public confession is not necessary in order to receive forgiveness. In fact, public confessions are sometimes disruptive in a church fellowship. Confessing your faults and asking for prayer as mentioned in James 5:16 is different than confessing specific sins. For example, you might say "I need prayer for a problem with unforgiveness" rather than specifically pointing out the people in the church you are unable to forgive!

Confession is important in claiming the benefit of the promises of God. You receive salvation by confession. Other spiritual benefits such as healing, peace, deliverance, financial blessings, etc., are also received by agreeing verbally and mentally with the promises in God's Word.

DEALING WITH CONFESSION:

Confess your sins to God in the name of Jesus. Each day, confess your known sins, and God will forgive you of them as well as those behaviors you do not recognize as sin. He will cleanse you from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8-9). Confession is part of the model prayer that is to be prayed daily by believers (Matthew 6:9-13).

Do not keep confessing sins of the past. Once confessed, God forgives you. The Bible says that God takes your sins and casts them as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12) and remembers them no more (Isaiah 43:25). If you bring those sins up again, God does not remember what you are talking about!

Confess the promises of God. Let the words that come out of your mouth agree with what God says in His Word regarding your healing, deliverance, peace, finances, etc.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT CONFESSION:

Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord--and you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Psalm 32:2-5)

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:12)

Read David's great psalm of confession: Psalm 51.

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)

I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. (Isaiah 43:25)

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (Matthew 6:12)

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. (Romans 10:9-10)

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

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

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (1 John 1:8-10)

CONFUSION

DEFINITION: Confusion is a lack of clarity or a misunderstanding of the truth or facts in a given situation. It is disruption in regards to time, place, people, or tasks to be accomplished.

FACTS ABOUT CONFUSION:

God is not the author of confusion. God does not cause confusion. If He does not cause it, then it is obvious that it is caused by Satan (1 Corinthians 14:33).

The causes of confusion. Evil spiritual powers may try to cause confusion. Confusion may also be caused by sin in your life, by looking to man instead of God, by lack of knowledge of the truth of God's Word, and an inability to hear God's voice and know His will. Your inability to hear God's voice often arises from neglecting prayer and study of the Word. You do not stay in His presence long enough to receive His direction. Confusion also results simply because you do not ask for wisdom from God.

You never need be confused. You can ask for wisdom from God for every situation in life and you will receive it (James 3:14-17).

The Holy Spirit is your guide. If you are a born-again, Spirit-filled believer, then the Holy Spirit is resident within you. One of His purposes is to guide you into all truth so that you need never be confused.

DEALING WITH CONFUSION:

Discover the root cause of confusion. Is it simply because of miscommunication or is it due to demonic powers? Is it because you have not sought God's will concerning the situation with which you are dealing? Deal with the root causes of the confusion.

Reject the spirit of confusion. Confusion is a spirit. Do not allow it to operate in your life. Anytime confusion starts to arise in your circumstances, stop and rebuke it immediately!

Resist the devil. Satan causes confusion, so submit yourself to God, resist Satan, and he will flee from you (James 4:7)

Ask God for wisdom. The Bible says: *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him"* (James 1:5).

Embrace and act upon the truth. Jesus said: *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free"* (John 8:31-32). Reject the lies of Satan that bring confusion and embrace God's truth.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT CONFUSION:

In thee, oh Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. (Psalm 71:1, KJV)

A man's steps are directed by the Lord. How then can anyone understand his own way?
(Proverbs 20:24)

The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. (Psalm 19:7)

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

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. (1 Corinthians 13:9-10)

There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.
(Luke 12:2)

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. (1 Corinthians 13:12)

If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. (John 8:31-32)

But the Counselor, 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. (John 14:26)

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5)

We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. (1 John 5:20)

COVETEOUSNESS

DEFINITION: Covetousness is a driving desire to have that which one does not possess, control, have access to, use of, or authority over.

FACTS ABOUT COVETEOUSNESS:

Covetousness is sin. The Bible declares: *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor" (Exodus 20:17).*

Covetousness results from a love of the world. The Bible warns: *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15-17, NKJV).*

Covetousness comes from your heart. Jesus said: *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-33, KJV).*

DEALING WITH COVETEOUSNESS:

Ask God to forgive your covetousness. Covetousness is sin, and as all sin, confession and repentance is required.

Ask God to change your heart. Covetousness comes from the heart. Pray the prayer of the psalmist: *"Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain" (Psalm 119:36)*

Ask God to help you order your priorities. Make spiritual things your desire and priority instead of coveting after carnal things: *"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:31-33).*

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT COVETEOUSNESS:

You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. (Exodus 20:17).

Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. (Psalm 119:36)

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:31-33)

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man. (Mark 7:21-33, KJV)

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. (1 Timothy 6:10-11, KJV)

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he has said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. (Hebrews 13:5, KJV)

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4:1-3)

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17, NKJV)

(See also "Envy And Jealousy" in this database.)

CRITICISM AND A CRITICAL SPIRIT

DEFINITION: Being critical is to make and express assumptions about the moral and personal conduct of others. Having a critical spirit is to be guilty of this continuously, always criticizing and putting others down.

FACTS ABOUT CRITICISM AND A CRITICAL SPIRIT:

God is the judge. You are not to criticize others because God is the judge (Romans 14:12-13). When you take it upon yourself to judge others, you are trying to assume a function of God.

You will be judged the same way you judge others. Think about that when tempted to judge and criticize other people (Matthew 7:2).

When you criticize others, you condemn yourself. Very often, you are doing the same things you are criticizing others for--if not worse (Romans 2:1).

When you criticize your leaders, you are criticizing God. Israel criticized Moses and Aaron, but God viewed it as criticism of Himself because He had set these leaders in authority (Numbers 14:27).

DEALING WITH CRITICISM AND A CRITICAL SPIRIT:

Ask God to forgive your judgmental, critical spirit. Since Jesus said not to judge others, then it is a sin when you do.

Focus on dealing with issues in your own life. Instead of judging and criticizing others, focus on your own moral and spiritual condition (Matthew 7:1-5).

Ask God to help you guard what you say. David said, *"Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, keep watch over the door of my lips"* (Psalm 141:3).

View others as God sees them. God sees you and others, not as you are, but as you have the capacity to become. Look at a person's potential, not their problems.

Do not accept criticism raised against you unless you believe it is justified. Simply tell the person, "Thank you for bringing that to my attention." If it is something legitimate, correct it. If not, forget it. When you are praised for something, do you not lift that praise to God since every good thing done in you and through you is because of Him? Lift unjustified criticism to Him in the same way.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT CRITICISM AND A CRITICAL SPIRIT:

For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:1-5)

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. (Luke 6:37)

And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. (Luke 18:7-8)

You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. (John 8:15-16)

For at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. (Romans 2:1)

So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? (Romans 2:3)

Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. (Romans 14:1)

You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. (Romans 14:10)

Each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. (Romans 14:12-13)

The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment. (1 Corinthians 2:15)

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 till the Lord comes. (1 Corinthians 4:3-5)

Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you -- who are you to judge your neighbor? (James 4:11-12)

(See also "Judging" in this database.)

CULTS AND FALSE DOCTRINES

DEFINITION: A cult is any group whose beliefs differ from the basic tenets of God's Word and whose members do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God. False doctrine is any teaching or belief that cannot be documented by the written Word of God.

FACTS ABOUT CULTS AND FALSE DOCTRINES:

There are many false religions and cults. You must follow the truth of God's Word, not the so-called revelations of man.

Cults often emerge from claims of personal revelation. Such revelations, if not in harmony with the Word of God, should be rejected (Galatians 1:8-9).

Cults often incorporate partial truths in their doctrines. For example, they may talk about the love of God and love for one another, yet deny the reality of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for sin.

Cults always present other ways to God. There are "many ways to God", they claim. But the Bible says: *"It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. He is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.' Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."* (Acts 4:10-12)

Common characteristics of cults and false doctrines include:

- Dictatorial Leadership: Cults cluster around domineering personalities who have absolute authority and are accountable to no one.
- Exclusive: Cults adopt the attitude that they are the only group with divine truth. They exclude from fellowship others who disagree with them.
- Legalistic: Cults usually have strict rules of belief and behavior which have no Scriptural basis.
- Defensive: Cult members are usually led to believe that society, organized religion, and/or governments are against them.
- Oppressive: Cult members are usually manipulated, controlled, and oppressed by the leadership.
- Secretive: Many things about the cult are kept secret from outsiders.
- Higher Revelation: Cults often claim "higher revelation" from God, a source of authority beyond the Scriptures
- Anti-church: Cults vigorously oppose organized churches and their pastors.
- Anti-family: Cults sometimes want their members to break ties with family who are not members.
- Salvation by works. They emphasize what you do rather than the fact that all has been done by Christ to secure your salvation.

DEALING WITH CULTS AND FALSE DOCTRINES:

Ask God to forgive you if you have been involved with a cult or false doctrine.

Renounce any involvement with cults and false doctrines. Leave the cult. Leave the fellowship of those teaching false doctrines. Break all ties!

Pray for deliverance from the demonic influences involved in cults. Cults are doctrines perpetrated by devils (1 Timothy 4:1).

Reaffirm your commitment to God. Reaffirm your belief in the Trinity of God and that Jesus is the only way to God and His Word as the authoritative source of truth.

Renew your mind in the Word of God. Cults tend to "brainwash" their members, so you need to renew your mind in order to understand and receive the truth: *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:1-2).* Study God's Word--not books written by man. Compare everything you read, hear, or are taught to what the Word of God teaches.

Join a Bible-believing church. The church is the pillar and foundation of truth and will help you grow in the Lord (1 Timothy 3:15).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT CULTS AND FALSE DOCTRINES:

I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path. (Psalm 119:104)
There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death. (Proverbs 16:25)
For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. (Matthew 24:24-25)

It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. He is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:10-12)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:13-14)

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! (Galatians 1:8-9)

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. (Colossians 2:8)

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. (2 Timothy 2:15-17)

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:13-15, NKJV)

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21)

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (2 Peter 2:1-2)

Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist--he denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. (1 John 2:22-23)

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. (1 John 4:1-3)

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets

him shares in his evil deeds. (2 John 9-11)

But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (Jude 17-21)

CURSES

DEFINITION: Curses are powerful forces that operate in the spiritual realm. A curse--also sometimes referred to as a jinx, hex, or execration--is any expressed wish that some sort of adversity or misfortune will befall a person. It can also be a command for evil powers to attach themselves to a certain place or object.

FACTS ABOUT CURSES:

Curses are not primitive superstitions. Curses are mentioned over 200 times in Scripture. People in the western world are not as aware of the power of curses as people in nations where witchcraft, Wicca, and Shamanism are common--but they are strong spiritual forces that cannot be ignored.

Both blessings and curses are invisible forces of spiritual power which are transmitted by words (Proverbs 18:21). You can speak positive words of blessing over someone, or negative words of curses that cause despair, discouragement, and destruction in a person's life.

The first instance of blessing and curses is found in Genesis. God blessed mankind (Genesis 1:28). In Genesis 3, due to the entrance of sin into the world, the first curses result. Curses are always linked in some way to a violation of God's Word--either by the person themselves or by a person who is putting a curse on someone.

Curses have causes. The Bible says "*...the curse causeless shall not come*" (Proverbs 26:2), meaning there is always a root cause behind a curse. Curses can result from witchcraft and the occult, of course, but they also arise from:

- Having false gods: Exodus 20:3- 4; Deuteronomy 27: 15.
- Disrespect for parents: Deuteronomy 27:16.
- Treachery against a neighbor: Deuteronomy 27: 17.
- Committing injustices: Deuteronomy 27: 18-19.
- Sexual sins: Deuteronomy 27: 20-23.
- Lying: Deuteronomy 27: 25.
- Stealing: Zechariah 5:1-4.
- Robbing God: Malachi 3: 9.
- Perverting the gospel: Galatians 1:8- 9.
- Depending on the flesh instead of God: Jeremiah 17:5.
- Acts of racial discrimination: Genesis 12:3, Genesis 28:3 and 14.

Self-imposed curses result when you make declarations like: "I'll never be any good. I am so stupid. God doesn't love me. I hate myself. I will never forgive myself. No one cares. I am better off dead. " You are actually putting a curse on yourself by your own words.

Curses imposed by others--authority figures in your life, your spouse, your parents, etc.--include statements such as "You are no good, you are useless, you are stupid, you are a failure, you will never achieve anything, you are ugly." Curses can also be imposed by those engaged in witchcraft and from maintaining relationships with those engaged in such satanic practices..

Generational curses are negative spiritual traits passed down from a previous generation.

These are sinful spiritual strongholds that have controlled the attitudes and actions of your ancestors. In the natural world it is possible to have a propensity towards certain physical conditions--cancer, heart disease, diabetes, etc.--due to heredity. The same is true in the spiritual world. For example, if your ancestors were involved in the occult, you may have a predisposition to dabble in it also and/or you may be affected by it. Chronic sickness can be a generational curse passed down from your ancestors, as well as a tendency to use addictive substances. Children often repeat the sins of their parents. Through your sin, you can erect spiritual strongholds that will be passed on as generational curses to your children and succeeding generations. You can also pass on spiritual blessings. Just as curses can be passed to a succeeding generation, so can blessings (Deuteronomy 5:8-10 and Psalm 103:17).

Curses can be broken through the blood of Jesus. Galatians 3:13 confirms that: "*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."* Jesus not only redeemed you from sin when He died at Calvary, but He also redeemed you from every curse.

DEALING WITH CURSES:

Recognize the signs of a curse operating in your life. Your life may seem to get increasingly harder. You may experience constant hardships, frustration, poverty, or be unproductive in your labors. You may live in continual defeat or experience chronic mental, emotional, or physical problems. Barrenness and being accident-prone are also signs of a curse.

Recognize that you have the power to choose either blessings or curses. God told Israel: "*See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse--the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known" (Deuteronomy 11:26-28).* You do not have to be a victim of curses.

Go to the root cause of curses. The Bible says "*...the curse causeless shall not come" (Proverbs 26:2),* meaning there is always a root cause behind a curse. Curses can result from witchcraft and the occult, of course, but you can also operate under a curse because of your own words and sins. See the causes of curses in the previous section. Cut the root and you will kill the fruit!

Acknowledge your sin. Acknowledge your sin and take personal responsibility for any sinful practices in which you are engaged. Confess and repent of these sins (Ezekiel 18:20). Freeing yourself from the results of your own sinful behavior is the first step in breaking curses. For example, if you are participating in a cult, a curse may be on you because of your participation. Idolatry opens the door to spiritual curses, as does sexual immorality and deliberate disobedience to God and His Word.

Identify generational curses. If you are struggling with issues passed down from your parents--and if your siblings also struggle in these areas--you most likely are living under a generational curse. (See "Generational Curses" in this database.)

Break every curse in the name of Jesus. A stronghold is an area in your life where the enemy has established control. It may be a hold he has over your attitudes, behaviors, emotions, or your finances. The Bible declares that you have power over all the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19). Claim the power of the blood of Jesus and take authority over Satan in every area of your life. Pray a prayer of deliverance, binding the power of Satan and breaking every curse or generational curse operating in your life. Here is a sample prayer: *"In the name of Jesus, I confess my sins and break any curses operating in my life. The strongholds of curses have no hold over my life. In the name of Jesus, and by the power of His blood, I declare that every curse is broken over my life. I am no longer in bondage and I declare myself to be free from all curses."*

Put on the spiritual armor of God. Study Ephesians 6:10-21 and the topic of "Spiritual Warfare" in this database. The armor of God will protect you against curses.

Refuse to engage in curse-causing behavior. Things like rebellion, negative emotions, witchcraft, the occult, addictive substances, and sexual sins all can result in spiritual curses in your life.

Destroy objects associated with the occult--things associated with idolatry, witchcraft, books, charms, tarot cards, games, etc. Break relationships with people involved in the occult or witchcraft.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT CURSES:

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments. (Deuteronomy 5:8-10)

See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse--the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known. (Deuteronomy 11:26-18)

But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children--with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts. (Psalm 103:17-18)

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. (Proverbs 18:21)

...the curse causeless shall not come. (Proverbs 26:2)

In those days people will no longer say, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.' Instead, everyone will die for his own sin; whoever eats sour grapes--his own teeth will be set on edge. (Jeremiah 31:29-30)

You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the fathers' sins into the laps of their children after them. O great and powerful God, whose name is the Lord Almighty, great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve. (Jeremiah 32:18-19)

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:36)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." (Galatians 3:13)

(See also "Generational Curses" in this database.)

DEATH

DEFINITION: Death is the end of life on earth. For the believer, death is the beginning of life in eternity with God. For the unbeliever, death is the end of life in this world and the start of an eternity without God--spoken of in the Bible as the "second death".

FACTS ABOUT DEATH:

God never intended death. Death resulted because of sin (Genesis 3).

Death comes to everyone. The Bible says a time to die is appointed to everyone (Hebrews 9:27). Even the great prophet Elisha--who did many miracles of healing--eventually became sick and died (2 Kings 13:14). Death, bereavement, and loss are part of life.

Death is an enemy, and it is the last enemy that will be destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:26). Through His resurrection, Jesus was the "first fruits" or the living evidence to prove that death is conquered although not yet destroyed. It is the terror and permanency of death that is disarmed for the believer (1 Corinthians 15:55).

After death, the spirit of believers go directly into the presence of the Lord. At the return of the Lord, the believer's body is reunited with the spirit to dwell forever in the presence of the Lord. Those who die as unbelievers are eternally lost and their destination is Hell.

Psychologists have identified stages of grief over loss by death to include the initial shock of a grief-causing event; emotional release through weeping; feelings of regret that one should have done more or done something differently; anger because of the loss; and a period of inertia when one doesn't care to go on or think they can go on. Psychologists say that the grieving period varies. It is longer for some, shorter for others.

But the Bible says that Jesus bore your grief and sorrow. The Bible says Jesus was not only familiar--acquainted with grief--but that He bore your grief and sorrow (Isaiah 53:3-5). Jesus bore your sin so that you no longer have to bear it. He also bore your grief and sorrow, so why are you bearing it?

For the believer, death should be a joyous time because you are going to be with the Lord. You are already living eternal life if you are a born-again Christian. You are just entering into a new phase of eternity through death. You are not to seek death, but you also are not to place such an undue emphasis on the present life that you prefer it to the one to come.

There is a sickness unto death. In John 11:4 Jesus said the sickness of Lazarus was not unto death so this means that there is a sickness unto death.

Divine healing is possible, even in the case of terminal illness. Many people have been

supernaturally healed of fatal illnesses. But the goal of healing is not immortality. Even the people Jesus healed and raised from the dead during His earthly ministry eventually died. The Bible does not promise immortality in this world as part of the healing covenant. Do not be disturbed when Christians who believe and have ministered healing die from sickness. This happened to Elisha, yet years later his bones had enough supernatural power to raise a dead man. This confirms he could not have died because of lack of faith!

For the believer, death is the ultimate healing. We are saved from the penalty of sin when we accept Jesus as Savior and Healer. We can be continually delivered from its power, but only in the future when we go to be with the Lord are we saved from its presence. The same is true for healing. You can be healed from many ailments through prayer and/or medical help, but you will only be delivered from the presence of sickness through death or at the return of Jesus Christ. In death, God performs the ultimate healing. Death is swallowed up in victory because those who die in Christ are assured eternal life in the Kingdom of God and enter eternity whole in body, mind, and spirit.

The death of a child. Children are precious to God (Matthew 19:14) and we know that they go immediately into the presence of the Lord when they die. As believers, we are assured that we will be with them again someday. When King David's child died, he declared "...*I shall go to him..*" (2 Samuel 12:23).

If you have lost someone in death who was not saved, the question of their eternal destiny must be left with the Lord. God is merciful, and it is possible that in the final moments of life they made a commitment to Him. You cannot know for sure, so you must leave unanswered questions with the Lord (Deuteronomy 29:29).

DEALING WITH DEATH:

If you do not know Jesus Christ as Savior, then confess your sins to God and ask Him to forgive you. Accept Jesus Christ as your Savior. Read John 3 in the Bible and see the topic of "Salvation" in this data base which details how to do this.

If you are a believer and have unconfessed sin in your life, confess your sin to God in the name of Jesus and He will forgive you. The Bible says that He will cleanse you from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8-9). Confession is part of the model prayer that is to be prayed daily by believers (Matthew 6:9-13).

If you are a believer facing death, pray for God to give you the courage to be victorious despite pain and to go joyously into the presence of your Lord. You need not fear death, because it is not the end, it is the beginning of a grand and glorious life with God. You have the assurance of eternal life. Still, it is common to feel a bit nervous about the transition, as we all are apprehensive about new experiences, leaving loved ones, etc. Focus your attention on the resurrection and eternity. Study the following references: Job 19:25- 27; John 11:5-6; Romans 8:10-11, 17-18, 22-23; 10:11; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44,54-58; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 5:1; I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Make proper preparations. Death is part of life, and preparing for it is not morbid--it is wise. Make sure your legal and financial affairs are in order. In most cases, this is done by a will or a trust for which you may need legal assistance. These documents indicate who is to receive your material goods after you pass away. Express in writing your desires regarding whether or not you want your life extended by being hooked up to machines. If you do not want this, say so. Make a list of those who should be contacted at the time of your death. List any credit cards, accounts, etc., that should be closed after your death. Give instructions for your funeral and burial. If you have children who are under age, make arrangements for them, as well as household pets. Settle any issues you have with people--i.e., extending and receiving forgiveness, debts, etc.

If you are dealing with someone facing death, listen with compassion to their concerns. Ask pertinent questions that are raised by what they have to say. Do not discourage references made about death by someone who is terminally ill. Their questions and comments can open the way for you to help the person prepare mentally, spiritually, and practically for death. Pray that God will give them the courage to face death and go joyously into the presence of the Lord. Encourage the sick one to commit themselves to total trust in God, so that whether in living or dying, they know they are secure in His hands (Job 13:15; 19:16; John 10:29.)

Never give up hope. Even while making wise preparations for death, never give up hope for yourself or a loved one. Unless you know that it is their appointed time to die, continue to pray for God's healing to be manifested, whether it be in this life or the one to come. Pray in the Spirit, since the Holy Spirit knows the will of God and will make intercession through you to God (Romans 8:26).

Call upon the Comforter. One of the purposes of the Holy Spirit is to comfort in times of grief and sorrow, so when you are overwhelmed with grief, ask the Holy Spirit to come and fulfill His purpose of supernatural comfort (John 14:6). As a believer, you have the Comforter resident within you. He is always available in your times of need. You are not alone. The Lord is near those whose hearts are broken (Psalm 34:18).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT DEATH:

Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed. (Job 14:5)

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. (Psalm 23:4)

Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. (Psalm 31:9)

But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. (Psalm 33:18-19)

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. (Psalm 34:18)

Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life. (Psalm 39:4)

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (Psalm 43:5)

But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself. (Psalm 49:15)

Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign Lord comes escape from death. (Psalm 68:20)

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Psalm 73:26)

For you, O Lord, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before the Lord in the land of the living. (Psalm 116:8-9)

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. (Psalm 116:15)

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die ... (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Naked a man comes from his mother's womb, and as he comes, so he departs. He takes nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hand. (Ecclesiastes 5:15)

A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth;

Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will take it to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, for by a sad countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. (Ecclesiastes 7:1-4, NKJV)

No man has power over the wind to contain it; so no one has power over the day of his death. (Ecclesiastes 8:8)

The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces. (Isaiah 25:8)

He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities;

The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:3-5)

Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death. (Isaiah 57:2)

I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction? (Hosea 13:14)

He is not the God of the dead, but of the living for to him all are alive. (Luke 20:38)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. (John 5:24-25)

I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death. (John 8:51.)

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. (John 11:25-26)

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. 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 that you also may be where I am. (John 14:1-3)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. (John 14:16)

But the Counselor, 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 14:26-27)

I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. (John 16:20)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we

belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. (Romans 14:8-9)

However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9-10)

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. (1 Corinthians 15:22-26)

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed--in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:51-57)

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. (2 Corinthians 5:1-9)

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

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. (Philippians 1:21-23)

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

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you. (2 Thessalonians 1:8-10)

For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. (1 Timothy 6:7)

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil---and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. (Hebrews 2:14-15)

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:27-28)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1 Peter 1:3-4)

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4)

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)

(See also "Grief" in this database.)

DECEPTION AND DISHONESTY

DEFINITION: Deception and dishonesty refer to misleading someone and deliberately making them believe things that are not true. Bearing false witness against someone, cheating, and lying are synonyms.

FACTS ABOUT DECEPTION AND DISHONESTY:

Examples of deception and dishonesty include lying in business dealings, in relationships, cheating on tests or in financial matters, and deliberate misrepresentation of the facts.

Deception and dishonesty are common in politics and governments. Unscrupulous leaders say what you want to hear rather than tell the truth.

Deception is common in religion. There are many false teachers and cults that deceive multitudes of people around the world. The Apostle Paul warns: *"I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people"* (Romans 16:17-18).

Deception and dishonesty are sin. One of the ten commandments addresses "bearing false witness", which means lying (Exodus 20:16). Leviticus 19:11 states clearly: *"Do not lie. Do not deceive one another."* Jesus repeated this command in Matthew 15:19; 19:18, Mark 10:19; and Luke 18:20. The Apostle Paul emphasized it in Romans 13:9.

God hates lying. Bearing false witness and a lying tongue are listed in Proverbs 6:19 among the top things God hates.

Satan is the father of lies. Jesus told the sinful Pharisees: *"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies"* (John 8:44).

Deception will increase in the end-times. The Apostle Peter warned about those who would scoff the Word of God and even say that the Lord was not going to return ((2 Peter 3:1-7). Timothy warns of "perilous times" in the last days, saying that men will be trucebreakers (dishonest) and that they will be *"ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (2 Timothy 3:17). He also warned that these untruthful men would follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons (1 Timothy 4:1-2). Jesus repeatedly warned believers to be on guard, lest we be deceived in the end-times (Matthew 24:4). One of the main characteristics of the Antichrist in the end-times will be deception. He will work "lying wonders" through the power of Satan and will deceive many people (2 Thessalonians 2:7-11).

DEALING WITH DECEPTION AND DISHONESTY:

Deception and dishonesty are sin. If you have been lying and cheating, you must recognize it is sin. As with any sin, you must confess this to God and seek forgiveness.

Accept and act upon the truth of God's Word. Ask God to put His Spirit of truth into your heart and mind (John 16:13). Put off the "old man" of sin which is corrupt and deceitful and put on the new self which is like God in true righteousness (Ephesians 4:22-23). Ask God to put a new heart within you, because bearing false witness comes from your heart (Matthew 15:18-19).

Ask forgiveness of those you have deceived. Be truthful and ask them to forgive you.

If you have a tendency to lie or deceive, make these verses your motto: *"Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3) and "Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips And from a deceitful tongue" (Psalm 120:2, NKJV).*

If you have been lied to or deceived, forgive those responsible. Forgive them, but in the future deal with them as they are, not as you wish they were. Forgive, but unless they prove themselves to be trustworthy once again, do not place blind trust in them.

Ask God for the gift of discernment. This is a supernatural ability given by God to perceive the truth in any situation (1 Corinthians 12:10).

Immerse yourself in the Word of God. Feasting spiritually on the strong meat of the Word will enable you to discern between good and evil and truth and deception (Hebrews 5:12-14). The way to deal with deception is to learn the truth, then you will not be deceived.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT DECEPTION AND DISHONESTY:

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. (Exodus 20:16)

Do not lie. Do not deceive one another. (Leviticus 19:11)

You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the Lord abhors. (Psalm 5:6)

Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. (Psalm 24:3-4)

Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. (Psalm 34:12-13)

You love evil rather than good, falsehood rather than speaking the truth. (Psalm 52:3)

But you, O God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of corruption; bloodthirsty and deceitful

men will not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in you. (Psalm 55:23)

For the sins of their mouths, for the words of their lips, let them be caught in their pride.
(Psalm 59:12)

...the mouths of liars will be silenced. (Psalm 63:11)

No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence. (Psalm 101:7)

Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me through your law. (Psalm 119:29)

I hate and abhor falsehood but I love your law. (Psalm 119:163)

Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips And from a deceitful tongue. (Psalm 120:2, NKJV)

Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips. (Psalm 141:3)

There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers. (Proverbs 6:16-19)

The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.
(Proverbs 11:3)

Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment. (Proverbs 12:19)

The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful. (Proverbs 12:22)

The righteous hate what is false, but the wicked bring shame and disgrace. (Proverbs 13:5)

A truthful witness does not deceive, but a false witness pours out lies. (Proverbs 14:5)

He whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble. (Proverbs 17:20)

Better is the poor who walks in his integrity Than one who is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.
(Proverbs 19:1)

A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will not go free. (Proverbs 19:5)

Better to be poor than a liar. (Proverbs 19:22)

Getting treasures by a lying tongue Is the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death.

(Proverbs 21:6)

An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips. (Proverbs 24:26)

Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, For would you deceive with your lips?
(Proverbs 24:28)

Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is the man who gives false testimony against his neighbor. (Proverbs 25:18)

Like a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows is a man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I was only joking!" (Proverbs 26:18-19)

A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin. (Proverbs 26:28)

Keep falsehood and lies far from me. (Proverbs 30:7-8)

O Lord, do not your eyes look for truth? (Jeremiah 5:3)

Friend deceives friend, and no one speaks the truth. They have taught their tongues to lie; they weary themselves with sinning. (Jeremiah 9:5)

For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matthew 12:37)

But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. (Matthew 15:18-19)

...and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people (Matthew 24:11)

... Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32)

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, (Galatians 3:1, KJV)

You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?
(Galatians 5:7)

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. (Ephesians 4:14-15)

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. (Ephesians 4:22-25)

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) (Ephesians 5:6-8)

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. (Colossians 3:9-10)

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness. (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. (1 Timothy 4:1-2)

In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. (Hebrews 5:12-14)

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. (2 Peter 2:1-3)

Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. (1 John 3:7-9)

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. (1 John 4:1-3)

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

(See also "Lying" in this database.)

DEMONS AND DELIVERANCE

DEFINITION: Demons are fallen angels who joined Satan's rebellion against God and were cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9). They were originally angels of God but are now evil spirits operating under Satan's control. They are also referred to as "devils", as distinct from the Devil who is Satan. People affected by demons are in need of deliverance from captivity and/or the influence of demonic powers.

FACTS ABOUT DEMONS AND DELIVERANCE:

Spiritual warfare is a battle with the forces of evil, Satan and his hosts of demons (Ephesians 6:12). Our armor is truth, righteousness, the Gospel, faith, and salvation. The Word of God and prayer are powerful spiritual weapons (Ephesians 6:14-18). Our authority and power is from Jesus (Mark 16:17).

How demons operate. Demons oppose God, His plan and purposes, and His people. They also war against unbelievers to keep them from the truth of the Gospel. Demons control specific territories (principalities) such as the prince of Persia mentioned in Daniel 10:12-13. Demons also work through personalities--through men and women--to accomplish Satanic objectives in the world. Opposition to God's will and His Word is Satan's main objective. The word "Satan" means "adversary." Satan and his demonic host are primarily God's adversary (Job 1:6; Matthew 13:39). He is secondarily, man's adversary (Zechariah 3:1; 1 Peter 5:8).

Demons have different natures. One demon identified himself as a "lying spirit" (1 Kings 22:23). A "deaf and dumb" spirit is identified in Mark 9:25. Demons of various natures operate as spirits of infirmity, seducing spirits, and unclean spirits.

-Spirits of infirmity afflict the bodies of believers as well as unbelievers. See the story of the daughter of Abraham (a Jewish believer) in Luke 13:10-17. For other examples of demonic powers afflicting the body see Matthew 12:22; 17:15-18; Acts 10:38; 1 Corinthians 12:7.

-Seducing spirits afflict the spirit of man, seducing him to believe doctrinal lies and be condemned to eternal punishment. They are deceptive spirits of false doctrine, cults, false Christs, and false teachers (1 Timothy 4:1). They do miraculous works which lead some to believe they are of God (Revelation 16:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10). Seducing spirits include the "spirit of divination" mentioned in Acts 16:16 and "familiar spirits" that operate in fortune tellers, witches, and palm, crystal ball, and tea leaf readers. Through unscriptural methods of divination, these spirits foretell the future and reveal things not naturally known. Warnings against familiar spirits are given in Leviticus 19:31; 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:9; 18:10; Leviticus 20:27; and 1 Samuel 28:3. Seducing spirits sear the conscience, seduce, entice, tempt, allure, interest, fascinate, excite, arouse, attract, and deceive. They are operative in every cult and wherever doctrinal error exists. Seducing spirits entice men and women to worship idols and even Satan himself.

-Unclean spirits afflict the soul. They are responsible for immoral acts and unclean

thoughts. When Satan controls individuals with unclean spirits, he uses them to cause problems in homes, churches, and nations. This is how Satan works in the various levels of structure in society (Matthew 10:1; 12:43; Mark 1:23-26).

Demonic oppression. To oppress means to bear down, come against, or bind from the outside. This oppression is accomplished by evil spirits in various ways. They cause depression, create negative circumstances, and cause wrong thoughts such as of suicide, immorality, unbelief, fear, etc.

-A physical binding: The "daughter of Abraham" who Jesus relieved of a spirit of infirmity was bound physically (Luke 13:10-17). Chronic sickness may be demonic oppression, although all illness is not caused by demonic powers.

-A mental oppression: Disturbances in the mind such as mental torment, confusion, doubt, loss of memory, etc. Restlessness, an inability to reason or listen to others, abnormal talkativeness or reserve may be exhibited. All mental problems are not caused by Satan, but some definitely are caused by demonic influence.

-Emotional problems: Disturbances in the emotions which persist or recur, including resentment, hatred, anger, fear, rejection, self-pity, jealousy, depression, worry, insecurity, inferiority, etc.

-Spiritual problems: Extreme difficulties in overcoming sin and sinful habits. Spiritual solutions are rejected and doctrinal error is frequent.

-Circumstances: Demons can create difficult circumstances which are oppressive. These circumstances usually involve confusion and can immediately be identified as demonic because God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33; James 3:16).

Demonic possession. Demon possession is a condition in which one or more evil spirits (demons) inhabit the body of a human being and take complete control of their victim at will. Some people prefer using the word "demonized" rather than possession, but regardless of the term, the possessed person is host to resident demons. "Possession" does not mean a person is not responsible for his own sin. His responsibility rests in the actions that led to his condition, i.e., involvement with demonic influences. Demonic possession can be recognized by the following signs:

-Indwelling of an unclean spirit: This is demonstrated by a basic moral uncleanness and filthiness. For examples see Mark 5:2 and Luke 8:27.

-Unusual physical strength: A person shows strength beyond normal capabilities. For examples see Mark 5:3 and Luke 8:29.

-Fits of rage: See Mark 9:14-29 and Luke 8:26-39.

-Resistance to spiritual things: In the accounts in Mark 6:7 and 1:21-28, the demons knew Jesus and asked Him to leave them alone. Fear of the name of Jesus, prayer, and the Word and blasphemy of that which is spiritual are all symptoms of demon possession.

-Changes in personality and/or voice: A person who is normally shy may become aggressive or violent. Actions as well as appearance may be affected. Moral character and intelligence may change. The voice may be altered (Mark 5:9).

-Accompanying physical afflictions: These appear most commonly as afflictions of the mental and nervous systems (Matthew 9:33; 12:22; Mark 5:4-5). They can also include a general wasting away physically. (Mark 9:14-29).

-Self-inflicted physical injury: In Matthew 17:14-21 there is the story of a man's son who would cast himself in the fire. In Luke 8:26-39 this demon possessed man cut himself with stones to inflict physical injury.

-Terrible anguish: Luke 8:28 relates that this man went about crying because of the inner torment caused by his possession.

-Incapacity for normal living: This man could not reside in society, but lived in the tombs of the cemetery (Luke 8:27).

-Divination: This is the ability, through unscriptural methods, to foretell the future or reveal that which is unknown. The woman in Acts 16:16 is said to be possessed by a spirit of divination.

-Obsessive immorality such as involvement with pornography, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, and other sexual sins. Strong compulsions toward eating disorders, suicide, self-mutilation, maiming, and murder.

-Addiction to drugs or alcohol.

-Trances, visions, and meditation which are not focused on or from the one true God.

-Bondage to emotions: Rage, hatred, jealousy, etc.

Demon obsession. This is a condition where one is obsessed by an interest in or preoccupation with demons. It is an unusual interest in the occult, demons, and Satan. Demonic obsession is recognized by an uncontrollable and unusual preoccupation with demons, Satan, and the occult. A person may dabble in occult practices, constantly credit everything to Satan or demons, or be preoccupied with the study of demons and Satan.

A true Christian cannot be demon possessed. He may be obsessed with demons or oppressed by them, but a true believer cannot be possessed by a demon because the Holy Spirit cannot

inhabit the same temple as an evil spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). When you belong to God and are filled with the Holy Spirit, you cannot belong to Satan and be filled with his spirits at the same time. The Holy Ghost will not abide in the same "temple" with Satan.

Demons gain control in varied ways.

-Through generations: Demonic powers operating in parents and the sins of the parents can affect the next generation. This may account for demon possession or oppression of children such as recorded in Mark 7:24-30 and 9:17-21. (See also "Generational Curses" in this database.)

-Through the mind: If Satan controls your thoughts, he will eventually control your actions. Lack of mental control eventually results in lack of use of the will. This leads to sinful actions. Continuing in sinful thoughts and actions can lead from oppression to possession and eventually to a reprobate mind such as is described in Romans 1--a mind totally controlled by evil thoughts. Demons also gain access through mind-altering drugs which reduce the ability to resist demons and grant increasing access to the mind. "Brain washing" and "mind control" also provide entrance points for the enemy into your mind. (See also "Mind And Thoughts" in this database.)

-Through sinful actions: Sinful thoughts lead to sinful actions. For example, the thought of adultery is fulfilled in the actual act of adultery. Sin is rebellion, and rebellious thoughts and actions provides an entry point for demonic activity. When a believer continues in sinful thoughts or actions they "give place" to the Devil (Ephesians 4:27). Sins of involvement with the occult, including objects, literature, séances, etc., are actions which are especially dangerous and attract demonic powers.

-Through desire: Some people ask Satan for demonic power to enable them to perform supernatural acts. Others worship Satan or join Satanic cults.

-Through an empty house: Demons consider the body of the person they inhabit as their own house (Matthew 12:44). When a person who is delivered from demonic powers does not fill his spiritual house by the new birth experience and the infilling of the Holy Spirit, reentry may occur.

-Through permission: Sometimes God grants permission for demonic powers to operate through a trial--as in the case of Job--or judgment for sin--as in the example of King Saul.

Jesus dealt with demons. The teaching and ministry of Jesus demonstrated that demonic spirits are real forces of evil. Jesus accepted the fact that Satan is the ruler of a host of demons. He taught of the reality and power of demons. He said that casting out demons was one of the signs

that the Kingdom of God had come. Read Matthew 12:22-30, Mark 3:22-27, and Luke 11:14-23 for a summary of what Jesus taught concerning demons. Jesus ministered deliverance to all who came with demonic problems (Acts 10:38).

You do not need to be afraid of demons. Jesus gives true believers power over all of the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19).

Jesus commissioned His followers to cast out demons. You are not to focus your ministry on casting out demons, but as you go into the world preaching the Gospel you will encounter demons that would hinder your ministry. You have the power and authority delegated by Jesus you to cast them out of yourself and others (Matthew 10:1,8; Mark 6:7; Mark 16:17; John 14:2).

DEALING WITH DEMONS AND DELIVERANCE:

Pray for discernment. Ask God to reveal the cause of the demonic influence. Ask for discernment in knowing how to minister and/or receive deliverance.

Faith, fasting, and prayer are essential when dealing with demons. Read the account in Matthew 17:14-21. Tools for deliverance include the Word of God (Ephesians 5:17; Hebrews 4:12); the blood of Jesus (Revelation 12:11); and the infilling power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:38).

Determine the specific problem. The problem may be in the:

-Spiritual realm: Problems related to sin. These require a ministry of spiritual healing (repentance and forgiveness of sin).

-Physical realm: Bodily sickness caused by demonic spirits of infirmity.

-Emotional realm: Problems of anxiety, fear, anger, bitterness, resentment, guilt, doubt, failure, jealousy, selfishness, confusion, frustration, perfectionism in the energy of the flesh, unforgiveness, past situations.

-Mental realm: Problems stemming from negative thinking and attacks of Satan on the mind.

Remember: Because man is a triune being, problems in one realm affect the whole person so deal with the whole person, not just one area. Man is body, soul, spirit. Wholeness implies dealing with all of these.

Pray a prayer of deliverance. Focus on the specific problem--possession, obsession, oppression, etc. You do not have to persuade God to deliver by your prayer. Just as salvation is readily available, the same is true of deliverance. Just as salvation is based on the condition of faith, so is deliverance. God wants to deliver, just as He wants to save. Here is a prayer of deliverance to pray over yourself or to someone to whom you may be ministering:

"In the name of Jesus Christ and on the basis of the authority of His power, His Word, His blood, and the Holy Spirit..."

...This establishes the power base for deliverance...

"...I bind you...."

...Jesus taught to bind the strong man first before attempting to cast him out...

"...and I command you..."

...Ministering deliverance is a prayer of authority, not of entreaty. You can speak quietly, but you must take authority over the forces of evil in the name of Jesus. Look directly into the eyes of the person as you speak.

"...the spirit of _____" or "...you foul spirit of Satan..."

...if the spirit has been identified either through spiritual or natural discernment, then name it specifically; otherwise, generally.

"...to depart..."

...this is the casting out process...

"...without harming _____ (your name or the name of the person being delivered), or anyone in this house, and without creating noise or disturbance"

...Sometimes the demon will try to harm the person or create a disturbance.

"I forbid you to reenter..."

...Remember that Jesus used this command...

"...and I loose the Holy Spirit to cleanse and fill this vessel through the power delegated by Jesus Christ..."

...We are told to loose as well as bind. If you have identified a specific spirit, name it.

"...in the name of Jesus Christ."

Recognize the signs of deliverance. In cases of demonic possession, sometimes demons come out with a struggle, such as crying out or throwing the person on the floor. When demons have departed and their hold has been broken, there will be a sense of release and joy, like the lifting of a weight.

Take follow-up steps. Jesus emphasized the importance of follow-up so that demons will not return (Matthew 12:43-45).

-Pray a prayer of renouncing. After deliverance, pray a prayer of confession, repentance, and renouncing of any sins or involvements connected with the demonic.

-Destroy occult items. These would include idols, voodoo items, witchcraft equipment, books, charms, etc.

-Fill the spiritual void. When a demon is cast out, he will seek another body through which to operate. A demon is restless and discontent outside of a human body. It is only by indwelling and controlling a human life that a demon is able to fulfill Satan's evil purposes. Because of the danger of a demon returning to his former victim accompanied by worse spirits, the spiritual void must be filled. A person must receive Jesus Christ as Savior and be filled with the Holy Spirit. He should continually immerse himself in prayer and the Word of God and become part of a community of believers.

-Testify of the deliverance. Jesus told the demoniac of Gadarene to tell others about his deliverance (Mark 5:19-20). Revelation 12:11 confirms that we overcome the powers of Satan by the word of our testimony.

Protect yourself from demonic powers. Here are specific ways to protect yourself from demonic powers:

-Accept Jesus Christ as Savior.

-Avoid sin. After you are saved, keep yourself from sin, for through sin you "give place to the devil" or provide opportunity for him to oppress you.

-Be filled with the Holy Spirit. Demonic spirits and the Spirit of God cannot inhabit the same spiritual vessel.

-Avoid an obsessive interest in demons. It is not wrong to study what God's Word says about them or expositions based on God's Word, but do not read secular books, attend séances, etc., to learn more about demons.

-Avoid any contact with the occult. Do not consult witches, shaman, astrologers, horoscopes, or card, palm, or tea leaf readers. Do not serve false gods or allow idols to come into your home (Deuteronomy 7:25-26).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT DEMONS AND DELIVERANCE:

Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 19:31)

When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, (Deuteronomy 18:9-12)

My enemies turn back; they stumble and perish before you. (Psalm 9:3)

For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the Lord. (Psalm 27:5-6)

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song. (Psalm 28:7)

This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. (Psalm 34:6-7)

The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. (Psalm 34:17)

A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all. (Psalm 34:19)

Read Psalm 91.

News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. (Matthew 4:24)

When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick... (Matthew 8:16)

He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. (Matthew 10:1)

If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house. (Matthew 12:26-29)

Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." (Mark 3:11)

And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." (Mark 16:17-18)

In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, "Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--the Holy One of God!" "Be quiet!" Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him. All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!" (Luke 4:33-36)

When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ. (Luke 4:40-41)

He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you." (Luke 10:18-19)

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

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. (John 14:12)

Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed. (Acts 5:16)

With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. (Acts 8:7)

You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached--how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. (Acts 10:37-38)

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. (Romans 8:9-11)

No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. (1 Corinthians 10:20-21)

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:11-18)

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. (1 Timothy 4:1-2)

The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (2 Timothy 4:18)

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)-- if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. (2 Peter 2:4-9)

He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. (1 John 3:8)

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than

the one who is in the world. They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. (1 John 4:1-6)

And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. (Jude 1:6)

And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. (Revelation 12:7-9)

And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Revelation 20:10)

(See also "Occult" and "Spiritual Warfare" in this database. For additional instruction in spiritual warfare and the spiritual forces of good and evil, see the Harvestime International Network publication entitled "*Spiritual Strategies: A Manual Of Spiritual Warfare*" available at <http://www.harvestime.org>)

DENYING THE LORD

DEFINITION: To deny someone or something is to be ashamed of them, fail to acknowledge them, or claim they do not exist. Biblically, denying the Lord is a failure to acknowledge Him and the truth of His Word. People who deny the existence of God are called atheists.

FACTS ABOUT DENYING THE LORD:

If you deny the existence of God, you are a fool. *"The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 14:1).*

Denying the Lord includes denying there is a God; denying the deity of Jesus Christ; denying the inspiration of God's Word; denying the work of God; denying the saving work of Christ; denying your faith; and denial by your sinful actions.

What you say and do are both important. If you confess Christ and then live like a sinner, you are denying God's work in your life.

Denying the Lord is not the unpardonable sin. It can be forgiven through confession and repentance. If you do not repent, however, God also will deny you (Matthew 10:32-33).

DEALING WITH DENYING THE LORD:

Confess your sin to God and ask forgiveness. Denying the Lord is sin, and as in the case of all sin, you must confess and repent of it.

Make a positive confession based on the Word. Confess the existence of God, your belief in Him and His Word, and in the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

Confess the Lord before others. If you have previously denied God, His Word, or His work in your life before certain people or groups, make it a point to go back and confess the Lord in front of these people.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT DENYING THE LORD:

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." (Psalm 14:1)

I speak of your faithfulness and salvation. I do not conceal your love and your truth from the great assembly. (Psalm 40:10)

Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven. (Matthew 10:32-33)

If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels. (Mark 8:38)

He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me. (Luke 10:16)

He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters. (Luke 11:23)

And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:27)

There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. (John 12:48)

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. (Romans 1:16)

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

I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. (Philippians 1:20)

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that confess his name. (Hebrews 13:15)

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. (2 Peter 2:1-2)

No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. (1 John 2:23)

If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. (1 John 4:15)

DEPRESSION **(Disappointment And Discouragement)**

DEFINITIONS: Depression is an emotional condition characterized by feelings of continued hopelessness, inadequacy, gloom, dejection, sadness, and difficulty in thinking, concentration, and action. Depression also causes loss of interest, hopelessness, and, in some cases, thoughts of suicide. Discouragement and disappointment often result in depression.

FACTS ABOUT DEPRESSION:

Both positive and negative circumstances contribute to depression. A great loss, death of a loved one, losing a job, traumatic experiences, divorce, imprisonment, financial problems and other negative circumstances can cause depression. Guilt is another trigger for depression, and struggles with addictions can cause it. Discouragement and disappointment are related emotions also. But positive circumstances may also cause depression: A new job, geographic relocation, retirement, a new baby. These are positive things, but they produce levels of stress that can result in depression.

Depression is caused by negative emotional responses to circumstances, physical or mental conditions, or attacks by Satan on your mind.

Disappointment in others contributes to depression. People disappoint you and don't measure up to what you want from them. Jesus told Peter not to be concerned about the performance or destiny of others (John 21:23). The Apostle Paul declared: *"We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise"* (2 Corinthians 10:12).

Discouragement may be caused by difficult circumstances. Poor health, financial problems, relationship issues, etc., can cause discouragement that leads to a diminished joy in life.

Unconfessed sin also contributes to depression (Psalm 38:38).

Errant spiritual decisions cause depression. The rich young man who refused to put all he had into the hands of Jesus went away "sorrowing" (Mark 10:22). Sometimes the root of depression is a spiritual cause--a refusal to place some aspect of our lives, abilities, possessions, family and friends, or sorrows into the hands of the Lord.

Depression can affect anyone. Male and female, young and old--even children and teenagers can be depressed.

Depression affects every aspect of your being--spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically. It can cause a change in your sleeping patterns, weight changes, loss of appetite or overeating, loss of interest in sex, lack of energy, problems with concentration, poor memory, and difficulty in making decisions. Emotionally it causes low-self image, self-criticism, hopelessness, anger, resentment, guilt, irritability, crying, fear, gloomy outlook. You may

withdraw from social relationships and your work ethic may be affected. You may also be tempted to turn to drugs and alcohol--which only tend to further the depression.

Depression can lead to suicide. If depression is not dealt with, it can lead to such hopelessness that a person contemplates or tries suicide to escape the pain. (See "Suicide" in this database.)

Depression is not sin. It is a signal that change, a healing, or deliverance is needed in your life.

DEALING WITH DEPRESSION:

Identify the root cause. How did the depression begin? When did it begin? What is the main issue causing it? Is your depression because of finances? Loneliness? Unconfessed sin? Are negative emotions causing it--things like anger and unforgiveness? Physical problems? An attack of Satan on your mind?

If unconfessed sin is the problem, ask God for forgiveness. David said that day and night, God's hand was heavy on him until he asked for forgiveness. Ask God to forgive your negative thinking and wrong emotions. If you are harboring unforgiveness, forgive!

Have a medical examination if you think your health is affecting your mood. If it is a medical condition, you can then pray for physical healing rather than misdirecting your efforts by thinking you are fighting a battle of the mind over depression.

Take these steps if your depression is due to negative circumstances and/or attacks of Satan:

-Pray and bind the spirit of depression that is operating in your life. Jesus gave you power over all the power of the enemy, and that includes depression (Luke 10:19).

-Eliminate drugs and alcohol--they only contribute to depression.

-Reprogram your thinking by immersing yourself in God's Word. The Word of God can change every area of your life--physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Program your mind to think on good things rather than the negative (Philippians 4:8).

-Do not look at your circumstances. Keep your focus on God.

-Recognize that God's ultimate purpose is to do you good and that He is in control of your circumstances (Jeremiah 29:11).

-When depressing thoughts try to return, resist the devil in the name of Jesus and he will flee (James 4:7). How you react to these thoughts is the key to your deliverance, as the battle of depression is in the mind. As long as you allow yourself to think you are defeated and depressed, you will remain that way because... "*As he thinks in his heart, so is he...*" (Proverbs 23:7, NKJV). Remember that with every temptation you face, there is a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).

-Encourage yourself in the Lord. Read 1 Samuel chapter 30 to see how David encouraged himself during a tragic event in his life. Read the book of Psalms and you will note that David is often discouraged, but finds encouragement in God.

-Praise and worship the Lord. Satan hates praise and worship and will flee in the presence of your sacrifice of praise.

Get proper rest, sleep, exercise, and nutrition. These all help with the physical aspects of depression.

Make positive changes in your life. What changes can you make that will eliminate stress? What changes will bring joy back into your life?

Return to the basics of Christian life. Be faithful in prayer, church attendance, and the Word of God. These will encourage you and give you a more positive attitude. The Word of God is effective to facilitate change in any problem or circumstance of your life. Depression is a state of mind, and your mind can be renewed through the Word (Ephesians 4:23; Colossians 3:10).

Cultivate friendships with positive people. Avoid being a loner. Satan wants to isolate you through depression. Deliberately spend time with believers who are positive and uplifting. Do not hang out with negative, critical, judgmental people, as this can contribute to your depressed state. Christian friendships with positive people will help you when you are feeling down (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

Do something for others. This will take the focus off of yourself and the joy you receive from doing acts of kindness can help your own depression.

Start a gratitude journal. Write down at least one thing each day for which you are thankful. This will help you focus on the positive instead of the negative.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT DEPRESSION:

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. (Deuteronomy 31:8)

But you are a shield around me, O Lord; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head. (Psalm 3:3)

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you. (Psalm 9:9-10)

I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. (Psalm 27:13-14)
The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song. (Psalm 28:7)
The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. (Psalm 34:18)

Read Psalm 38 as an example of depression caused by personal sin. Read Psalm 51, a prayer of repentance which restored the joy of salvation to David.

I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord. (Psalm 40:1-3)

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (Psalm 42:5, 11; 43:5)

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. (Psalm 46:1-3)

Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall. (Psalm 55:22)

Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. (Psalm 62:5)

When I said, "My foot is slipping," your love, O Lord, supported me. When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul. (Psalm 94:18-19)

Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man. (Psalm 112:4)

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch out Your hand Against the wrath of my enemies, And Your right hand will save me. (Psalm 138:7, NKJV)

The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. (Psalm 145:14)

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (Psalm 147:3)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up. (Proverbs 12:25)

The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, But who can bear a broken spirit? (Proverbs 18:14)

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

Anyone who is among the living has hope. (Ecclesiastes 9:4)

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. (Isaiah 26:3)

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

...Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. (Isaiah 43:1-2)

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:4-5)

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. (Isaiah 60:1)

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you," says the Lord, "thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11, NKJV)

The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. (Nahum 1:7)

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. (Luke 10:19)

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

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 14:27)

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

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18-22)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28-29)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. (2 Corinthians 4:8-9)

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. (Galatians 6:9, NKJV)

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And

the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:4--9)

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:7)

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16, NKJV)

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. (James 1:12-17)

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7-8)

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. (1 Peter 2:24)

Study the story of the Prophet Elijah's depression in 1 Kings 18-19.

DISAGREEMENTS

DEFINITION: To disagree is to have a difference of opinions. A disagreement is a failure to agree about something. Unresolved disagreements can lead to arguments, misunderstanding, and disputes. If resolved biblically, they do not need to do so.

FACTS ABOUT DISAGREEMENTS:

People can disagree without having conflict, but conflict often results from unresolved disagreements. It is not differences of opinion that hurt and destroy, but the failure to resolve them and to love others despite our differences.

When people are fighting each other, they are not fighting the works of Satan or battling for the souls of lost men and women. God wants you to deal with disagreements effectively so the work of His Kingdom can proceed.

The reasons for conflicts are detailed in James 3:14-16: *"But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice."* Again, in James 4:1-3, James declares: *"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."* The Apostle Paul wrote: *"You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?"* (1 Corinthians 3:3). Remember also that one who is being led by the Spirit will usually come into conflict with others who are being led (at least for a time) by the flesh.

A good leader does not ignore disagreements. He does not call people "unspiritual" for bringing problems to his attention. He immediately deals with disagreements according to scriptural principles.

Personal disagreements between believers should not be ignored, but should be resolved according to biblical guidelines. Do not allow differences of opinion to separate you from other believers or fester in your mind to create anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness.

DEALING WITH DISAGREEMENTS:

Prevent conflicts. The best way to handle conflict is to prevent it before it occurs. Here are some ways to prevent conflict:

-Become spiritually mature (James 3:14-16; 4:1; 1 Corinthians 3:3).

-Keep others well-informed. Confusion and lack of information often creates problems. Build strong bridges of communication between those involved with you in the work of

the ministry. Good leaders in the Bible (like Moses, Nehemiah, Ezra, etc.) were good communicators. Communicating with your family is also important.

-We live in an imperfect world. Expect problems and deal with them immediately when they arise.

-Plan ahead. By careful planning you can deal with many issues before they become conflicts. If everyone knows what you are doing and why, there is less opportunity for misunderstanding and conflict.

-Build strong relationships. It is easier to resolve disagreements when you have a good relationship with others with whom you are interacting.

-If you make a mistake, do not ignore it. Be big enough to admit and correct it.

Dealing with conflict. When a disagreement arises, follow these guidelines:

-Pray for wisdom to deal with it.

-Determine the real problem. The conflict is not the real problem. What caused the conflict is the problem. To determine the problem you must ask questions, observe, and continue to pray for revelation. Listen to all sides of the problem and to all people involved. Do not act without a clear understanding of all the facts. Always keep in mind the real source of problems (James 3:14-16; 4:1; 1 Corinthians 3:3).

-Let people who are directly affected by the problem suggest solutions. Be willing to listen to all suggestions.

-Pray together about a solution. In serious conflicts, fasting is also recommended.

-If the conflict is a personal problem between two people--you and another person-- resolve it according to the principles of Matthew 18:15-17.

-Deal with conflicts with a proper attitude. Be forgiving, seeking to restore rather than sever relationships. Be loving. Do not threaten or become angry.

-Use tact. Tact is the ability to deal with difficult situations with wisdom and love without offending people. It involves being sensitive to others, being understanding, and using words that restore and heal rather than divide and wound. Be flexible. Do not be selfishly set on having your own way. Be open to different ideas and ways of solving problems.

-Deal with one conflict or problem at a time. Do not confuse the issue by discussing other related problems.

-When you have a clear understanding of the problem causing the conflict, act immediately to correct it.

-Explain to others involved the reason you are handling the conflict the way you are. For example, in the conflict described in Acts 15, the leaders explained their decision in detail in writing to those involved (Acts 15).

Use God's Word to resolve issues. God's Word is vital in solving discipline problems and conflicts because: *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16-17). God's Word is effective for discipline, reproof, and correction.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT DISAGREEMENTS:

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore. (Psalm 133)

Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (Proverbs 12:18)

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. (Proverbs 15:1)

He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. (Proverbs 17:9)

Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife. The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, And they go down into the inmost body. (Proverbs 26:20-22)

For as churning the milk produces butter, and as twisting the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife. (Proverbs 30:33)

Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so? (Amos 3:3)

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (Matthew 5:9)

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matthew 6:14-15)

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:19)

I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. (1 Corinthians 1:10)

You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? (1 Corinthians 3:3).

If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? But instead, one brother goes to law against another--and this in front of unbelievers! The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers. (1 Corinthians 6:1-8)

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called--one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:3-6)

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life. (Philippians 2:14-16)

But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. (Colossians 3:8)

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3:13-14)

If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. (1 Timothy 6:3-5)

Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce

quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. (2 Timothy 2:23-24)

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

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

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.
(James 1:19-20)

But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. (James 3:14-18)

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4:1-3)

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.
He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. (1 Peter 3:8-11)

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. (1 John 3:18)

Biblical examples of resolving disagreements.

Abraham. Abraham resolved disagreements between his servants and those of Lot by

suggesting they separate and giving Lot the choice of lands (Genesis 13:5-13).

Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas disagreed over taking a young man named John Mark with them on a missions trip. The problem was solved by forming a second evangelistic team. This solution actually advanced the spread of the Gospel. Paul and Barnabas did not get angry, stop speaking, and have nothing more to do with one another. Neither one dropped out of Christian service because "someone had hurt them." They both continued on to serve the Lord. Sometime later, Paul admitted that John Mark--having been trained by Barnabas--was ready for ministry and asked that John Mark be sent to him (Acts 15:36-41).

The early church. Any time a church, an organization, or work of God is launched, it goes through certain stages of development. Read the following chapters in your Bible:

Acts 1	God chose certain men.
Acts 2	He gave these men a ministry.
Acts 3	There was great multiplication.
Acts 4	A great movement was born (the Church).
Acts 5-6	Persecution and conflict arose.

In Acts 1-4 a great work of God is birthed, then in Acts 5:1-11, a problem arises. Peter does not ignore it, but confronts and deals with it. In Acts 5:12-42, conflict from without the Church arises. The disciples stand in the face of opposition and boldly declare that they should obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29 and 42). In Acts 6:1, conflict from within the church arises. There is a dispute over the distribution of supplies to widows. Again, the disciples immediately solve the conflict (Acts 6:2-7.) Anytime a ministry or work of God is launched, it will experience a similar pattern. As it grows, there will be disagreements and conflicts from without and within the fellowship that must be resolved biblically.

DISOBEDIENCE

DEFINITION: Disobedience is refusing to follow instructions and to comply with rules or regulations. Biblically, disobedience is refusing to obey God, the commands in His Word, and leaders who have God-given authority over you.

FACTS ABOUT DISOBEDIENCE:

Disobedience is sin. Biblical, disobedience is not "exercising your right to choose" or "freedom of choice". It is sin. Obedience is the opposite of disobedience. Obedience is acceptance and submission to the authority of God and His Word.

God expects obedience. Your entire relationship with Him is based on obedience, beginning with your obedience in accepting Jesus as Savior (Deuteronomy 11:26-28).

Disobedience will prevent you from taking possession of the promises of God. It kept an entire nation out of their promised land. When Israel disobeyed God, they were sent back into the wilderness to wander for forty years (Nehemiah 9:17).

Disobedience includes sins of commission--things you should have done and did not do--and sins of commission--sinful acts you committed contrary to God's Word.

You are required to obey authorities. It is a command: "*Obey your leaders and submit to their authority*" (Hebrews 13:17).

Strategies of Satan that will lead you into disobedience.

- He causes you to doubt God and His Word.
- He tempts you to murmur against God.
- He causes you to turn away from God.
- He causes you to reject God's voice and His Word.
- He causes you to no longer fear God.
- He causes you to fear man more than you fear God.
- He causes you to reject God's will and follow your own plan.
- He deceives you into compromising.

DEALING WITH DISOBEDIENCE:

Repent of your disobedience. Disobedience is sin, and as with any sin you must confess it and ask forgiveness from God.

Determine you will obey God. You have the power to obey God. Sin no longer has dominion over you: "*For sin shall not [any longer] exert dominion over you, since now you are not under Law [as slaves], but under grace [as subjects of God's favor and mercy].*" (Romans 6:14 AMP)

Practice obedience in routine decisions. Then you will develop the habit of obeying and will

not fail to obey God in the big decisions of life.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT DISOBEDIENCE:

Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever! (Deuteronomy 5:29)

See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse--the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known. (Deuteronomy 11:26-28)

It is the Lord your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. (Deuteronomy 13:4)

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life... (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:8-9)

If you fear the Lord and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord your God--good! But if you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your fathers. (1 Samuel 12:14-15)

But Samuel replied: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry." (1 Samuel 15:22-23)

Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord. (Psalm 119:1)

Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed. (Psalm 119:136)

I look on the faithless with loathing, for they do not obey your word. (Psalm 119:158)

I obey your statutes, for I love them greatly. (Psalm 119:167)

He who obeys instructions guards his life, but he who is contemptuous of his ways will die. (Proverbs 19:16)

If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. (Isaiah 1:19)

Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you. (Jeremiah 7:23)

Obey me and do everything I command you, and you will be my people, and I will be your God. (Jeremiah 11:4)

See how each of you is following the stubbornness of his evil heart instead of obeying me. (Jeremiah 16:12)

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash. (Matthew 7:21-24)

Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? (Luke 6:46)

If you love me, you will obey what I command. (John 14:15)

Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He 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." (John 14:23-24)

If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. (John 15:10)

We must obey God rather than men! (Acts 5:29)

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:19)

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as

those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace. (Romans 6:12-14)

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey--whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. (Romans 6:16-18)

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete. (2 Corinthians 10:5-6)

You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? (Galatians 5:7)

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them. (Ephesians 5:6-7)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"-which is the first commandment with a promise "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." (Ephesians 6:1-3)

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. (Colossians 3:20)

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving (Colossians 3:22-24)

Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men. (Titus 3:1-2)

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it – he will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:23-25)

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. (1 John 2:3)

This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. (1 John 2:5-6)

Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. (1 John 3:24)

This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. (1 John 5:2-4)

Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. (2 John 1:9)

Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. (Revelation 3:3)

(See "Sin", "Submission", and "Authority" in this database.)

DISSATISFACTION **(Unhappiness)**

DEFINITION: Dissatisfaction is a feeling of discontent and displeasure with circumstances in life or other people. It is a feeling of unhappiness.

FACTS ABOUT DISSATISFACTION:

The enemy causes dissatisfaction. The Bible says in John 10:10 that it is the enemy that kills, steals, and destroys. If you are dissatisfied and unhappy, guess who stole your joy? Jesus came to destroy the work of the enemy and to give you abundant life. He wants you to be content and happy.

Disappointments cause dissatisfaction. Sometimes people disappoint you or your circumstances are disappointing. Sometimes you disappoint yourself by failures. Such disappointments can lead to dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction with your own performance or that of others leads to discouragement, and discouragement can lead to depression.

Materialism causes dissatisfaction. The Apostle Paul warned Timothy: *"People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs"* (1 Timothy 6:9-10). All the things that you want that seem so important are usually temporal. Focus on the eternal (1 John 2:15-17).

Dissatisfaction is sin. When you are dissatisfied, grumbling, and complaining, you are actually blaming God for your circumstances, implying that He is not providing adequately for your wants and needs. Israel was repeatedly dissatisfied with God's provision in the wilderness. They grumbled about lack of water and food. Then they complained because the manna God provided was not as good as the leeks and garlic they had in Egypt. God said their grumbling was sin, and judged it as such.

Dissatisfaction leads to grumbling, complaining, unhappiness, and an unthankful and critical spirit.

DEALING WITH DISSATISFACTION:

Recognize that dissatisfaction is sin. As with other sins, you must confess and ask God for forgiveness.

Ask God to give you a spirit of contentment. The Apostle Paul declared: *"...I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength"* (Philippians 4:11-13). He told young Timothy to be content with the basics of food and clothing (1 Timothy 6:8). The Hebrews were admonished to be content with what they had.

Put your trust in God, rather than in people or things that will fail (Psalm 20:7-8; 44:6; 146:3). That way you will never be disappointed or dissatisfied. Your trust should be in God, not in man. Keep your focus on the Lord!

Make positive changes in your life. What changes can you make that will eliminate negative circumstances in your life? What changes will bring joy back into your life?

Return to the basics of Christian life. Be faithful in prayer, church attendance, and the Word of God. The Word of God is effective to facilitate change in any problem or circumstance of your life. Dissatisfaction is a state of mind, and your mind can be renewed through the Word (Ephesians 4:23; Colossians 3:10).

Cultivate friendships with positive people. Avoid being a loner. Satan wants to isolate you through dissatisfaction. Deliberately spend time with believers who are positive and uplifting. Do not hang out with negative, critical, judgmental people, as this will contribute to your own dissatisfaction. Christian friendships with positive people will help you when you feel discouraged (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

Do something for others. This will take the focus off of things that are causing your dissatisfaction. The joy you receive from doing acts of kindness will help eliminate your dissatisfaction. When you see how tough some other people have it, you will be more satisfied with your own lot in life.

Start a gratitude journal. Write down at least one thing each day for which you are thankful. This will help you remain focused on the positive instead of the negative. It is the will of God for you to give thanks in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Recognize the difference between happiness and joy. Happiness is based on outward circumstances. When things are going good, then you are happy. When circumstances are bad, you are unhappy. Joy, on the other hand, is a spiritual fruit from God. You can rejoice in every circumstance and the joy of the Lord gives you strength to face negative circumstances (Philippians 4:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:18). Jesus faced the most difficult circumstances of His life with joy. Although He knew the suffering that awaited Him in Jerusalem, He entered the city with a joyous procession. In view of this, *"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross" (Hebrews 12:2).*

Pray this prayer: *"Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me" (Psalm 51:12).*

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT DISSATISFACTION:

...for the joy of the Lord is your strength. (Nehemiah 8:10)

Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. (Psalms 37:3-4)

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?
(Psalm 42:2)

O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. (Psalm 63:1)

My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. (Psalm 63:5)

Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. (Psalm 90:14)

With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation. (Psalm 91:16)

Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits--who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
(Psalm 103:1-5)

For he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things. (Psalm 107:9)

You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. (Psalm 145:16)

Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. (Psalms 146:3)

Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.
Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. (Isaiah 55:2-3)

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 58:11)

Blessed are you who hunger now for you will be satisfied. (Luke 6:21)

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:13-14)

For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. (John 6:33)

I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. (John 6:35)

If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him. (John 7:38)

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

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. (John 15:11)

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, (Romans 14:17)

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

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:4-9)

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (Philippians 4:11-13)

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

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

But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. (1 Timothy 6:8)

People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (1 Timothy 6:9-10)

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:8-9)

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

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

He will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. (Revelation 7:17)

"Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. (Revelation 22:17)

Read through the book of Psalms and underline all of the commands to rejoice and the reasons for rejoicing instead of being dissatisfied.

(See also "Criticism And A Critical Spirit" in this database.)

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

DEFINITIONS: Divorce occurs when a couple decides they no longer want to fulfill their commitment to their marriage. Remarriage is marrying again after a previous marriage ended in either death or divorce.

FACTS ABOUT DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE:

Divorce was not God's original plan. When questioned by the religious leaders about divorce, Jesus explained that divorce was permitted because of the hardness of the hearts of mankind (Mark 10:1-9). God's original plan was one man, one wife, for life (1 Corinthians 7:10)

Divorce is permitted under certain circumstances. For believers, these circumstances include sexual immorality (Matthew 19:9) and when a spouse deserts (1 Corinthians 7:15). In these situations, divorce is permitted by scripture, but not necessarily advocated. The goal is always reconciliation if possible.

Remarriage is not prohibited for a person whose spouse has committed sexual immorality or abandoned them--and of course, remarriage is permitted after the death of a spouse.

Although usually one person initiates divorce proceedings, both parties most likely have contributed to the breakup to some degree.

Divorce is not the unpardonable sin. We are all sinners, and we all make mistakes in relationships. To those who were caught in sin, Jesus forgave them with the admonishment, "go your way and sin no more." Sinful errors may have been made in a relationship, but you can receive forgiveness and go on with a renewed dedication to God.

Having an unbelieving spouse is not grounds for divorce. The Christian spouse is encouraged to remain with their mate with the goal of winning him/her to Christ (1 Corinthians 7:12-16).

Many problems in marriage would be avoided if believers obeyed God's Word regarding not marrying an unbeliever (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). No need to pray about this. God already said don't do it! To avoid such emotional entanglements, don't date unbelievers.

DEALING WITH DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE:

Think long and hard before initiating a divorce. Do you have biblical grounds? How will it affect your children, friends, and family? Will it actually solve problems or just present a whole set of new issues? How will it affect you and your family financially? Divorces are difficult spiritually, mentally, materially, and a breakup is especially hard on the children. Shame, anger, depression, loss of other relationships--all are part of divorce. You shouldn't leave because of petty issues of incompatibility, because you tire of a relationship, or you are not committed enough to make it through the tough times.

Explore your relationship with God. Are you a believer? If you want your marriage to succeed, you must build it on the Lord (Psalm 127:1). Join with your spouse to seek a renewed

relationship with God first, then with each other.

Seek forgiveness. Ask forgiveness from God and from your spouse. Pray for the healing of your emotions and relationship.

Seek reconciliation. Try to the best of your ability to reconcile with your spouse. Pray together, study the Word of God, form relationships with couples who have successful marriages, attend Christian marriage seminars. Pray about your problems instead of yelling about them. Do not bring up the past. Look to the future.

Take practical actions. List all the praiseworthy traits of your spouse and share at least one each day with them. Take a good look at yourself and improve things like bad habits, appearance, mannerisms, integrity, etc. Don't just tell your spouse how you are going to change; show him/her by changing.

If you are a born-again believer, do not marry an unsaved person. Don't be surprised when such a union experiences difficulties because Jesus said, a house divided against itself is destined to fall (Luke 11:17). A similar passage in the Amplified Version says, "*...no city or house divided against itself will last or continue to stand*" (Matthew 12:25 AMP).

Accept that sometimes, there is no more you can do. If you have done everything possible to save your marriage and it still failed, if your mate has departed, or if you are in an abusive situation and you need to depart for your own safety--then accept that there is nothing more you can do. It is in God's hands. Divorce is not the unpardonable sin. Ask God for forgiveness for your part in the problem. Accept His forgiveness, forgive yourself, and then get on with your life. Do not keep looking back thinking "I should have...." As long as you live in the past, you will never have a future.

Realize that there are some relationships that cannot be fixed. Not because God can't fix them, but because one party is unwilling to change. The abuser, the alcoholic, the drug addict--they all promise they won't do it again, but they will not change without a true born-again experience and supernatural deliverance. The adulterer and fornicator that comes and goes in and out of your marriage bed may leave you with an incurable sexually transmitted disease. Perhaps this is one reason why fornication--sexual activity outside of marriage including adultery--was specifically mentioned as a scriptural cause for divorce (Matthew 5:32). In the case of spousal abuse or child abuse, you must leave and take the kids with you. In many nations, you are legally responsible and can be criminally prosecuted if you fail to protect your children. Just because you walk away, does not mean God will not continue to deal with your spouse, nor does it mean God cannot put the relationship back together again in the future, nor does it mean that you must legally divorce your mate. What it means is that, for the present, you must take this action to protect yourself and your children. Be sure to protect yourself legally from the debts of your spouse and be sure the children are provided for.

Know that God is the God of a second chance. Consider Jonah, David, Moses, and Peter. God accomplished His purposes in the lives of each of these men, despite their failures. If you have failed in marriage and you are divorced, it is time to..*Arise [from the depression and prostration*

in which circumstances have kept you--rise to a new life]! Shine (be radiant with the glory of the Lord), for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you!" (Isaiah 60:1, TAB). Let go of the hurt and bitterness. Stop dwelling on the "what ifs". Stop rehearsing the past. If you are in an abusive situation, stop trying to make it work. If your mate has abandoned you, release them to God. If God puts the relationship back together in the future, then it will work. If not, consider it a divine division, abandon the past, and look to the future. As long as you are living in the past, you will never have a future.

Embrace your loss as spiritual gain. The Apostle Paul said: *"But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" (Philippians 3:7-10, KJV).* God can use even the suffering of divorce to deepen your relationship with Him. Embrace that loss--and all the losses in your life--as spiritual gain.

Do not judge others who have divorced and remarried. If you don't believe in divorce for any reason or remarriage after a divorce, do not judge others who remarry. Live by your own convictions in this area, but do not impose your beliefs on those whose situations you do not understand and know nothing about.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE:

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. (Genesis 2:20-24)

He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the Lord. (Proverbs 18:22)

Like a bird that strays from its nest is a man who strays from his home. (Proverbs 27:8)

If a man divorces his wife and she leaves him and marries another man, should he return to her again? Would not the land be completely defiled? (Jeremiah 3:1)

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Can two walk together, except they be agreed? (Amos 3:3)

And did not God make [you and your wife] one [flesh]? Did not one make you and preserve your spirit alive? And why [did God make you two] one? Because He sought a godly offspring [from

your union]. Therefore take heed to yourselves, and let no one deal treacherously and be faithless to the wife of his youth. (Malachi 2:15 AMP)

It has been said, "Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce." But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery. (Matthew 5:31-32)

Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand." (Matthew 12:25)

Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery." (Matthew 19:3-9)

Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" "What did Moses command you?" he replied. They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away." "It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied. "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery." (Mark 10:1-9-12)

Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. (Luke 16:18)

For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. (Romans 7:2-3)

To the married I give this command (not I but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a

believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. (1 Corinthians 7:10-15)

A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:39)

Read 1 Corinthians 13.

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate," says the Lord. "Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:14-18, NIV)

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. (Hebrews 13:4)

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. (1 Peter 3:7)

(See also "Marriage" in this database.)

DOUBT

DEFINITION: Doubt is a lack of assurance that causes one to question their salvation as well as other spiritual works God has done in their lives. It is a feeling of uncertainty and mistrust.

FACTS ABOUT DOUBT:

Doubt is a feeling, but we are not saved by feelings. We are saved by faith. Satan can tamper with your feelings, but he cannot void the work of God in your life. Determine that you will serve God even if you never "feel" anything that confirms your spiritual experience. Your eternal relationship with God is not based on feelings.

Doubt often results from disappointed with God. Perhaps He did not answer a prayer as you desired, or you feel He did not intervene in your circumstances as you had hoped.

Faith is the opposite of doubt. Faith is belief or trust in someone or something without overt proof. Biblically, faith is *"being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see"* (Hebrews 11:1). The basic tenets of our faith are the Word of God and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You are mandated to have faith in God. Jesus commanded: *"Have faith in God"* (Mark 11:22). It is impossible to please God without faith. You must not only believe in God, but you must believe that He acts in your behalf: *"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him"* (Hebrews 11:6).

You can be assured of your salvation because God's Word assures it (John 3:16; Romans 10:9; 1 John 1:9). You can be assured that:

- Jesus paid your sin debt and obtained your full pardon: Colossians 2:13-14.
- Your pardon is based on God's grace, which always exceeds your transgressions: Ephesians 1:7; Romans 5:20.
- God does not hold your past or present sins against you as long as you have asked forgiveness: Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:19.
- Forgiveness is extended to all who believe in Jesus: Acts 10:43.
- Forgiveness is extended to believers who sin: John 1:9.

Assurance that eliminates doubt is not a matter of applying human logic. It is a matter of faith. You simply believe God's Word and do not rely on your own thinking (Proverbs 3:5).

DEALING WITH DOUBT:

Confess your sins to God: Sin can cause a lack of assurance about your spiritual status in God. Confess your sins regularly by using the model prayer for daily prayer (1 John 1:9 Proverbs 28:13).

Confess your doubts to God. *"...for what is not of faith is sin"* (Romans 14:23). Lack of faith

shows you do not believe God at His Word. As the father who brought his ailing child to Jesus, cry out by faith, "*Lord I believe. Help me overcome my unbelief!*" (Mark 9:24).

Study the Word of God consistently. The better you come to know God through His Word, the more you will trust Him completely with your salvation and in other spiritual issues (Romans 10:17; John 7:17; 1 John 5:13). Faith--the remedy for doubt--is increased through hearing, reading, and studying God's Word (Romans 10:17).

Refuse to allow the spirit of unbelief to operate in your life. In the first temptation, Satan caused Eve to doubt the Word of God. Doubt is a tool of the enemy, so when Satan returns with doubtful thoughts, rebuke him, rebuke the thoughts, and cast them out in the name of Jesus.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT DOUBT:

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." (Psalm 14:1)

Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. (Psalm 119:89)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." (Matthew 8:13)

...your faith has healed you. (Matthew 9:22)

According to your faith will it be done to you... (Matthew 9:29)

Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. (Matthews 13:58)

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31)

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you." (Matthew 17:19-21, NKJV)

I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, "Go, throw yourself into the sea," and it will be done. (Matthew 21:21)

He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" (Mark 4:40)

He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." (Mark 5:34)

Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe."
(Mark 5:36)

"Lord I believe. Help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).

"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road. (Mark 10:52)

"Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples. (Luke 8:22)

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" (Luke 17:5)

"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." (Mark 11:22-24)

Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.
(Mark 16:14, NKJV)

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. (Mark 16:16)

The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!" He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. "Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples. (Luke 8:24-25)

If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea," and it will obey you. (Luke 17:6)

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

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16)

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.
(John 5:24)

I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. (John 6:47)

I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins. (John 8:24)

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. (John 10:27-28)

Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. (John 12:37)

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. (John 15:4)

Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:24-31)

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37-39)

But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" (Romans 10:8-10).

...for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Romans 10:13)

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. (1 Corinthians 16:13)

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

(2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

...for by faith you stand. (2 Corinthians 1:24)

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

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. (Ephesians 6:16)

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

If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself. (2 Timothy 2:13)

I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. (1 Timothy 2:8, KJV)

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. (Hebrews 3:12-13)

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved. (Hebrews 10:35)

Now faith is the assurance, the confirmation, the title deed of the things we hope for, being the proof of things we do not see, and the conviction of their reality. Faith is perceiving as real what is not revealed to the senses. (Hebrews 11:1, AMP)

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. (James 1:5-8)

And God, in his mighty power, will protect you until you receive this salvation, because you are trusting him. It will be revealed on the last day for all to see. (1 Peter 1:5, NLT)

See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us--even eternal life. (1 John 2:24-

25)

And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. (1 John 2:28)

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit (Jude 20)

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

(See also the subjects of "Assurance", "Faith", and "Unbelief" in this database.)

EATING DISORDERS

DEFINITION OF EATING DISORDERS: An eating disorder is an abnormal eating habit associated with deranged thoughts and negative feelings. Eating may be increased or decreased by bingeing or refusing to eat.

FACTS ABOUT EATING DISORDERS:

There are several types of eating disorders. Anorexia is when a person refuses to eat, expresses an intense fear of gaining weight, and becomes extremely underweight--sometimes to the point of starvation. An anorexic person sees themselves as "fat" no matter what their weight, and will often exercise excessively. Bulimia is characterized by bingeing and purging--overeating and then forcing one's self to vomit afterwards. Binge-eating is overeating to the point of being physically uncomfortable--the biblical definition of this is gluttony.

Emotional issues are at the root of eating disorders. People who feel their world is out of control believe that eating is one area where they are in control. A sense of worthlessness, sadness, and depression may drive one to develop an eating disorder. A bad self image--thinking one is fat and unattractive--also contributes to these types of problems. Stress, anxiety, rejection, guilt and shame are other emotions that trigger abnormal eating habits.

Eating disorders tend to develop during the teenage and young adult years, and they are more common in women.

There are no biblical restrictions on food for New Testament believers. The restrictions of the Old Testament were made under the law and were part of God's covenant with Israel. Some believers still choose to abide by these, but this is not mandatory according to scriptures and their beliefs should not be imposed on others. The New Testament clearly indicates that all things are pure (Romans 14:20-21) and believers are free to choose their diets (1 Corinthians 8:7-9). Paul warns about legalistic regulations: *"Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: 'Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!'"? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence" (Colossians 2:20-23).*

Eating disorders lead to physical problems. Bingeing and purging through vomiting, diuretics, enemas, or laxatives can harm one's digestive tract. Being extremely overweight or underweight can affect internal organs, heart, blood pressure, and the functioning of the brain.

God does not want you to be in bondage to eating disorders or anything else. The Apostle Paul said: *"Everything is permissible for me but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me but I will not be mastered by anything" (1 Corinthians 6:12).*

DEALING WITH EATING DISORDERS:

Admit your problem. Acknowledging that you have a problem is the first step in dealing with an eating disorder.

Determine the triggers that cause your problem. Identifying the issues that contribute to your eating disorder will help you deal with the root cause of it. Do you eat because you are lonely? Depressed? Because of stress?

Pray a prayer of deliverance. Ask God to deliver you from the bondage of eating disorders. Accept by faith, as you did your salvation, that it is done. In prayer, deal with any issues that contribute to your eating disorder. Ask God for deliverance from guilt, shame, depression, anxiety, etc. Ask Him to show you better ways to deal with loneliness, depression, and stress, etc. rather than eating.

Acknowledge that you have within you the power to change. You have the ability, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to put off old behaviors and put on new ones: *"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness"* (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Surround yourself with supportive people. Recruit a few friends to provide prayer support. Get involved in a church or Bible study where you can receive additional support from other believers. If you know someone who has overcome an eating disorder, ask them to join your support team.

Learn to eat right. Learn what foods to eat in what amounts in order to develop a healthy lifestyle. A trained nutritionist can assist with this. No more binging and purging. No more dieting. No more fasting for losing weight. If you need to lose weight, develop a healthy lifestyle, exercise, and eat right.

Stick to a schedule. Have set times for eating and snacking. Set a schedule and stick to it. This will prevent you from becoming so hungry that you overeat.

Meditate on Scriptures that will help you overcome your disorder. The following is a list you can use for this purpose.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT EATING DISORDERS:

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)

Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities. They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. (Psalm 107:17-20)

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. (Psalm 139:14-16)

Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. (Proverbs 31:30)

All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no flaw in you. (Song of Solomon 4:7)

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? (Matthew 6:25-26)

Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak. (Mark 14:38)

Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear." (Luke 12:22)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)

Everything is permissible for me but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me but I will not be mastered by anything. (1 Corinthians 6:12)

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5:1)

You have the ability to put off old behaviors and put on new ones: You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. (Ephesians 6:11-13)

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)

Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. (Colossians 2:20-23)

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight (1 Peter 3:3-4)

EMOTIONS

DEFINITION: Emotions are defined as strong feelings about something or someone.

FACTS ABOUT EMOTIONS:

God created emotions. God created you in His image and He is an emotional being, expressing emotions such as love, righteous anger, mercy, compassion, etc. As a human being, created in God's image, you also have emotions.

Emotions can be divided into two categories A negative emotion is any response that results in adverse thoughts or actions. A positive emotion is any response that results in positive thoughts or actions. There is a broad range of emotions in each of these two categories and a person may also express combinations of these emotional responses. It is your negative emotional responses which you want to eliminate.

DEALING WITH EMOTIONS:

Recognize that negative emotions are powerful. Unbridled negative emotions can cause you to react in ways that can impact your life forever. Many people who had never violated the law previously are serving lengthy prison sentences because of one violent act done in a fit of anger.

Understand that negative emotions do not represent the truth. For example, you may feel fearful when there is nothing to fear. You may worry when in reality, there is nothing about which to be concerned. It is God's Word that speaks the truth into your life, not your own negative emotions or your limited perception of the situations around you.

Do not try to excuse your negative emotions. Deal with them, because they are powerful and, left unchecked, they will control your life! You have the power to do so because the Word of God declares that *"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world"* (1 John 4:4, NKJV). The same power that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you and will enable you to control your emotions (Romans 8:11).

Take responsibility for your emotions. What negative emotions do you experience and express when you are in difficult situations? Acknowledging these responses will make you more aware of them when they try to surface in your life. Do not blame your emotions on others, i.e., "I'm like my Uncle Jack. I got his temper!" Take responsibility for your own negative responses. You are only responsible for how you react to situations, not for how others respond.

Make a decision to change. All change begins with a decision. Your decision to become a believer was the first step toward a new life. Now you must make a decision to allow God to rule in every area of your life, including your emotional responses. You are the only one who can initiate changes in your emotions. You do this by making a decision to be transformed by the Word instead of being conformed to the world (Romans 12:1-2).

Realize that you cannot change your soulish nature on your own. Self-effort will not rid you of habitual sin. Negative emotions cannot be broken through self-effort. You must let God supernaturally change your mind, will, and emotions. For years, your sinful soulish nature has controlled your body and your spirit. Now you must learn to let your redeemed spirit control your body and soul. Don't give up. It is a process of spiritual growth.

Pray about your negative emotions. Make your negative emotions a matter of prayer. God wants you set free from every emotion that has you in bondage. As you pray about your emotions, God will give you wisdom and power to deal with them.

Realize that negative emotions call for an immediate response. Whenever you recognize a negative emotion beginning to surface, it is a signal that something is wrong. You need to stop what you are doing, stop what you are saying, or stop what you are thinking. Do not allow the emotion to be strengthened by your actions, words, or thoughts. In the name of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit, take control of negative emotions immediately (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

Be willing to forgive. If you follow the biblical directive to forgive others, many negative emotions will be eliminated. You have been forgiven by God and people whom you have offended. Extend this same grace to others

Wait before you respond. In difficult situations, think about the response you are about to express. Is it an attitude that honors God, His Word, and your commitment to Christ? How does this emotion reflect on you as a believer? Is it an emotion by which you want to be known? For example, being angry all the time will make you known as an angry person.

Take the way of escape. Sometimes, you need to remove yourself from a volatile situation or an aggravating person. God's Word has promised: "*No temptation (trial) has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted (tried) beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted (tried), he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it*" (1 Corinthians 10:13, NIV). This is God's guarantee that no circumstances, trial, temptation or attack of the enemy will come into your life that you are unable to bear. In every circumstance you face, God has made a way of escape that will bring you out victoriously.

Respond as you would like to be responded to. Ask yourself how you would like for someone to treat you in a similar situation. Apply what is called the "golden rule" that is the thesis statement of the Word of God: "*So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets*" (Matthew 7:12).

Eliminate volatile situations when you can do so. This will help, but you may not be able to escape certain people and problems. You can, however, make a decision to change your attitudes and your responses to these circumstances and refuse to respond negatively.

Avoid toxic people. Toxic people are those who speak negative things into your life such as "you are stupid, you should be ashamed, you will never amount to anything, etc." Avoiding such

people does not give you license to treat them rudely. You can be friendly without being friends. Do not make annoying, insensitive, rude, toxic people your close friends and confidants. Toxic people ignite the sparks of negative emotions in your life. The Bible says: "*Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go, Lest you learn his ways And set a snare for your soul*" (Proverbs 22:24-25, NKJV). Substitute any negative emotion for the words "angry" and "furious", and the warning is the same because you learn the ways of those you hang out with. Your own attitudes, actions, and emotions are affected by the company you keep. Make friendships with people who are aggressively following the Lord and will speak the truth of God's Word into your life.

Don't give up. If you regress into a negative emotional reaction, do not give up in your quest to eliminate such responses. You never fail until you quit trying! Remember that after your new spiritual birth, your soul—which is your mind, will, and emotions—must be supernaturally changed as you live out this new life. This change is a process of spiritual maturity.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT EMOTIONS:

Here are some general guidelines that are applicable to all negative emotions. For specific emotions, identify the problem and then use a concordance to study all the Bible has to say about it. For example, if you are struggling with anger, commit to memory such verses as: "*A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control*" (Proverbs 19:11).

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2).

No temptation (trial) has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted (tried) beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted (tried), he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. (Philippians 4:8)

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4, NKJV)

ENEMIES

DEFINITION: An enemy is one towards whom you are antagonistic, hostile, and unforgiving. It is someone that you also may be seeking to injure or threaten. You may also try to ruin the reputation of an enemy through slander, gossip, and lies.

FACTS ABOUT ENEMIES:

The Word of God teaches you not to become bitter, hostile, or vengeful toward another person. You might not like what others do or say, but you must love them and extend forgiveness to them, just as God extended it to you.

Satan is the source of all contention. The Bible explains that *"...our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"* (Ephesians 6:12). Your struggle is against the evil forces that cause a person to react in such a way that you consider them an enemy.

The proper response to contention. The Fruit of the Holy Spirit, qualities that are to be evident in the lives of believers, provide the answer to contention. *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another"* (Galatians 5:22-23).

You are commanded to love and pray for your enemies. *"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"* (Matthew 5:46-47).

God can cause your enemies to be at peace with you. *"When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him"* (Proverbs 16:7).

DEALING WITH YOUR ENEMIES:

Examine your heart. If you have hatred, anger, unforgiveness, or bitterness towards someone, then you are not responding biblically to your enemies. Are the feelings and attitudes you have towards this person Christ-like? What caused the break in the relationship? Did you have a part in it? What is the other person's attitude towards you?

Pray for forgiveness. Not only for your own attitude towards your enemy, but pray to forgive your enemy also. As a mature believer, the obligation to forgive and initiate reconciliation rests with you. You can do this because the Bible declares you can do all things through Christ (Philippians 4:13).

Go to your enemy and try to reconcile. You cannot control their response, but you can ask

forgiveness and seek to reconcile with them. If they refuse, then you have the satisfaction of knowing you have acted scripturally. Follow the guidelines in Matthew 18:15-17.

Love and pray for your enemies. Jesus commanded this in Matthew 5:43-48.

Pray for the Fruit of the Spirit to be manifested in your life towards your enemy: Love, goodness, kindness, meekness, patience, etc. (Galatians 5:22-23).

Cast down vain imaginations. Vain imaginations are unproductive thoughts and imaginations. When Satan tries to return and instill unforgiveness or bitterness towards the person once again, cast these thoughts down in the name of the Lord (2 Corinthians 10:5).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT ENEMIES:

He is the God who avenges me, who subdues nations under me, who saves me from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from violent men you rescued me. (Psalm 18:47-48)

When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him. (Proverbs 16:7)

Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice, or the Lord will see and disapprove and turn his wrath away from him. (Proverbs 24:17-18)

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:43-48)

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matthew 6:14-15)

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church,

treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." (Matthew 18:22-35)

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39)

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. (Mark 11:25,26)

But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:27-36)

"So watch yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him." (Luke 17:3-4)

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. (Romans 12:14-21)

(See also "Forgiveness and Reconciliation" in this database.)

ENVY AND JEALOUSY

DEFINITION: Envy is a synonym for jealousy and covetousness excited by the success of others. It is resentment of the spiritual, financial, or material blessings of others. It is lustful desire and longing for something that someone else has. It is sometimes characterized by snide remarks against others in an effort to build up one's own self.

FACTS ABOUT ENVY AND JEALOUSY:

Envy comes from the spirit of man. *"Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely?" (James 4:5)*

Envy is a sign of being a carnal Christian. *"...for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?" (1 Corinthians 3:3, NKJV)*

Those living in sin are filled with envy. *"Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers..." (Romans 1:29, KJV)*

Where there is envy, other problems arise. *"But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice" (James 3:14,16).*

You are not to envy sinners. *"Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the Lord" (Proverbs 23:17)*

Envy is a characteristic of false teachers. *"If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain" (1 Timothy 6:-4).*

DEALING WITH ENVY AND JEALOUSY:

Acknowledge that you are envious and jealous. Until you recognize these responses are operating in your life, you will not be able to deal with them.

Recognize the ramifications of envy and jealousy. It results in confusion and other evil works (James 3:16) and it ultimately ends in tragedy (Galatians 5:19-21).

Repent. Envy and jealousy are sins which require repentance.

Ask God for a new manifestation of His love. When you truly love someone, you do not envy them, nor are you jealous of them: *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy..."*
(1 Corinthians 13:4)

In the future:

- Walk in the Spirit: Romans 13:13.
- Manifest the Fruit of the Spirit: Galatians 5:22-23.
- Focus on things of eternal value instead of things of the world: Colossians 3:1-4.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT ENVY AND JEALOUSY:

A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones. (Proverbs 14:30)
Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the Lord. (Proverbs 23:17)

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers... (Romans 1:29, KJV)

Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. (Romans 13:13, NKJV)

...for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? (1 Corinthians 3:3, NKJV)

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy...(1 Corinthians 13:4)

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5:19-23)

If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. But godliness with contentment is great gain. (1 Timothy 6:3-6)

For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, and deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. (Titus 3:3, KJV)

But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. (James 3:14,16)

Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? (James 4:5)

(See also "Covetousness" and "Greed" in this database.)

EVIL

DEFINITION: The dictionary defines evil as being morally bad. For believers, it is any act or thought that violates the Word of God. Other words for evil used in the Bible include iniquity, transgression, and sin.

FACTS ABOUT EVIL:

Evil exists everywhere. Since the fall of Satan from heaven and Adam and Eve's original sin, evil has been manifested in the world.

Evil is sin. The Bible calls evil "transgression, sin, and iniquity". Evil is the opposite of all that is good and is any act or thought that is contrary to God's Word.

You will encounter evil people and circumstances. Because you live in an evil world, you will confront evil people and evil circumstances. You cannot control the circumstances or the people, but you can control your attitudes and responses towards them and your involvement in evil.

DEALING WITH EVIL:

Realize that everyone is tempted. You are not the only one tempted to do wrong, but you must recognize where the temptation comes from and what to do about it (James 1:13-15). Reject it the minute it enters your mind.

Repent of evil. Acknowledge evil thoughts and actions as sin and repent of them. God is faithful to forgive you of confessed sins, but He goes beyond that to cleanse you from all unrighteousness when you come to Him seeking forgiveness (1 John 1:8-9).

Eliminate sinful practices. Reject every kind of evil--even the appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22 and Ephesians 5:3-17). Dispose of evil literature, photographs, pornography, music, and anything that has to do with the occult. Do not hang out where evil people congregate.

Be filled with the Holy Spirit. Learn to walk according to the guidance and dictates of the Holy Spirit who is resident within you. When you feel like something is wrong, that is the Holy Spirit warning you to avoid it (Ephesians 5:18).

Concentrate on pure things. Do not think about or give your attention to evil things. The Apostle Paul said: "*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things*" (Philippians 4:8).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT EVIL:

The fear of the Lord--that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding. (Job 28:28)

Turn from evil and do good; then you will dwell in the land forever. (Psalm 37:27)

Deliver me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of evil and cruel men. (Psalm 71:4)

Let not my heart be drawn to what is evil, to take part in wicked deeds with men who are evildoers; let me not eat of their delicacies. (Psalm 141:4)

Keep me from the snares they have laid for me, from the traps set by evildoers. (Psalm 141:9)

Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. (Proverbs 3:7)

Through the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil. (Proverbs 16:6)

In the paths of the wicked lie thorns and snares, but he who guards his soul stays far from them. (Proverbs 22:5)

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. (Isaiah 5:20)

This is what the Lord says: "Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand. Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. See to it then, that the light within you is not darkness." (Luke 11:34-35)

Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (John 3:20)

Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. (Romans 12:9)

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:21)

Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character. (1 Corinthians 15:33)

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them. (Ephesians 5:3-7)

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. (Philippians 4:8)

Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)

Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness. (2 Timothy 2:19)

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away 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)

As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. Peter But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." (1 Peter 1:14-16)

Be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. (2 Peter 3:17)

Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. (1 John 3:7)

Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. (3 John 1:11)

(See also "Sin" in this database.)

FAILURE

DEFINITION: Failure is a lack of success in achieving something. It is falling short of what is required or expected, failing God, others, or one's self.

FACTS ABOUT FAILURE:

Failure to live up to the mandates of God's Word is sin. This requires repentance. "Forgive our sins" is part of the model prayer to be prayed daily (Matthew 6:12).

All failure is not sin. Sometimes you fall short of goals or expectations you set for yourself or those that are set for you by others. For example, you might fail at meeting your employer's expectations in a certain area or fail an examination at school. This is not sinful. It is simply a setback that, if handled properly, you can learn from and turn into a comeback.

Failure makes you realize your dependence on God. The world says "you can do it". Failure eliminates this idol of self-effort and makes you realize you can and be successful through Jesus Christ. Even the great Apostle Paul admitted that the difficulties in Asia were beyond his ability to endure and were permitted so that "...we might not rely on ourselves but on God..." (2 Corinthians 1:8-11).

DEALING WITH FAILURE:

If you have failed to live up to the mandates in God's Word, repent. This type of failure requires repentance and forgiveness by God. You will not succeed if you continue to conceal your sins (Proverbs 28:13).

If you have failed to live up to expectations, forgive yourself. Many expectations are imposed upon you by others or yourself. Realize that you are an imperfect person living in an imperfect world. Failure to achieve a self-imposed goal or one imposed upon you by others is not sin. Forgive yourself and move on.

Forget the past. You can learn from the past, but you cannot live in the past if you want to succeed. As long as you are living in the past, you will never have a future. Like the Apostle Paul, forget the past and keep pressing towards the future (Philippians 3:13-14)

Confess your dependence on God. Rely on God for strength to succeed (2 Corinthians 1:8-11). Make Philippians 1:6 your daily confession: "*I can do everything through him who gives me strength*".

Confess your confidence in God: You are not destined to fail. If you are a true believer, God will complete what He has started in you. "...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

Do not quit! Failure is not permanent. You never truly fail until you quit trying!

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT FAILURE:

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. (Deuteronomy 31:8)

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Psalms 73:26)

...for though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity. (Proverbs 24:16)

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. (Isaiah 60:1)

But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers. (Luke 22:32)

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us. (2 Corinthians 1:8-11)

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. (2 Corinthians 4:7-9)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

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

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:8-10)

FAITH

DEFINITION: Faith is belief or trust in someone or something without overt proof. Biblically, faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1). The basic tenets of our faith are based on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

FACTS ABOUT FAITH:

Faith is not the same as "mind over matter." Mind over matter teaches that man can overcome all problems by using his mind, reason, or willpower. These teachings are man-centered. They rely on self and not on God. "Mind over matter" is not based on the Word of God. Faith is God-centered, not man-centered. It is a gift of God, not something you produce through your mental abilities.

Faith can be misplaced. Faith is not just "faith in general"--it is directed faith in the one and true God. You can have misdirected faith in natural resources (Psalm 44:6; 20:7); great men (Psalm 146:3); idols (Isaiah 42:17); false prophets (Jeremiah 7:4,8); wealth (Psalm 52:7); friends (Psalm 41:9); and by placing trust in yourself instead of God (Proverbs 28:26).

You are commanded to have faith in God. Jesus commanded: *"Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22).*

It is impossible to please God without faith. You must not only believe in God, but you must believe that He acts in your behalf: *"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).*

Atheism is an extreme form of lack of faith. It is refusing to believe that God exists (Psalm 14:1).

Saving faith is a gift of God. God grants everyone a measure of faith in order for them to obtain salvation: *"But what does it say? 'The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,' that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" (Romans 10:8-10).* It is through faith you are saved: *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-10).*

Faith cannot be increased by works. You cannot increase your faith by doing things for God. Faith, however, is demonstrated through your works (James 2:14-18).

Faith increases through the Word of God. The Bible reveals that everyone is given a certain amount of faith as a gift from God (Romans 12:3b). Your faith can be increased by studying the Word of God because the scriptures were recorded to increase your faith (John 20:31). The Apostle Paul declared: *"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message*

is heard through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

Faith affects how God works in your life. There are various levels of faith that can be developed after your conversion to Christ. Jesus spoke of people who did not use their faith as being "faithless" (Matthew 17:17). He spoke of those with little faith (Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; Luke 12:28) and of those with great faith (Matthew 8:10; 15:28; Luke 7:9). Jesus did no great works in Nazareth because of their lack of faith (Matthew 13:58). When a centurion came to Him with a request, Jesus said: "*Go! It will be done just as you believed it would.*" (Matthew 8:13) and to a woman seeking healing "*...your faith has healed you*" (Matthew 9:22).

Faith is an important spiritual virtue. Faith is a shield against Satanic attacks (Ephesians 6:16). Faith is the victory that helps you resist the enemy (1 Peter 5:9) and overcome the world (1 John 5:4). Faith gives you endurance (James 1:3) and results in blessings in your life (1 Peter 1:5). Faith gives assurance of eternal life (John 5:24) and dispels the darkness of this world (John 12:46). You are sanctified by faith (Galatians 2:20) and receive the promise of the Holy Spirit by faith (Galatians 3:14). Faith is a fruit of the Holy Spirit that is to be manifested in your life (Galatians 5:22-23). Christ dwells in your heart by faith (Ephesians 3:17). Your entire Christian walk is based on faith (Romans 1:17; 2 Corinthians 5:7).

DEALING WITH FAITH:

Confess your lack of faith as sin. "*...for what is not of faith is sin*" (Romans 14:23). Lack of faith means you do not believe God at His Word. As the father who brought his ailing child to Jesus, cry out by faith, "*Lord I believe. Help me overcome my unbelief!*" (Mark 9:24).

Immerse yourself in the Word of God. Faith is increased through hearing, reading, and studying God's Word (Romans 10:17). There are approximately 500 references to faith and belief in the New Testament. Read through the New Testament and study each reference to faith and belief.

Spend time in prayer. Prayer is linked with faith in Matthew 17:20 and James 5:15. As you pray regularly and receive answers to your prayers, your faith will increase.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT FAITH:

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." (Psalm 14:1)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would."
(Matthew 8:13)

"...your faith has healed you" (Matthew 9:22)

"According to your faith will it be done to you..." (Matthew 9:29)

Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. (Matthews 13:58)

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. (Matthew 17:19-21, NKJV)

If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." (Matthew 21:22)

He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" (Mark 4:40)

He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." (Mark 5:34)

Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe." (Mark 5:36)

"Lord I believe. Help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).

"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road. (Mark 10:52)

"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." (Mark 11:22-24)

Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. (Mark 15:14, NKJV)

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. (Mark 16:16)

For nothing is impossible with God. (Luke 1:37)

"Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples. (Luke 8:22)

"Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well." (Luke 12:27-31)

If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead. (Luke 16:31)

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" (Luke 17:5)

Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." (Luke 17:19)

Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God. (Luke 18:42-43)

If you are the Christ," they said, "tell us." Jesus answered, If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. (Luke 22:67-68)

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" (Luke 27:5)

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

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (John 3:16-18)

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him. (John 3:36)

Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders, Jesus told him, you will never believe. (John 4:48)

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." (John 5:24)

I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. (John 6:47)

The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe. (John 6:63)

For even his own brothers did not believe in him. (John 7:5)

I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins. (John 8:24)

Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not

believe in him. (John 12:37)

I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. (John 12:46)

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:31)

By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see. (Acts 3:16)

I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me. (Acts 26:17-18)

For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." (Romans 1:17)

Read Romans chapters 3-4 for several key references to faith.

Yet he (Abraham) did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:20-21)

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. (Romans 5:1-2)

But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" (Romans 10:8-10).

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)

Read 1 Corinthians chapter 13. Faith is one of the three main virtues of the Christian life.

...for by faith you stand. (2 Corinthians 1:24)

Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified. (Galatians 2:16)

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." (Galatians 3:11)

(Read Galatians chapter 3 for several key references to faith)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. (Ephesians 6:16)

If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. (1 Timothy 4:6)

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1 Timothy 6:11-12)

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. (2 Timothy 4:7)

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. (Hebrews 3:12-13)

Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:23)

Now faith is the assurance, the confirmation, the title deed of the things we hope for, being the proof of things we do not see, and the conviction of their reality. Faith is perceiving as real what is not revealed to the senses. (Hebrews 11:1, AMP)

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

(Study Hebrews 11 in its entirety. It defines faith and gives multiple examples of faith in action.)

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. (James 1:5-8)

Study James chapter 2 for numerous references to faith.

And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. (James 5:15)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-5)

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:6-9)

And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. (1 John 3:23)

...for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. (1 John 5:4)

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. (Jude 3)

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit (Jude 20)

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

(See also "Unbelief" in this database. For further instruction regarding faith, obtain the Harvestime International Network publication entitled "*Foundations of Faith*" available at <http://www.harvestime.org>)

FASTING

DEFINITION: Fasting is the willing abstinence from or the reduction of food, drink, or both for a period of time.

FACTS ABOUT FASTING:

The purpose of fasting. Fasting does not change God. It changes you. God relates to you on the basis of your relationship to Him. When you change, then the way God deals with you is affected. Read the book of Jonah for an example of how this worked for the city of Ninevah.

There are two types of fasts. The total fast is when you do not eat or drink at all. An example of this is found in Acts 9:9. The partial fast is a restricted diet. An example of this is in Daniel 10:3.

Public and private fasting. Fasting is a personal matter between an individual and God. It is to be done in private and not boasted about (Matthew 6:16-18). Leaders, however, may also call a public fast and request the whole church to fast (Joel 2:15).

God's chosen fast. Isaiah 58 describes God's "chosen" or divinely approved fast. God's chosen fast is one:

- Where you humble yourself before God: Verse 5
- To loose the bonds of wickedness: Verse 6
- Which undoes heavy burdens: Verse 6
- That frees the oppressed: Verse 6
- Done with unselfish motives and manifested charity: Verse 7

The results of fasting. When you fast, God begins to reveal Himself to you. The Father says, *"Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here am I'"* (Isaiah 58:9). Other results of fasting revealed in Isaiah 58 are:

- Illumination: Verses 8 and 10 declare that the dark periods of your life will become like noonday. When others think they have extinguished your spiritual light, it will rise again and break forth like the morning.
- Direction: Verse 11 promises that "the Lord will guide you continually."
- Provision: Verse 11 declares God will "satisfy your soul in drought." This can apply to both material and spiritually lean times. Verse 11 also describes unlimited spiritual resources. You will be like a "well watered garden," and "a spring of water whose waters do not fail."
- Rejuvenation: Verse 11 declares God will "strengthen your bones" and verse 8 proclaims that "your healing shall spring forth speedily."
- Restoration: Verse 12 indicates that you and your spiritual seed "shall build the old waste places...raise up the foundations of many generations...And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In."

Prayer with fasting was practiced in the early Church and Paul encourages us to "give

ourselves" to it (Acts 14:23; 1 Corinthians 7:5).

DEALING WITH FASTING:

Consider making fasting part of your spiritual discipline. Perhaps a weekly, monthly, or annual fast--or as the Lord leads you.

Length of the fast. How long you fast depends upon what God impresses on your spirit. He may lead you to fast a brief or lengthy time. Remember the story of Esau and Jacob? Jacob was originally making a meal for himself but denied himself in order to obtain the birthright. How much better if Esau had fasted that meal!

How to begin. If you have never fasted, start by fasting one meal. Next you might try fasting from sundown one day to sundown the next night, which is the measure of the Old Testament day. Then you might increase your fasting to more lengthy periods of time. You should always drink water on long fasts. You can go without food for long periods, but water is needed to maintain bodily functions.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT FASTING:

Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. (2 Chronicles 20:3)

I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread. (Job 23:12)

Study Isaiah 58 which reveals God's Chosen Fast.

So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer. (Ezra 8:23)

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. (Nehemiah 1:4)

So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. (Daniel 9:3)

The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth... When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened. (Jonah 3:5 and 10)

So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. (Joel 1:14)

"Even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity." (Joel 2:12-13)

Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord. (Joel 1:14)

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. (Matthew 4:1-2)

When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:16-18)

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:2-3)

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. (Acts 14:23)

Study these Biblical examples of fasting.

- Abraham's servant fasted while seeking the right bride for Isaac (Genesis 24:33).
- Moses fasted for 40 days and nights while receiving the revelations of the law and the tabernacle (Exodus 34).
- Hannah fasted for a child (2 Samuel 1:7-8).
- Nehemiah fasted for the restoration of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:4).
- The Jews fasted for deliverance following Haman's evil decree of death (Esther 4).
- The entire city of Ninevah fasted in response to Jonah's call for repentance (Jonah 3:5-10).
- David fasted prior to assuming his God-given destiny as King of Israel (1 Samuel 31).
- Daniel fasted for 21 days and received the message from God that was the turning point for the Hebrews in captivity.
- Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast prior to battle (2 Chronicles 20:3).
- Ezra called a fast of repentance for the exiles by the river Ahava (Ezra 8-9).
- Jesus fasted prior to entering His ministry (Matthew 4).
- The Apostle Paul fasted after his conversion (Acts 9).
- It was during a time of fasting that Peter received his commission to share the Gospel with the Gentiles and Cornelius was prepared to receive the revelation (Acts 10).
- The disciples were fasting and praying when the Holy Spirit separated Paul and Barnabas for missionary service (Acts 13:2).

Reasons for fasting.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| -In response to a message from God: | Jonah 3:5 |
| -During times of testing: | Luke 4:1 |
| -During the threat of national calamity or war: | 2 Chronicles 20:3 |
| -When revelation was needed from God: | Daniel 9:3-4 |
| -When making decisions: | Acts 13:2-3 |
| -When making special requests before authorities: | Esther 4:16 |
| -To prepare for confrontation with demonic activity: | Mark 9:29 |
| -To humble one's self: | Psalms 35:13; 69:10 |
| -To repent of sin: | Joel 2:12 |
| -To feed the poor, both physically and spiritually: | Isaiah 58:7 |
| -To be heard of God: | 2 Samuel 12:16,22; Jonah 3:5,10 |
| -To loose bands of wickedness, lift heavy burdens,
set the oppressed free, and break every bondage: | Isaiah 58:6 |

FEAR

DEFINITION: Fear is a sense of alarm or apprehension of danger. For a believer, fear is an expression of unbelief in God or a lack of understanding of His ways.

FACTS ABOUT FEAR:

All fear is not bad. The "fight or flight" response that is common to all people is not negative. "Fight or flight" is a normal response that protects you in the face of perceived danger. For example, if you are threatened by a dangerous beast your "fight or flight" response will kick in so you can either escape or successfully confront the animal. This is a rational response to danger that differs from irrational and tormenting fears.

Fear was first manifested when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. When God came seeking them in the cool of the day, Adam replied: "...*I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid...*" (*Genesis 3:10*). One of the first negative emotion resulting from sin was fear.

Fear is a spirit. The Bible declares that God has not given us the spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7). If the spirit of fear is not from God, then it is from Satan.

Fear is a tormenting emotion According to 1 John 4:18, fear has torment.

Fear fosters irrational phobias and negative emotions. Its most severe manifestations causes people to withdraw from society and become agoraphobics--confined in their own home where they think they are safe. The spirit of fear will make you a slave to fear (Romans 8:15-16).

Medical science has proven that fear results in stress, high blood pressure, strokes, and heart attacks. The Bible speaks of men's hearts failing because of fear (Luke 21:26) and of people living in bondage all of their lives because of the fear of death (Hebrews 2:15).

Fear is sin and leads to other sins. You are either functioning in fear or in faith, and whatever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). There are numerous biblical examples of fear leading to additional sins. Abraham was so afraid of Abimelech that he lied to save his own life, saying Sarah was his sister (Genesis 20:1-13). Isaac feared for his life and committed the same sin (Genesis 26:7). Ten of the twelve spies who investigated the promised land were terrified of the giants and their fear resulted in Israel's disobedience and the death of a whole generation (Numbers 13). Saul tried to murder David because he feared him (1 Samuel 18:12,15,29) and later Saul sinned by offering a burnt offering because he feared the people would scatter (1 Samuel 13:11-12). Acting in fear cost Saul the kingdom. What will fear cost you?

Fear focuses on the future--whether it be today, tomorrow, or in the distant future. God designed the universe to run on a 24-hour period of time. That is why the prayer Jesus taught His disciples was to be a daily prayer for needs to be provided, forgiveness, etc. Fear enters in when you violate this principle and begin to worry about the future (Matthew 6:25-34).

DEALING WITH FEAR:

Ask yourself, "Why am I so fearful?" Jesus asked His disciples this question (Mark 4:40).

Deal with fear spiritually. Because most fear is irrational, it cannot be dealt with through rational means. Fear must be dealt with spiritually. David said: *"I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears"* (Psalm 34:4).

Repent of fear. Whatever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). Fear is not faith, so it is sin. When you fear, you are functioning in unbelief--not trusting God to care for you and your concerns,

Make your fears a matter of prayer. When David sought the Lord, he was delivered from all of his fears (Psalm 34:4). Philippians 4:6-7 directs us to make every concern a matter of prayer instead of worrying, and we will function in God's peace instead of fear.

Focus on God instead of the fear. Isaiah 26:3 promises: *"You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you."* David said he sought the Lord, and He delivered him from all of His fear (Psalm 34:4).

Do not fear the future. Claim God's promise instead: *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future"* (Jeremiah 29:11).

Eliminate things that feed your fear. These include scare tactics generated by others and media violence viewed through news reports, horror movies, the Internet, or violent video games.

Overcome fear by God's power, His love, and a sound mind. These are the keys given in 2 Timothy 1:7: *"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind"*. You overcome fear by:

-*Power.* Jesus delegated to believers power over all the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19). Face your fears in the power of the promises of God.

-*Love.* You eliminate fear by really coming to understand the love of God. His perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:16-18).

-*A sound mind.* Irrational fear is just that: Not rational. It is the result of irrational thinking, so you cannot deal with fear by trying to be rational. You must develop a sound mind that cannot be tormented by fear (Romans 12:1-2). You do this by living by the Spirit rather than by the flesh (Romans 8:5-6). Fear begins in the mind, and it is in the mind where you must conquer it. Fear is a battle that starts with lies instigated by the god of this world and the father of lies, Satan (John 8:44). This is why the scriptures direct you to cast down vain imaginations. "Cast down" means to conquer, pull down, and hold under one's power. The word "imaginations" means logic. Your mind can

develop strongholds that result from logical reasoning. A sound mind is one controlled by the Holy Spirit, rather than the logic of your own carnal mind. (For further study of the battle of the mind, consult the Harvestime publication entitled "*Spiritual Strategies: A Manual Of Spiritual Warfare.*" See also "Mind And Thoughts" in this database.)

Do not play the "what if" game. "What if this happens, what if that happens?" The power to face difficult situations is given when it is needed, not when you are worrying over the future (Hebrews 4:15-16).

Reject the fear of death. The fear of death is a major issue for many people (Hebrews 2:15). True believers need not fear death, because when you vacate your body you will immediately be in the presence of the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:8). The Apostle Paul said that to die would be gain (Philippians 1:21). Peter refers to death as putting off an earthly tabernacle (2 Peter 1:14). David wrote: "*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*" (Psalm 23:4). When Jesus returns, you will be reunited with your loved ones (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Make this declaration daily. "*What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me ..In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me*" (Psalm 56:3-4,11).

Be of good courage. Courage is not the absence of fear, rather it is acting and persevering in spite of fear. God repeatedly told His people to be of good courage (Deuteronomy 31:6-7,23; Joshua 1:6,9,18; Joshua 10:25; 1 Chronicles 28:20). The psalmist said if you wait on the Lord and are of good courage you will receive the strength you need to face the difficulties of life (Psalm 27:14; 32:24).

Praise the Lord in the face of fear. David did so and God delivered him from all of his fears (Psalm 34:1-4).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT FEAR:

The Bible is filled with references about fear--so many that we cannot include them all. Use a concordance to study the subject of "fear" in the Bible. Here are some key selected references.

Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today." (Exodus 14:13)

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

"Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are

with them." (2 Kings 6:16)

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. (Psalm 23:4)

The Lord is my light and my salvation--whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life --of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)

I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. (Psalm 34:1-4)

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. (Psalm 46:2-3)

When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me? When I am afraid, I will trust in you. (Psalm 56:3-4)

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. (Psalm 91:5-7)

The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? (Psalm 118:6)

The Lord watches over all who love him. (Psalm 145:20)

...but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm. (Proverbs 1:33)

The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion. (Proverbs 28:1)

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe. (Proverbs 29:25)

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. (Isaiah 12:2)

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. (Isaiah 26:3)

Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear, your God will come." (Isaiah 35:3-4)

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you

and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

But now, this is what the Lord says--he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze." (Isaiah 43:1-2)

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:31-34)

You of little faith, why are you so afraid? (Matthew 8:26)

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:28-31)

Don't be afraid; just believe. (Mark 5:36)

I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. (Luke 10:19)

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32)

Peace I leave with you; My [own] peace I now give and bequeath to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. [Stop allowing yourselves to be agitated and disturbed; and do not permit yourselves to be fearful and intimidated and cowardly and unsettled.] (John 14:27, AMP)

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. (Romans 8:15-16)

... everything that does not come from faith is sin. (Romans 14:23)

Stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel, without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. (Philippians 1:27-28)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

Since the children have flesh and blood, he (Jesus) too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. (Hebrews 2:14-15).

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16).

The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. (Hebrews 13:6)

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4, NKJV)

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. (1 John 1:18, NKJV)

Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)

(See also "Anxiety" in this database.)

FINANCES

DEFINITION: Finances involve the gaining, exchange, and management of money. A barter trading system is also a type of finance. Financing is the act of managing available resources like money, assets, and investments. Problems with finances may include an inability to meet financial obligations, excessive debt, and an inability to provide for basic needs.

FACTS ABOUT FINANCES:

Chief causes of financial problems include not honoring God with tithes and offerings; living beyond one's income; credit buying; lack of a budget; laziness or refusing to work; co-signing for the debts of others--all of which are violations of God's Word.

God's Word is our financial guide. As believers, we do not look to the strategies of the world for principles to govern finances. We look to the truth of God's Word. Financial blessing comes through keeping the Word of God in every area of our lives, including finances (Deuteronomy 28:2).

There are five principles that should distinguish the believer's attitude from that of the world:

-The *master* of our money is God. We are guided by obedience to His Word in regards to our finances. As a steward, you are responsible for your resources, and God holds you accountable (Matthew 25:14-30).

-Our *motivation* is different from that of the world. Instead of amassing wealth for selfish purposes, we are motivated by a desire to use our resources for God's glory.

-Our *mindset* differs from that of the world. We seek contentment with what we have and we own our possessions instead of being owned by them.

-Our *means* of attaining finances differ. Scriptural mandates are honored to prevent fraud and deceit and we are governed by principles of honesty and integrity.

-Our *management* of money differs from that of the world. Our budgets include categories like tithes, offerings, and gifts to the poor.

Tithes and offerings are part of the financial plan of true believers. A tithe is 10% of your income. Offerings are gifts to the work of the Lord above the 10% tithe. The first record of tithing was when Abraham paid tithe to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:20). New Testament believers also tithed and gave offerings (1 Corinthians 16:2; Luke 18:12-13). If a person fails to tithe, it is considered robbing God (Malachi 3:8). You can borrow from the tithe, but if you do you must include 20% interest when you repay it (Leviticus 27:31). God blesses those who give tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:10).

Why should believers give tithes and offerings? We give because:

-We want to pattern ourselves after our giving God. God gives lavishly. We want to be like Him, so this means that we follow His example and give generously.

-We want to obey God's commands to give. God commanded Israel to make giving central in their personal, family, and national lives. New Testament teachings in the Gospels and Epistles emphasize giving as well. Examples in the history of the first church recorded in the book of Acts also illustrate this. God commands us to give by precept and example, and as His children we respond in obedience.

-We love the world with the love of God. God so loved the world that He gave His only Son (John 3:16). We give to the work of the Lord because we are filled with that same love and in so doing we help extend the Gospel to the world.

-We are thankful. The Jews gave sacrificial gifts to express gratitude for God's provision for their needs. We also express our thanks by giving to God.

-We want to address legitimate need. Some of our brothers and sisters in emerging nations struggle in difficult conditions, while those in western nations live in relative ease. The Bible teaches that we cannot truly have God's love manifested through us if we ignore the needs of our brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ. The Bible repeatedly addresses the importance of giving to the poor, to widows, orphans, and the nation of Israel.

-We know it is more blessed to give than to receive. This Kingdom principle is totally opposite of the world's advice which is to get all you can, get it any way you can, and then hoard it.

-We want to lay up heavenly treasure. We want to be among those who receive the awesome blessings which God has promised for those who invest in heavenly rather than earthly treasures (Luke 12:33-34).

-We want our needs supplied. Some people spend years clinging to their money in a vain attempt to meet their own needs, only to see God provide miraculously as soon as they start to give. Sadly, many never learn to give and remain in need their entire lives. God promises to supply all of your needs out of His infinite riches when you are obedient to His commands to give.

The Bible mandates how we should give. We are to:

-Give generously. "Generosity" means "giving widely". Do not measure your generosity by what you give. Measure it by what you retain (Proverbs 11:25; 22:9).

-Give creatively. Giving in Bible times included tithes, sacrifices, free-will offerings, gleanings, hospitality, funds for widows, collections for famine relief, expensive jars of oil, and even a burial tomb.

-*Give willingly.* God asks that people give willingly (Exodus 25:2; 2 Corinthians 8:12; 1 Chronicles 29:9).

-*Give cheerfully.* God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

-*Give proportionately.* Every believer should give as he is able, in proportion to his income and how God has blessed him (Deuteronomy 16:17).

-*Give with simplicity and without seeking recognition.* Don't give with fanfare or seeking recognition (Romans 12:8; Matthew 6:1-4).

-*Give sacrificially.* Sacrificial giving is measured by what you retain rather than by what you give (Mark 12:43-44).

-*Give with a pure motive.* Ask yourself: Why am I giving? If you are giving because you were pressured to do so or because you want to look good before others, your motive is wrong. Your giving should be from a heart filled with love (1 Corinthians 13:3; 1 Samuel 15:22).

-*Give expecting God to meet your need.* This is not a wrong motive. You are simply claiming God's promises and taking Him at His Word (Proverbs 3:9-10; Philippians 4:19).

-*Give your best.* In Old Testament times, God's people were instructed to bring their best and were forbidden to offer sick and injured animals or polluted offerings (Malachi 1:6-14). You also should give your best. The woman who offered her alabaster box of expensive ointment gave the very best she had, as did the widow woman who gave all that she had (Mark 26:7-10 and Mark 12:42-44). If it doesn't cost you something, it isn't your best gift. David said, "*I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God of that which costs me nothing*" (2 Samuel 24:24).

The Bible indicates to whom we should give. Here are some scriptural directives to guide your giving.

-*Give to the local church.* The first priority in giving should be to allocate a tenth of your income to your local church. Your tithes should be used to support the modern equivalents of priests and Levites--people who are involved in some form of ministry like pastors, missionaries, teachers, prophets, evangelists, church secretaries, musicians, youth workers, counselors, and caretakers of God's house. Your gifts should also be used for rent, utilities, maintenance, etc., of the local church.

-*Give to the poor.* In addition to financial gifts to the poor, your giving might include assisting orphanages, taking clothes and food to the homeless, giving your time to organize care facilities for poor children, establishing job centers for the unemployed, or delivering meals to the elderly. A portion of your tithes and offerings should go into a specific fund so that the church can help their local poor. (For examples, see Deuteronomy 15:10; Proverbs 19:17; 28:27; 22:9; and Psalm 41:1).

-*Give to ministries that mentor you.* You should support the ministries which bless you and help

you grow in the Lord. In the New Testament, the Macedonian believers were committed, long-term financial partners of the Apostle Paul. They had been brought to faith in Christ by Paul and were blessed and mentored spiritually by him, so in return they helped support his ministry.

-Give your spiritual gifts, talents, and time to worthy causes. These should be offered to the Lord as well as your finances. Consider volunteering in your church or for a Christian organization.

-Give to Israel. Paul made it clear that we owe a spiritual debt to the Jews. Almost all of the Bible was written by Jews. Jewish believers first brought the Gospel to the Gentiles and they were the first to spread the Good News across the world. God prospers those who love Israel, and giving is one way to demonstrate your love (Psalm 122:6).

-Give hospitality to other believers. As our communities disintegrate, families break up, and the number of elderly people multiplies, hospitality among believers becomes ever more urgent. Our towns are increasingly filled with lonely people who would value a meal in another person's home. Many believers live alone and have empty rooms that could be used help others. For example, in America, many believers opened their homes for temporary shelter to the homeless after a terrible hurricane called Katrina ravaged a portion of the nation. Perhaps you could host a missionary who is home on furlough or provide temporary housing for someone who has been displaced from their own residence due to a disaster.

-You can expect to receive when you give. When you give consistently and scripturally, then you can expect to receive:

-Provision for your earthly needs. Both the Old and New Testaments contain clear promises that God will bless us in tangible ways when we give of our resources. In Deuteronomy 14:29 and 24:19 and Malachi 3:10, God promises overflowing blessing upon those who give biblically. When we give freely to the poor, we can expect God to bless us (Proverbs 19:17). The Prophet Isaiah explains the amazing blessings you will receive when you give God's way (Isaiah 58:7-11).. You will receive in the same measure that you give (Luke 6:38).

-Supernatural growth and miracles. The staggering growth in the early church was clearly related to their generosity. Miracles of salvation, healing, and deliverance cannot be separated from the sacrificial lifestyle of believers in the early church. When our churches give God's way, we will see miracles and dynamic growth such as the early church experienced.

-Heavenly treasure. You convert your earthly wealth into heavenly treasure by giving God's way (Matthew 10:42) .

DEALING WITH FINANCES:

If you have not been tithing, ask God to forgive you. The prophet admonished the people to consider their ways, repent, and renew their covenant of tithing with the Lord (Haggai 1:5-11).

Set aside 10% of all you earn to give to the work of the Lord. Do this first before you pay any

bills or spend money on anything else. In some cultures, as in Old Testament times, people may tithe off of the produce of their land when there is no monetary exchange for goods operative. Set aside funds above the 10% to give as offerings to special works like missions, the poor, etc.

Get your eyes off of your lack. Take your eyes off of your difficult circumstances and, by faith, look to God for His divine provision. Your faith must be fixed to the infallible, impregnable Word of God and His unlimited resources.

Believe that God wants to prosper you. If you are going to effectively war against the enemy's attack on your finances, you must believe that God wants to prosper you (Deuteronomy 28:2,11-12; Malachi 3:10). He has promised to provide all of your needs--not every selfish want or desires that would not be good for you, but all legitimate needs through Jesus Christ (Philippians 4:19).

Face your financial problems armed with the Word of God. To effectively war against the devil's attack on your finances, you must face your problems head-on with a solid scriptural foundation concerning God's will for your finances. Learn what the Bible says about finances, and live by these mandates. Eliminate any scriptural violations regarding finances.

Identify the real enemy. The enemy of your finances is not your boss or the government. Get your eyes off your employer. Get your eyes off the economy. Your employer, the economy, or anyone or anything else in the natural world are not your enemies. Satan is the one who comes to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). You are not fighting against flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:12) so you must battle with spiritual weapons (2 Corinthians 10:4-5, Ephesians 6:13-18).

Take control of your mind. Take captive the thoughts that you will go under financially and that you are going to lose your house or your job. Reject these ideas in the name of Jesus! Cast down such "vain imaginations".

Make a budget. Ask God for wisdom to make and live within a realistic budget (James 1:5). Here are the steps to take.

-Create a list of monthly expenses. This might include a mortgage payment or rent, car payments, gasoline, telephone, trash service, insurances, auto repairs, public transportation, groceries, eating out, tuition, utilities, entertainment, laundry and dry cleaning, clothes, house and medical insurance, property and income taxes, baby-sitting, subscriptions or dues, alimony or child support, medical and dental, home repairs, money spent on pets, haircuts, etc. Use your check book, credit card statements, and receipts to make this list.

-Divide this list of expenses into two categories. The first category lists fixed expenses which are the same each month. For example, your rent and car payment are fixed. The second category is variable expenses that change from month-to-month. Examples are gasoline, groceries, utilities, etc.

-Total your expenses. Total your fixed expenses. Total your variable expenses. Then add them together for a grand total.

-Total your monthly income. List every source of income, how much you receive from each source, and then total it.

-Compare your expenses and income. You will have one of two results:

-If your results show more income than expenses you are off to a good start. This means you can designate extra money to reduce debt or put into savings for emergencies and future needs.

-If you have more expenses than income, then you must make some life-style changes.

-Make adjustments to your expenses. Examine your expenses and list areas where you can cut costs. Usually you can't cut fixed expenses like a mortgage, etc., so look closely at variable expenses to see where you can reduce expenditures. What can you live without? For example, could you give up your cell phones for a cheaper home phone? What can you cut out completely? Could you eliminate entertainment costs and eating out for awhile? What expenses could you lower? For example, perhaps you could use less gasoline by combining errands or walking when possible. By lowering each variable expense, you will come closer to your goal of balancing income and expenditures.

-Set a realistic monthly budget. The budget should focus on your actual needs instead of extras you desire.

-Review your budget each month. This review will show you where you did well and where you need to improve.

Note: If you have large credit card balances, here is a strategy to help you retire those debts. Transfer your credit card balances to the card with the lowest interest rates. As an incentive for the credit card company to allow this, tell them they can make an automatic deduction from your bank account each month to assure they will be paid. Once you have moved your credit card debt to the card with the lowest interest rate, do not pay only the lowest monthly payment required. Keep your monthly payments as large as they were before you transferred everything to the one card. This way you will have a higher payment on the principal and be able to pay off your debt in a shorter time.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT FINANCES:

Tithes and offerings.

A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. If a man redeems any of his tithe, he must add a fifth of the value to it. (Leviticus 27:30-31)

Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. (Proverbs 3:9-10)

Consider your ways (and set your mind on what has come to you). Now therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways (and set your mind on what has come to you). You have sown much, but you have reaped little; you eat, but you do not have enough; you drink, but you do not have your fill, you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages has earned them to put them in a bag with holes in it...You looked for much (harvest), and it came to little; and even when you brought that home, I blew it away. Why? says the Lord of hosts. Because of My house which lies waste, while you yourselves run each man to his own house (eager to build and adorn it). Therefore the heavens above you (for your sake) withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its produce. And I have called for a drought upon the land and the hill country, upon the grain, the fresh fruit juice, the oil, upon what the ground brings forth, upon men and cattle, and upon all the (wearisome) toil of men's hands. (Haggai 1:5-6, 9-11, AMP)

"The silver is mine and the gold is mine," declares the Lord Almighty. (Haggai 2:8)

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me." But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." (Malachi 3:8-10)

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

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. (Luke 6:38)

...The Lord Jesus himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income...(1 Corinthians 16:2)

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

Financial principles in the Psalms.

The book of Psalms opens with a promise that whatever you do will prosper: "*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in*

the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:1-3, KJV). Here are the steps to prospering in all you do:

- Refuse to walk in the counsel of the ungodly.
 - Stop hanging out with sinners.
 - Stop scorning God's promises.
 - Delight in the Word of God.
 - Meditate on God's Word day and night...
- ...and you will prosper in all you do!

Here are some other key principles from the book of Psalms:

- God cares for the poor, as should we: 22:26; 9:18; 12:5; 14:6; 35:10; 40:17; 41:1; 68:10; 69:33; 72:4,12-13;19; 107:41; 109:31; 112:9; 113:7; 132:15; 140:12.
- God promises blessings when you give to the poor: 11:1-3.
- God delivers the poor and needy: 72:12-14; 132:15.
- If you regard iniquity in your heart, God won't hear you--which means He won't hear your prayers for financial blessing: 66:18.
- Do not charge a Christian brother interest or accept bribes: 15:5.
- Do not trust in wealth: 49:6-7, 10-12, 16-17; 52:7.
- Wealth and riches will be found in the house of one who serves the Lord: 112:3.
- It is better to have little than to have much and dwell with the wicked: 37:16.
- Do not borrow and fail to repay: 37:21.
- The righteous will never be forsaken and his children will never beg: 37:25.
- God provides for the righteous because of their generosity: 37:25-26.
- God provides lavishly for His people: 105:37-45.
- God bless those who give generously: 112:5.

Financial principles in Proverbs.

- Warnings against ill-gotten gains: 1:13-15; 10:2; 11:16, 18; 12:11 13:11; 21:5-6; 23:4; 28:8,16, 19-20; 28:24.
- Wisdom is more important than wealth: 2:14-16; 8:11,18; 16:16; 4:15.
- Admonitions to give tithes and offerings: 3:9-10.
- Admonitions to be generous and rewards for generosity: 3:27-2; 11:24-25; 22:9.
- The danger of co-signing for the debts of others: 6:1-11; 11:15; 22:26-27.
- Avoid bribery: 6:35.
- The importance of saving: 6:6-8.
- Acknowledge God's divine provision: 10:3; 11:4.
- Warnings against laziness and admonitions to be diligent: 10:4-5; 13:4; 18:9; 20:4,13; 21:5; 21:20, 25-26; 21:17; 23:21; 24:30-34; 28:3.
- Warnings against trusting in riches: 11:28; 18:11; 20:21; 23:4-5; 27:24.
- Warning against hoarding: 11:26.
- The wealth of the wicked is stored up for the righteous: 13:22.
- Admonitions to care for the poor: 14:21, 31; 17:5; 18:23; 22:22-23; 19:17; 21:13; 22:9,16,22-23; 28:27.

- Warnings against greed: 15:27; 28:25; 28:4.
- Honesty in business is required: 11:1; 16:11; 20:23.
- Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth: 22:4.
- Avoid borrowing: 22:7.
- Don't be stingy: 21:26; 23:6-7; 28:22.
- There is value in being neither rich or poor: 30:8-9.
- Wealth obtained by fraud disappears: 13:11.
- Don't oppress the poor: 22:16.
- Reasons for poverty: 11:24; 13:18; 20:13; 23:21; 24:34; 28:19; 28:22.

Financial principles in Ecclesiastes. Despite the fact that Solomon--the author of Ecclesiastes--had great riches, he found them to be meaningless (Ecclesiastes 2:8-15). Read chapter 2 for his exhortation on the meaninglessness of riches apart from God. He acknowledges God as the source of wealth and of any joy that one might gain through riches (Ecclesiastes 5:19). In chapter 5 verses 4-5, Solomon emphasizes the importance of keeping vows made to God--which, of course, includes financial vows. He observes that one who loves money never has enough of it. He also presents the concept that the wicked store up wealth for the righteous (Ecclesiastes 2:26) and that if you give to others, in due time you will receive (Ecclesiastes 11:1).

Financial principles in the prophetic books.

- Isaiah:* Providing for the poor is important to God, so you are blessed when you give to the poor: 1:23;10:1-2; 41:17-20; 58:7.
- Jeremiah:* Do not glory in riches: 9:23.
Pay fair wages: 22:13.
A promise of restoration: 33:10-11.
Do not oppress the poor: 18:17.
- Ezekiel:* Divine restoration is promised: 11:17.
- Hosea:* If you sow to the wind, you will reap the whirlwind: 6:6.
God does not bless dishonesty: 12:7.
- Joel:* Divine restoration is promised: 2:25-27.
- Amos:* Divine restoration is promised: 9:11.
A tremendous end-time harvest will occur: 9:13.
- Jonah:* Divine provision was evident--even for God's errant prophet: 1:17; 3:6-7.
- Micah:* Do not defraud others: 2:1-2.
Ill-gotten gains will not last: 4:13b.
- Habakkuk:* Stealing and extortion is forbidden: 2:6-7.
- Haggai:* Priority should be given to the work of the Lord: 1:5-11.
God blesses you financially from the moment you begin to obey His Word: 1:18-19.
- Malachi:* Do not offer blemished sacrifices: 1:9,11.
Pay workers a fair wage: 3:5.
Do not rob God by refusing to pay tithes: 3:7-12.

Some extravagant givers in the New Testament.

- The wise men.* They gave valuable gifts to Christ (Matthew 2:9-12).

-Anointing women. Each of the gospels reports a story of a woman who worshiped Jesus by anointing Him with expensive fragrances. Read these accounts in Luke 7:36-50; Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; and John 12:1-11. What extravagant gift can you give to God? For sure, you can offer sacrifices of praise and worship. Don't let your giving become routine. Give as an act of worship.

-Generous women. These women offered hospitality to Jesus and His disciples during His earthly ministry: Luke 8:1-3 and 19:38-42 and John 11:1-45 and 12:1-12.

-Joseph and Nicodemus. Matthew 27:57 introduces a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who was Jesus' disciple." Mark 15:42-47 and Luke 23:50-54 describe Joseph's visit to Pilate, his request for Christ's body, and the gift of his own tomb for His burial. John 19:38-40 indicates that Joseph was helped by Nicodemus, who gave 100 pounds of myrrh and aloes for embalming the Lord's body.

-Zacchaeus. Read his story in Luke 19. Financial restoration to those he had cheated was the first response of this dishonest tax collector after he came to Jesus. Is there restoration you need to make to others in order to be blessed financially?

-A small boy with a small lunch. The boy in John 6 gave what he had and a multitude was fed. What do you have that you can give to God to be supernaturally multiplied?

-The poor widow. This lady is one of the greatest biblical givers. We do not know her name, but her story is recorded in Mark 12:41-44 and Luke 21:1-4. She gave all she had!

-Luke's commendations to extravagant givers. John the Baptist (Luke 3:10-11); the Capernaum centurion (Luke 7:5-6); Joanna and Susanna (Luke 8:1-3); the good Samaritan (10:25-37); Zacchaeus (Luke 19:8-10); the widow (Luke 21:1-4); and Joseph (Luke 23:50-54) How would Luke view your generosity?

Financial Principles In The Book Of Acts.

In Acts chapter 2, new believers in the first church manifested immediate changes in their financial practices and made giving central to their lives (Acts 2:42-45). Acts 4:32-37 describes the believers' generosity. In Acts 9:36-39, Luke describes Dorcas as a giving person. Cornelius was introduced in Acts 10:1-2 as one who... "*gave much alms to the people*" and in Acts 16:15 a woman named Lydia gave hospitality to Paul and Silas.

Acts 5:1-11 tells the story of a man and his wife who gave deceitfully and suffered severe judgment for doing so. Acts 8:18-24 records the story of a man who thought he could buy the gifts of God with money and learned it cannot be done.

Acts 11:27-30 records an important development in giving. Barnabas and Saul were teaching Gentile believers in Syrian Antioch when some prophets visited them and told of a famine that was to come.

Acts 20:35 emphasizes the teaching of Jesus that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Financial principles in the Epistles.

Romans.

- One who works is worthy of his wages: 4:4.
- God, who gave His Son, will graciously give you all things: 8:32.
- The greatest gift you can give to God is to present your body a living sacrifice: 12:1-2.
- When you give, do it liberally: 12:8.
- Owe nothing to anyone: 13:8.
- The early church cared for the poor, as you should also: 15:25-27.

1 Corinthians.

- You already have all you need and are rich in Christ: 4:8.
- You should work hard with your own hands: 4:12.
- Those who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel--a minister can be supported by the church: 9:14.
- You should offer the gospel free of charge: 9:18.
- Each believer should give tithes and offerings in keeping with their income: 16:1-2.

2 Corinthians.

- The command not to be yoked together with unbelievers applies to business associates as well as other relationships: 6:14.
- Generosity is encouraged: 8:1-12.
- Jesus became poor that you might become rich: 8:9.
- You should give willingly: 8:12.
- Believers should help one another when in need: 8:13-15.
- If you sow sparingly, you will reap sparingly: 9:6.
- Believers should purpose in their hearts what to give and give cheerfully, rather than grudgingly or out of necessity because they have to do so: 9:7.
- God wants you to abound in all things at all times so that you can accomplish good works: 9:8-9.
- God supplies your need so that you can sow more seed and reap a harvest so you can sow again: 9:10.
- God wants you to be made rich in every way so you can be generous and through your generosity God will be glorified: 9:11-13.

Galatians.

- Paul remembered the poor, as should we: 2:10.
- You reap what you sow: 6:6-9.
- You should not grow weary in sowing: 6:9-10.

Ephesians.

- As a believer, you are blessed with spiritual blessings: 1:3.

- You have unsearchable riches in Christ: 3:8.
- He is able to do immeasurably more than all you ask or think according to the power within you: 3:20.

Philippians.

- Worldly profit is viewed as loss to a believer: 3:7-11.
- The Philippians gave to Paul, who mentored them in the faith. You should give to those who mentor you in the faith as well: 4:14-17.
- Believers may experience times of need as well as plenty, but God ultimately supplies your needs: 4:11-12.
- The secret in any circumstance is to be content with what you have: 4:12.
- Your offerings are a sweet-smelling scent before God: 4:18.

Colossians.

- You have immense riches through Jesus Christ: 2:2-3.
- Avoid greed, which is actually idolatry: 3:5.
- Whatever you do, you should do it as if you are working for the Lord instead of men, for it is from Him you will receive your reward: 23-24.

1 Thessalonians.

- Paul worked with his own hands in order not to be a burden to anyone while he preached the Gospel. There may be times that it is necessary for you to do this also: 1:9; 4:11.

2 Thessalonians.

- Paul worked with his own hands while sharing the gospel, so as not to be a burden on the people to whom he was ministering: 3:8-9.
- If a person does not work, he should not eat: 3:10.
- You must earn the bread which you eat: 3:12.

1 Timothy.

- You should not be a lover of money: 3:3.
- You should not pursue dishonest gain: 3:8.
- If a person does not provide for his family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever: 5:8.
- Believers should help widows in their family: 5:16.
- The church should help widows in need who do not have family to help them: 5:16.
- Workers are worthy of their wages: 5:17-18.
- Godliness with contentment is great gain: 6:6.
- You brought nothing into the world and can take nothing out of it: 6:7.
- You should be content with having your basic needs met--food and clothing: 6:8.
- People who pursue riches often fall into traps: 6:9.
- The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil: 6:10.
- The love of money has caused some to wander from the faith and experience much grief: 6:6-10.
- Those who are rich should not trust in their riches, but they should invest in eternity: 6:17.
- Those who are rich should be generous and willing to share: 6:18.

-You lay up treasures in heaven when you give to others: 6:19.

2 Timothy.

-In the last days, people will love money more than they love God: 3:2.

-Have nothing to do with those who love money: 3:5.

Philemon.

-God uses us to meet the needs of others: 1:18.

Hebrews.

-Tithing was instituted when Abraham paid tithe to Melchizedek: 7:1-10.

-If your heart is not set on riches, the "spoiling of your goods" will not affect your faith in God: 10:34-35.

-Men and women of faith from biblical history are listed in Hebrews 11. They all are givers, having given up something, performed dangerous tasks for the Lord at personal risk, and/or laid down their lives as martyrs. The greatest gift you can give is to offer your life to Jesus Christ to fulfill His purposes: Hebrews 11.

-You should continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God. It is not a sacrifice when everything is going well. It is a sacrifice when you are struggling with difficult circumstances: 13:15.

-God equips you with divine provision so that He can work in you and through you: 13:21.

James.

-God generously gives wisdom to govern every aspect of our lives--including finances: 1:5-7.

-You cannot be double-minded and expect to receive anything from God: 1:7.

-You should not show partiality to the rich: 2:1-9.

-Giving necessities is a good work of faith: 2:15-16.

-If you ask and do not receive, perhaps it is because you have a wrong motive: 4:2-3.

-You should guard against divisions that arise out of covetousness and materialistic desires: 4:1-3.

-The rich should not hoard, withhold fair wages, live in luxury, or be unjust: 5:1-6.

1 John.

-The Father's lavish love for us is one of His greatest gifts: 3:1.

3 John.

-John's prayer for believers was that they would prosper and be in good health even as their soul prospered. God wants you to prosper in every area of your life--body, soul, and spirit: 3:2.

Jude.

-The gift of divine preservation will keep you from falling and present you faultless in the presence of the Lord: 1:24.

Financial principles in the book of Revelation.

-The church at Laodicea is chided by God for trusting in their riches. They did not recognize their spiritual poverty. True riches come from God: 3:17-18.

- "Hurt not the oil and the wine." The oil is a type of the Holy Spirit and the wine is a type of Christ's blood. The command here is to not touch God's people with the end-time economic chaos that is caused by the rider on the black horse: 6:6.
- God will create all things new--a new heaven and a new earth--and give this lavish gift and eternal life to His people: Chapter 21.

Summary of Biblical financial principles. To get the full benefit of this summary, look up each reference in your Bible and read the entire passage. This will enable you to study each teaching within the context it was given.

Asking:

- Ask, and you shall receive: Luke 11:9-10.
- Your Heavenly Father always responds to your appeals: Matthew 7:7-12; Luke 11:5-18.

Covetousness:

- Covetousness is sin: Mark 7:21.
- You should beware of covetousness: Luke 12:15.
- Be content with your wages: Luke 3:14.

Fairness:

- The Father is fair in bestowing rewards to His servants: Matthew 20:1-13.
- Those who experience true change in their lives will set their finances in order. Zacchaeus, the tax collector, is an example: Luke 19:1-9.

Financial planning:

- Plan wisely before you begin a project so you know that you have sufficient funds to finish it: Luke 14:28-30.
- God expects you to be a good financial manager. See the parable of the good manager: Luke 16:1-12.

Forgiving debt:

- You should be merciful and forgive others their debts, even as you have been forgiven. The parable of the unmerciful servant: Matthew 18:21-35.

Giving:

- Do not give to be seen by others: Matthew 6:1-4.
- Store up treasures in heaven rather than on earth: Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 12:32-34.
- When you give what you have, God multiplies it: Matthew 14:13-21; 15:29-38; Mark 6:30-44; 8:1-21; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:1-13.
- Whatever you give up to follow God, you will receive it multiplied back to you in this life and in eternity: Matthew 19:27-29; Mark 10:29-30; Luke 18:28-30.
- Jesus takes note of your giving. The widow who gave all: Mark 12:41-43; Luke 21:1-4. The extravagant gift from Mary: John 12:3-8.
- Give to those who ask of you: Matthew 5:42; Luke 6:30.
- You are to help those who are suffering, even as the good Samaritan did: Luke 10:25-37.
- The smallest act of giving does not go unnoticed: Matthew 10:42.

- Give and it will be given to you in abundance: Luke 6:38.
- When you give to those in need, you are giving to the Lord: Matthew 25:35-45.
- Giving does not absolve you of keeping the other laws of God: Matthew 23:23; Luke 18:10-14.
- You should give alms (offerings to the poor) based upon what you have: Luke 11:41.
- Give to the poor: Luke 14:12-14.

Hindrances to giving and receiving:

- If you have anything in your heart between you and a brother or sister, make it right before presenting your gifts to God: Matthew 5:23-24.

Possessions:

- Your life doesn't consist in the abundance of things you possess: Luke 12:15,23.
- Own your possessions, don't let your possessions own you: Mark 10:17-27.

Priorities in regards to money:

- Following the Lord, not money, must be your priority. The rich young ruler: Matthew 19:16-22; Luke 18:18-27.
- God's house should be a house of prayer, not merchandizing: Mark 11:15-17; John 2:13-16.
- Your eternal destiny is more important than amassed riches. The rich fool: Luke 12:13-21 and the rich man and Lazarus: Luke 16:19-31.
- Seek first God's kingdom, and all other things will be added to you: Luke 12:31.

Riches--their danger:

- It is difficult for rich people to be saved when they trust in their wealth: Matthew 19:23-26; Mark 10:23-27.
- You should guard against the deceitfulness of riches: Mark 4:19.

Stewardship:

- If you are not a good steward, what you have will be given to others: Matthew 21:33-41; Mark 12:1-9; Luke 19:11-26; 20:9-16.
- God has given you talents, spiritual gifts, and finances for which you will be held responsible when Jesus returns: Matthew 24:45-51; 25:14-30; Mark 13:34-37; Luke 14:42-48; 16:1-12.

Taxes:

- You should pay your taxes: Matthew 22:19-21; 17:24-26.
- Give to the government what is required and give to God what is His: Matthew 22:16-23; Luke 20:20-26.

Theft:

- Theft is a sin: Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21-23.
- You should not steal: Matthew 19:17-18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20.

Trust in God's provision:

- Do not worry about food, clothing, etc, because God will take care of you: Matthew 6:25-34; Luke 12:6-7; 22-31.

- Seek first God's Kingdom, and all else will be provided: Luke 12:31.
- Don't be limited by your own resources but trust in God's provision: Luke 22:35.

Work:

- When you do your work God's way, supernatural multiplication occurs: Luke 5:4-11;
John 21:1-6.

(See also "Tithes And Offerings" in this database. For detailed teaching regarding finances, obtain the Harvestime International Network publication entitled "*Divine Provision*" available at <http://www.harvestime.org>)

FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

DEFINITION: Forgiveness is the act of pardoning someone for an offense. Reconciliation is the ending of conflict between two or more people and the renewing of relationship. Included in the biblical concept of forgiveness is receiving forgiveness from God for sin, extending forgiveness to others, and forgiving ones' self. Forgiveness includes the releasing of grudges and bitterness over past offenses.

FACTS ABOUT FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION:

Forgiveness and reconciliation come through Jesus Christ. *"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).*

God promises forgiveness for your sin. When you confess your sins to God and repent, you are forgiven because He promises this in His Word (1 John 1:8-9). By repenting and accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for your sin, you are reconciled to God. You may not "feel" forgiven, but the Christian walk is by faith not by feeling. God promised, and He cannot lie (Numbers 23:19). Jesus said: ...*"whoever comes to me I will never drive away"* (John 6:37).

Broken relationships result in additional problems. Bitterness, grudges, resentment, anger, etc., all result from broken relationships. These negative emotions affect you mentally, physically, and spiritually. They are all sinful emotions that must be dealt with in order to receive and extend forgiveness.

The Bible teaches forgiveness. You need forgiveness from God and you are required to forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15). You also need to forgive yourself.

DEALING WITH FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION:

Be reconciled to God. A proper vertical relationship with God makes positive horizontal relationships with others possible. Confess your sins and ask God to forgive you. Read Psalm 51. You do not need to repeatedly ask forgiveness for a sin. Once you have confessed and asked forgiveness, God forgives and forgets (Isaiah 43:25). Remain reconciled to God by praying the model prayer, designed to be prayed daily, which includes "forgive our sins as we forgive others" (Matthew 6:12).

Repent of your unforgiveness. Repent of bitterness, anger, resentment, and holding grudges. These are all sin and must be dealt with as such.

Forgive others. You may not feel like it, but by an act of your will you must forgive others.

Follow the directives given in Matthew 18:15-19. Forgiveness is not:

- Justifying someone else's wrongs which they have done to you.
- Denying you were hurt in the first place.
- Accepting with resignation what was done to you.
- Waiting for time to heal the hurt. (It doesn't).

True forgiveness comes by:

-Recognizing what was done to you was wrong, the result of sinful men in a sinful world. It is not necessary to go back and relive the event mentally, but neither can you deal with it by denying it. Acknowledge what happened and how it affected you.

-Confessing the hurt to God and asking Him to heal you of the harmful emotions. You may never forget the facts of the incident, but what is needed is healing for the negative emotions relating to it.

-Asking God to help you forgive others, even as Christ forgives you. Recognize that God extends forgiveness to you as you forgive others: *"Forgive us our trespasses AS we forgive those who trespass against us."*

If others offend you again, forgive them again. Peter asked Christ how many times he was required to forgive someone. Jesus answered: *"I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times"* (Matthew 18:21-22). He was actually saying that your forgiveness must be unlimited.

Forgive yourself. Distinguish between true remorse and guilt and shame. You are right to feel remorse, but guilt and shame are not from God. Jesus bore your sins, your guilt, and your shame on the cross (Hebrews 12:2). You do not have to bear these things (1 John 3:20). If you have confessed your sin to God and sought forgiveness and reconciliation with others, then you must also forgive yourself. See yourself as God sees you, a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Here are some guidelines to help you forgive yourself.

-Acknowledge the sin that is causing your feelings of guilt. Confess your sin to God, and repent. Ask God to forgive your sin and heal your emotions.

-Recognize when God forgives, He forgets--He casts your sins as far as east from west (Psalm 103:12).

-Claim the promises of 1 John 1:8-9 and Romans 8:1.

-By an act of your own will, release yourself from condemnation. Control future thoughts by casting down "vain imaginations" of guilt and shame and "forgetting those things behind" (2 Corinthians 10:5 and Philippians 3:3).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION:

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. (Psalm 32:1)

Read David's prayer of repentance in Psalm 51.

For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You. (Psalm 86:5)

He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us after our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his lovingkindness toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:10-12)

Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins. (Proverbs 10:12)

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)

"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." (Isaiah 1:18)

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. (Isaiah 43:18)

"I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more." (Isaiah 43:25)

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:5-6)

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23-24)

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (Matthew 6:12)

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matthew 6:14-15)

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." (Matthew 18:21-22)

The parable about forgiveness in Matthew 18:23-35 illustrates how your forgiveness by God is related to forgiving others.

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. (Mark 11:25-26)

But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. (Luke 6:27-31)

Forgive, and you will be forgiven. (Luke 6:37)

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. (John 6:37)

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:34-35)

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. (Acts 3:19)

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin. (Romans 4:7-8)

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. (Romans 5:1)

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1)

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the

riches of God's grace. (Ephesians 1:7)

...by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. (Ephesians 2:15-18))

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:2-3)

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (Colossians 1:19-20)

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:13)

See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many (Hebrews 12:15)

And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4:8)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (1 John 1:8-10)

FRIENDSHIP

DEFINITION: Friendship is a relationship of mutual affection between two or more people. It is a strong bond that exceeds a mere association with someone.

FACTS ABOUT FRIENDSHIP:

The two greatest commands in the Bible, upon which all others depend, are concerned with relationships: *"Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments"* (Matthew 22:37-40). Amazingly, the whole message of the Word of God is summarized in these two commandments--your relationship with God and others!

There are three basic types of relationships.

-A mentor friendship: This is a relationship in which you are the mentor and you disciple a friend in God's Word and help them grow spiritually.

-A mentee friendship: In this relationship, you are the one being mentored by a godly friend who is helping you grow spiritually.

-A mutual friendship: Mutual friendships are when you are closely aligned with another person on the same spiritual level, and you minister to each other back and forth.

Do not be unequally yoked in friendship. The Bible says: *"Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character"* (1 Corinthians 15:33). We are warned not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers in any type of relationship (2 Corinthians 6:16).

Christian friendships are based on Jesus Christ. That mutually significant factor provides a sound foundation upon which to build a friendship. He is the one who ... *"...has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity"* (Ephesians 2:14-16, NKJV).

Christian friends love one another unconditionally. When difficult times come in the relationship, they continue to love and accept one another despite faults and differences: *"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity"* (Proverbs 17:17).

Romans 15:7 indicates that you are to accept others as Christ accepts you--unconditionally.

Christian friends love sacrificially. They are not selfish, rather they give freely of their time, energies, and abilities to their friends: *"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends"* (John 15:13). Jesus is the best example of a true Christian friend. His love

for you is sacrificial, never selfish. He demonstrated this not only through miracles of salvation, healing, and deliverance, but also by the humble service of washing the disciples' feet, and ultimately when He gave His life for you.

Christian friends do not use one another. Philippians 2:3 says, "*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.*" By placing your friend's needs before your own, you will gain a true friend.

Christian friends edify one another. "Edification" means to build another person up emotionally, spiritually, and physically. This is done by encouragement based upon God's Word (1 Timothy 5:11).

Christian friends are honest with one another. Proverbs 27:6 indicates that "*the wounds of a friend are faithful*"--meaning that even when your friend says something difficult to you that is true, yet painful, they are being a faithful friend. Christian friends can be honest and confront one another when necessary without fearing loss of relationship.

Christian friends respect confidences. You are free to share anything with your friend, knowing that it will be kept in confidence.

Christian friendships are mutually rewarding. If you feel used, abused, or even smothered in a friendship, something is wrong. Seek to correct it if possible. If not, back off on the relationship.

Christian friends respect boundaries. Christian friends will never come between you and God or you and your spouse. They will respect boundaries you set in regards to time spent together and will recognize your need to develop other relationships.

DEALING WITH FRIENDSHIP:

Pray about your relationships. Ask God to bring new friends into your life that will be in harmony with His will and purpose for your life. Ask God for a mentor and ask Him to send people that you can mentor as well. Ask the Lord to show you any negative relationships you

might need to sever--people who pull you down or back into the old life.

Frequent places where you can develop good friends. Excellent places to find friends is in Church, Bible studies, or prayer groups. If you develop a friend at a local bar, what kind of friend do you think it will be?

Take the initiative to make friends. The Bible says: *"A man who has friends must himself be friendly"* (Proverbs 18:24, NKJV).

Develop qualities in your life that foster good relationships. In Galatians 5:16-26 Paul contrasts the qualities of character that result in bad relationships with those that foster good relationships. Attitudes and actions that abort positive relationships are hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy. Positive relationships are supported by the Fruit of the Holy Spirit being manifested in your life: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Always remember--your friendship with God is most important. You cannot be a friend of the world and remain in intimate friendship with God. (James 4:4)

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT FRIENDSHIP:

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

A righteous man is cautious in friendship, but the way of the wicked leads them astray. (Proverbs 12:26)

He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm. (Proverbs 13:20)

A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends. (Proverbs 16:28)

He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. (Proverbs 17:9)

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. (Proverbs 17:17)

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:24)

Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared. (Proverbs 22:24-25)

Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. (Proverbs 27:6)

Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his

earnest counsel. Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you. (Proverbs 27:9-10)

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. (Ecclesiastes. 4:9-12)

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40)

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God (Romans 15:7)

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (1 Corinthians 6:14-18)

Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character. (1 Corinthians 15:33)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3)

And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God's friend." (James 2:23)

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. (James 4:4)

Do not be friends with:

-Gossips: Proverbs 20:19

-The bad tempered: Proverbs 22:24-25

-Those given to change: Proverbs 24:21-22

-Those given to drinking (addiction) and gluttony: Proverbs 23:20-21

-Liars, untrustworthy, and those who are inconsiderate: Proverbs 25:18-20

-Those given to violence: Proverbs 1:10-19

The types of friends to foster.

-Those who display wisdom: Proverbs 13:20

-Those who give wise counsel: Proverbs 27:9; 13:14

-Those who are comforting instead of dragging you down: Proverbs 17:17 Proverbs 18:24

Things to avoid in friendships.

-Repeating everything you hear: Proverbs 17:9; 26:20

-Senseless arguments: Proverbs 17:14; 26:21

-Overstaying your welcome: Proverbs 25:17

-Bad jokes at the expense of your friend: Proverbs 26:18-19

-Meddling in affairs that do not concern you: Proverbs 26:17

-Insincere flattery: Proverbs 27:14

Solving problems in friendships.

-Be slow to anger: Proverbs 16:7

-Be slow to respond: Proverbs 18:13

-Avoid quarreling: Proverbs 20:3

-Speak gently: Proverbs 15:1

-Speak briefly: Proverbs 10:29

-Be quick to show love: Proverbs 10:12

-When necessary, it is better to rebuke than to flatter: Proverbs 28:23.

The biblical emphasis on relationships is evident when we note the number of times the words "one another" occurs, particularly in Paul's letters. We are commanded to:

-love one another: John 13:35

-be devoted to one another: Romans 12:10

-honor others above yourself: Romans 12:10

-live in harmony with one another: Romans 12:16

-comfort one another: 1 Thessalonians 4:18

-encourage one another: Hebrews 3:13

-stir up one another to love and good works: Hebrews 10:24

-show hospitality to one another: 1 Peter 4:9

-employ the gifts of God for the benefit of one another: 1 Peter 4:10

-clothe yourself with humility towards one another: 1 Peter 5:5

-pray for one another: James 5:16

-confess your faults to one another: James 5:16

-speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs: Ephesians 5:19

-submit to one another: Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5

-consider others better than yourself: Philippians 2:3

-be concerned about the interests of others: Philippians 2:4

-bear with one another: Colossians 3:13

-teach one another: Colossians 3:16

-build up one another: Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11

-be likeminded towards one another: Romans 15:5

- accept one another unconditionally: Romans 15:7
- admonish one another: Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16
- care for one another: 1 Corinthians 12:25
- serve one another: Galatians 5:13
- bear one another's burdens: Galatians 6:2
- forgive one another: Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13
- be patient with one another: Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13
- be kind and compassionate to one another: Ephesians 4:32

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

DEFINITION: The fruit of the Holy Spirit refers to the nature of the Spirit revealed in the life of the believer, spiritual qualities which should be evident in the lives of all Christians.

FACTS ABOUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:

Spiritual Fruit comes through the Holy Spirit. It is the "Fruit of the Spirit", not the fruit of self-effort. Developing spiritual fruit is a continuing work of the Holy Spirit in your life as a believer to conform you to the image of Christ. Like fruit in the natural world, you must continue to cultivate it.

Spiritual Fruit is evidence of spiritual maturity. Like fruit in the natural world, spiritual fruit it is a product resulting from the process of life. It is Christian character that is manifested in both personal and social conduct and is the evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in your life. Just as fruit takes time to develop in the natural world, spiritual fruit also takes time to develop. It is the product of growth in the life of the Spirit.

Spiritual Fruit is singular. The word "fruit" is singular. It is not plural. Spiritual fruit can be understood by the natural example of grapes. A cluster of grapes has individual grapes on it, but it is one cluster. In the natural world, when grapes are picked from the vine they are picked in a cluster. This cluster of grapes is called the "fruit" [singular] of the vine. Spiritually, there is one cluster of fruit with many individual facets.

You are chosen to bear fruit. Jesus said: *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last" (John 15:16).*

Jesus placed great emphasis on fruit bearing. Read the parable of the vineyard that did not yield fruit (Luke 13:6-9) and the fig tree which had no fruit (Matthew 21:18-19).

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit consists of these qualities.

-Love, an emotion of deep affection, care, and concern, an unconditional giving of self to others.

-Joy, a quality of gladness, delight, and jubilation. Happiness depends on the world around you and your circumstances. Joy originates with the Spirit of God and is not dependent upon what is going on in the world or your outward circumstances.

-Peace, a condition of quiet, calm, tranquility, and harmony. Peace is the absence of strife, anxiety, and concern.

-Longsuffering is the quality of patience, the ability to cheerfully bear an unbearable situation and patiently endure.

-Gentleness is the quality of having a mild manner that is not severe, violent, or loud. It is a quiet and respectful kindness.

-Goodness, which is demonstrated through holiness and righteousness.

-Faith, a strong confidence in God which is manifested through a lifestyle of godly works.

-Meekness, which is controlled strength.

-Temperance, which is self-control, moderation in emotions, thoughts, and actions.

Developing the Fruit of the Spirit. Jesus used the term "fruit" of the Spirit as a natural parallel of a spiritual truth. Certain conditions are necessary to produce fruit in the natural world that are symbolic of things necessary for production of spiritual fruit. In the natural world, as well as the spiritual realm, specific conditions are necessary to assure growth. These include:

-Life: Just as life in the natural world comes through seed, life in the spiritual world came through the Seed of Jesus Christ (Genesis 3:15).

-Water: Water is necessary to produce fruit in the natural world and the water of the Holy Spirit is necessary to produce fruit in the spirit world. It quenches your spiritual thirst and brings spiritual growth (John 7:38-39 and Isaiah 44:3).

-Light: It is response to light that stimulates growth in the natural fruit bearing process. It is your response to the light of God's Word that produces the fruit of the Spirit (1 John 1:5-7).

-Air: Carbon dioxide is drawn in by a plant from the air which surrounds it and is necessary for growth and fruit production. The Word of God compares the Holy Spirit to air or wind (John 3:8). The "wind" of the Holy Spirit blowing across your life is much like the wind in the natural world. It scatters the seeds of the Word of God, separates the wheat from the chaff in your spiritual life, and fans the dying coals of your spiritual zeal to set you ablaze for God.

-Space: In Matthew 13 in the parable of the sower, competition for space choked out some plants. The believer who develops spiritual fruit will discover he must be set apart from the competition of the "weeds" of the world (Matthew 13:22; Romans 12:1-2).

-Roots: Roots are necessary to anchor and supply nutrients to the plant. Psalms chapter explains how to develop the root system in your spiritual life.

-Rest: Dormancy (rest) occupies a specific season in the natural growth cycle of plants. Dormancy is a period during which the plant may appear to be dead because there is no growth. Dormancy usually occurs right before a period of very rapid growth. One of the purposes of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is to bring spiritual rest and refreshing. This spiritual refreshing results in rapid growth of the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 28:11-12).

-Soil: Both in the natural and spiritual worlds, in order to produce fruit the ground must be properly prepared. In the parable of the sower in Matthew 13 it was the condition of the soil that affected the growth of the seed. Your heart is like soil in the natural world. If your heart is hard and filled with things of the world that choke out the Word of God, you will not bear spiritual fruit (Hosea 10:12).

-Death: Every time you plant a seed to produce fruit, it does not come to life unless it dies first (John 12:24; 1 Corinthians 15:36). Spiritual life depends on death to the things of the world. It requires death to sin, worldly desires, and pleasures. Death to the world results in the development of the fruit of Christ-likeness in your life.

-Attachment to the vine: In order to bear fruit in the natural world, a branch must be attached to the main plant. If the branch is broken off from the main, life-giving vine it will not bear fruit. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. In order to bear spiritual fruit we must maintain our relationship to Him (John 15:1-5).

-Pruning: Pruning is necessary in the natural world if a plant is to remain productive and bear fruit. When a farmer prunes a plant he cuts off the unproductive branches in order to make the plant produce more fruit. He removes everything which would hinder the growth of the plant. Pruning is also necessary in the spiritual world. Spiritual pruning is correction by God. The Bible also calls it chastisement. When God "prunes", He removes from your life everything which would hinder your spiritual growth. This process is necessary if you are to bear spiritual fruit (John 15:2).

-Climate: Climate is important in developing good fruit. In the natural world, many types of fruit are developed in environments that are specially controlled. They are grown in buildings called "hot houses" at specific temperatures. They are protected from the real environment of the outside world. If you take a "hot house" plant and move it outside, it will soon die because it has lived only in a controlled environment and it cannot withstand the environment of the real world. Spiritually speaking, we do not want "hot house" Christians who look good in controlled settings but wilt on contact with the real world. Spiritual fruit should be just as evident in your contacts with the world as in the controlled settings of Christian friends and the church.

DEALING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:

Analyze your life. Which manifestations of the Fruit of the Spirit are apparent? Which are lacking? Which need to be strengthened?

Rely on the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells within you. The Fruit of the Spirit does not develop through self-effort. It develops from the resident power of the Holy Spirit within you. The Holy Spirit works with you by convicting you when you violate scriptural principles that will impede your spiritual growth.

Provide the proper environment for spiritual growth. Review the conditions for developing spiritual fruit in the preceding section and make sure you are providing a proper environment for fruit-bearing.

Remember that fruit-bearing is a process. In the natural world as well as the spiritual world, fruit develops over time with proper care. Do not become discouraged if you don't always seem to manifest the spiritual qualities of the Holy Spirit in challenging situations. Ask God for forgiveness when you fail, and then ask Him to strengthen you in the areas in which you are weak.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:

He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. (Psalm 1:3)

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise (Proverbs 11:30)

Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. (Matthew 3:8)

Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. (Matthew 7:17-20)

"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit." (Matthew 12:33)

The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop. (Luke 8:14-15)

He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.'" (Luke 13:6-9)

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. (John 15:1-6)

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. (John 15:15-16)

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. (Galatians 5:16-26)

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. (Galatians 6:7-8)

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

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that confess his name (Hebrews 13:15)

(For further study obtain the Harvestime International Network course "*Ministry Of The Holy Spirit*" available at <http://www.harvestime.org>)

GENERATIONAL CURSES

DEFINITION: Generational curses are spiritual bondages or predispositions for sinful behaviors that are passed down from one generation to another.

FACTS ABOUT GENERATIONAL CURSES:

Natural heredity is a term used to describe how living organisms reproduce after their kind. It concerns the presence or absence of certain characteristics--physical, emotional, and personality traits that are passed biologically from one generation to another.

Spiritual heredity refers to spiritual blessings or curses that are passed from one generation to the next. Spiritual heredity--what you received spiritually from your ancestors--can be either positive or negative in your life. You may have had godly parents who gave you a good spiritual heritage, or you may have had unsaved parents who were hostile, angry, and addicted and passed some of these issues on to you.

Blessing and cursing are invisible forces of spiritual power which are transmitted by words (Proverbs 18:21). You can speak positive words of blessing over someone, or negative words of curses that cause despair, discouragement, and destruction in a person's life.

Generational curses are negative spiritual traits passed down from a previous generation. These are sinful spiritual strongholds that have controlled the attitudes and actions of your ancestors. In the natural world it is possible to have a propensity towards certain physical conditions--cancer, heart disease, diabetes, etc.--due to heredity. The same is true in the spiritual world. For example, if your ancestors were involved in the occult, you may have a predisposition to dabble in it also and you may be affected by it. Chronic sickness can be a generational curse passed down from your ancestors, as well as a tendency to use addictive substances. Children often repeat the sins of their parents.

You can initiate and pass on curses to following generations. Through your personal sin, you can erect spiritual strongholds that will be passed on to your children and succeeding generations.

Generational curses can be broken through the blood of Jesus. Galatians 3:13 says "*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."* Jesus not only redeemed you from sin when He died at Calvary, but He also redeemed you from every curse.

You can pass on spiritual blessings. Just as curses can be passed to succeeding generations, so can blessings. See Deuteronomy 5:8-10 and Psalm 103:17.

DEALING WITH GENERATIONAL CURSES:

Acknowledge known sin. Acknowledge your sin and take personal responsibility for any sinful practices in which you are engaged. Confess and repent of these sins (Ezekiel 18:20).

Identify generational curses. If you are struggling with issues passed down from your parents--and if your siblings also struggle in these areas--you most likely are living under a generational curse.

Break every curse in the name of Jesus. A stronghold is an area in your life where the enemy has established control. It may be a hold he has over your attitudes, behaviors, emotions, or your finances. Claim the power of the blood of Jesus and take authority over Satan in every area of your life. Pray a prayer of deliverance, binding the power of Satan and breaking any curses or generational spirits operating in your life. Here is a sample prayer: *"In the name of Jesus, I confess the sins and iniquities of my ancestors and declare that these strongholds have no hold over my life. In the name of Jesus, and by the power of His blood, I declare that every generational curse is broken over my life. I am no longer in bondage and I declare myself and future generations freed from bondages passed down by our ancestors."*

Refuse to engage in curse-causing behavior. Things like rebellion, negative emotions, witchcraft, the occult, addictive substances, and sexual sins all result in spiritual curses in your life. Reject such behaviors so that you do not erect spiritual strongholds and pass curses on to your descendants.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT GENERATIONAL CURSES:

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation." (Exodus 34:6-7)

The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation. (Numbers 14:18)

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments. (Deuteronomy 5:8-10)

But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children-- with those who keep his covenant and remember to

obey his precepts. (Psalm 103:17-18)

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.
(Proverbs 18:21)

In those days people will no longer say, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.' Instead, everyone will die for his own sin; whoever eats sour grapes--his own teeth will be set on edge. (Jeremiah 31:29-30)

You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the fathers' sins into the laps of their children after them. O great and powerful God, whose name is the Lord Almighty, great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve. (Jeremiah 32:18-19)

The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. (Ezekiel 18:20)

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:36)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written:
"Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." (Galatians 3:13)

(See also "Curses" in this database.)

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

DEFINITION: The word "spiritual" means "characterized or controlled by the Holy Spirit." A "gift" is something freely given from one person to another. A spiritual gift is a supernatural ability given by the Holy Spirit to a believer for the purpose of service in the Body of Christ.

FACTS ABOUT GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

There is a difference between the "gift" and "gifts" of the Holy Spirit. The "gift" was given at Pentecost (Acts 2) when the Holy Spirit was given in answer to the promise of Jesus: *"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter...Even the Spirit of truth..."(John 14:16-17a)*. "Gifts" are supernatural abilities given by the Holy Spirit to enable effective ministry, and are distributed to each believer as the Holy Spirit wills.

There is a difference between spiritual gifts and natural talents. A talent is a natural ability inherited at birth or developed through training. A spiritual gift is a supernatural ability given by the Holy Spirit to be used for specific spiritual purposes.

The purposes of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are listed in Ephesians 4:12-15. The purposes are to perfect the saints, promote the work of the ministry, and edify Christ and the Church. The goals of these spiritual gifts are that we will become united in the faith, develop our knowledge of Christ, develop in perfection, with Christ as our model, become stable, not be deceived by false doctrines, and mature spiritually in Christ.

There are many gifts which come from one source. The source of spiritual gifts is the Holy Spirit who gives and operates these gifts in the lives of believers (1 Corinthians 12:4-7).

Each believer has at least one spiritual gift. *"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10)*. See also 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11.

You are only a steward of your spiritual gifts. A steward does not own that with which he works. He uses something given to him in behalf of the person who gave it to him. You are a steward of your spiritual gifts to be used for the advancement of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 4:1).

The key to using spirit gifts is love. See 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

A spiritual gift can be abused. You abuse spiritual gifts by not using the gifts given to you (1 Timothy 4:14, 2 Timothy 1:6); attempting to use gifts not given to you (Acts 8:20-21; 19:15-16); and not using gifts properly (1 Corinthians 14:33,40).

The main passages identifying spiritual gifts are Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Ephesians 4:1-16; and 1 Peter 4:7-11.

Spiritual gifts include the following.

-Leadership gifts.

Apostle. An apostle is one who has a special ability to develop new churches in different places and cultures and to oversee a number of churches as a supervisor. Apostle means "a delegate, one sent with full power and authority to act for another."

Prophet. Prophecy is the ability to receive and communicate an immediate message from God to His people through a divinely-anointed utterance. A prophet is one who is in a leadership position in addition to his gift of prophesying.

Evangelist. An evangelist has a special ability to share the Gospel with non-believers in a way that men and women respond and become responsible members of the Body of Christ.

Pastor. Pastors are leaders who assume long-term responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.

Teachers are believers who have the ability to communicate the Word of God effectively in such a way that others learn and apply what is taught. As a leadership gift, they also assume a leadership role in addition to teaching.

-Speaking gifts.

Prophecy is speaking by the special inspiration of God to communicate an immediate message to His people.

Teaching communicates the Word of God in a way that others can learn and apply what is taught.

Exhortation is the ability to draw close to individuals in time of need, counseling them correctly with the Word of God. To "exhort" means to call a person aside, to advise, recommend, admonish, encourage, or comfort.

Word of knowledge is the ability to understand things which others cannot comprehend and to share this knowledge with them under the inspiration of the Spirit.

Word of wisdom is the ability to receive insight as to how knowledge may be applied to specific needs.

-Serving gifts.

Discerning of spirits is the ability to evaluate people, doctrines, and situations as to whether they are of God or of Satan.

Leadership is the ability to make plans in accord with God's purpose and to communicate these goals to others. A person with this gift motivates others to accomplish these goals for the glory of God.

Administration. A person with the gift of administration has the ability to give direction, organize, and make decisions on behalf of others.

Faith is a special ability to believe with supernatural confidence and trust God in difficult circumstances.

Giving. A person with the gift of giving has a special ability to give material goods and financial resources to the work of the Lord. The gift of giving also includes giving time, strength, and talents to the work of the Lord. All Christians are to give to the work of the Lord, but the gift of giving is a special ability given to give above and beyond the average believer.

Helps. A person with the gift of helps assists others in their work for the Lord.

Serving is an ability to assume routine but necessary duties to free others to fulfill their giftedness.

Mercy is the ability to show special compassion on those suffering and help them

Hospitality is a special ability to provide food, lodging, and care for those in need.

-Sign gifts.

Miracles. Through a person with the gift of miracles God performs powerful acts which are beyond the possibility of occurring naturally.

Healing. A believer with the gifts of healing has the ability to let God's power flow through him to restore health apart from the use of natural methods. All believers can pray for the sick, but a believer with a healing gift is used specifically and consistently by God in this area of ministry.

Tongues is the ability to receive and communicate a message of God to His people through a language unknown to listeners, a message which is subsequently interpreted by someone with the gift of interpretation.

Interpretation of tongues is the ability to make known in a language understood by listeners a message from God given through one with the gifts of tongues.

DEALING WITH GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

Become a believer. You must be a believer in order to receive a spiritual gift. If you do not know Jesus Christ as Savior, confess your sins, repent, and accept Him into your life.

Receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. See "Baptisms" in this database for guidelines to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Pray for spiritual gifts. The Apostle Paul said to desire spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31). Ask the Holy Spirit to manifest in your life the gifts necessary for you to minister effectively in the realm of your spiritual calling.

Have church elders lay hands on you to bestow and confirm your gifts. They did this for Timothy, a young minister in New Testament times (2 Timothy 1:6).

Use your spiritual gifts. God has given you spiritual gifts and expects you to use what you have been given. Read the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong--that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. (Romans 1:11-12)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is his good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. (Romans 12:1-8)

Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. (1 Corinthians 1:7-9)

Read 1 Corinthians chapter 12.

Read 1 Corinthians chapter 14.

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Ephesians 4:7-16)

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. (2 Timothy 1:6)

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:7-11)

(See also the verses in the topic "Baptisms" in this database. For a detailed study of the gifts of the Spirit obtain the Harvestime International Network publication entitled *"The Ministry Of The Holy Spirit"* available at <http://www.harvestime.org>)

GOD'S WILL **(Guidance And Decision-Making)**

DEFINITION: In Greek there are two terms used for the word "will" in reference to the will of God. One word is "boulema," which refers to God's sovereign will. This is His predetermined plan for everything that happens in the universe. This type of "God's will" is fulfilled regardless of decisions made by man. The "boulema" will of God is written in His Word. There is no need to seek this will of God because it is revealed in the Bible. The other word "thelema" refers to God's desire for man to experience and live in His will. It refers to His individual plan for each believer. You have the power to choose whether or not you will walk in the "thelema" or individual will of God for your life. It is this "thelema" will, or God's will for you as an individual, to which we refer when we speak of seeking God's will.

FACTS ABOUT GOD'S WILL:

Seeking God's will for your life assumes several things. That you acknowledge there is a God, that He communicates with man, that you can recognize His voice, and that He has something to say. All of these are true according to the revelation in God's Word. It also assumes you have received Christ as Savior and are a believer (John 10:27).

Never seek guidance through the occult--witchcraft, tarot cards, tea leaves, fortune telling, horoscopes, etc. These are all satanic methods of guidance.

Do not use methods of chance to determine God's will. These include casting lots or fleeces. These methods were only used prior to the giving of the Holy Spirit in a new dimension where He came to live within believers (Acts 2). A fleece is only mentioned once in the Bible. It was used by Gideon at a time of great national crisis and was for confirmation of God's will, not for direction. Casting lots was a method similar to rolling dice to make a decision. These methods of guidance were never again mentioned after the giving of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2.

Every voice you hear is not God's voice. The Bible reveals that Satan speaks (Genesis 3). He lies, deceives, and attempts to lead you away from God. Satan even spoke to Jesus (Matthew 4:1-13). Evil spirits have voices (Acts 8:7; Luke 4:33-34). There are also the voice of self--examples of which are found in Luke 16:3 and 18:4 and in Jonah 4:8--and the voices of others who would give you advice. Then there is the voice of God, the voice that as a believer, you want to hear and follow.

God speaks through both the written and revealed Word. The first is called the "logos" Word of God. The second is called the "Rhema" word. The "logos" or written Word always agrees with the "rhema" or spoken, life-giving Word. A "rhema" Word from God usually applies to a specific situation, meets a personal need, and provides individual guidance. A "rhema" Word may be communicated through a sermon or a verse from the Bible which suddenly strikes you with great meaning. It may be spoken to you by God through the use of spiritual gifts. It may also be spoken in your inner spirit by the Lord. God will never guide you through a "rhema" personal word from God to do anything that conflicts with His written Word.

God reveals His will through the written Word of God, through counselors, through circumstances, and through open and closed doors of opportunity. God also gives supernatural guidance through angels, miracles, dreams, visions, or prophetic words spoken into your life. God sometimes speaks with an audible voice, but most often He communicates through a voice in your spirit. One of the most important ministries of the Holy Spirit is to guide believers into God's will: *"When He, the Spirit of truth is come (the Holy Spirit), He will guide you into all truth. . . and He will show you things to come and He shall receive of mine (God's will) and show it to you"* (John 16:13-14, KJV).

DEALING WITH GOD'S WILL:

Immerse yourself in the Word of God. Many questions regarding guidance are answered in God's Word. For example, the question of whether or not a believer should marry an unbeliever is addressed clearly in 1 Corinthians 6:14. There is no need to seek additional guidance or pray about something that is already revealed in God's Word.

Pray for God's will to be done. Jesus prayed: *"...yet not my will, but yours be done"* (Luke 22:42). Make this your prayer also. Ask God to teach you to do His will and to lead you by His Spirit (Psalm 143:10). If you do not know God's will in a certain situation, allow the Holy Spirit to pray through you because He intercedes according to the will of God (Romans 8:26).

Seek Godly counsel. Never go to a secular counselor, as they do not offer advice based on God's Word. As a believer, you cannot find God's purposes and plans for your life through advice from someone who does not know God and His Word (Proverbs 12:15).

Fulfill God's will for each day. If you obey the Word of God and His direction for each day, someday you will look back over your lifetime and realize you have walked in His will for a lifetime.

Expect God to open and close doors of opportunity. The Apostle Paul experienced both closed and open doors of opportunity--and so will you (1 Corinthians 16:9; Acts 16:6). Step through the open doors and stop at the closed doors, recognizing that closed doors are also used to direct your life. Never try to open a door that God has closed.

Trust God to guide you even when you do not understand. *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight"* (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Use the Biblical keys for guidance given in Proverbs 34:5-6 and Romans 12:1-2.

Remember that the individual will of God for you will never conflict with the moral will of God revealed in His Word.

Ask these questions when making decisions regarding questionable practices--things not

mentioned in the Bible as being either right or wrong:

- Does it glorify God?
- What is your motivation for wanting to do this?
- Is it necessary?
- Does it promote spiritual growth?
- Is it an enslaving habit?
- Is it a compromise?
- Will it lead to temptation?
- Does it give the appearance of evil?
- Does it violate your conscience?
- How will it affect others?

Recognize that the peace of the Holy Spirit is your guide. For decisions not specifically dealt with by Biblical command, principle, or example, the peace of the Holy Spirit is your guide. When you make a decision regarding a questionable practice or life situation and you do not have peace in your spirit, continue to seek the Lord. Do not act until you have the peace of God confirming your choice.

Make wise decisions. Ask God for wisdom to make good decisions each day, and He will give it (James 1:5).

If you make a bad decision, do not give up in despair. Many people in the Bible strayed from the will of God but returned to fulfill their destinies: The prophet Jonah; the Apostle Peter; John Mark; and King David are some key examples. If this happens to you, admit your failure, repent, determine where you got off course, and correct your errors. Then seek God for new direction and act upon it.

Always remember that decisions determine destiny. Even your eternal destiny is determined by the decision you make regarding Jesus Christ.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT GOD'S WILL:

At the Lord's command they encamped, and at the Lord's command they set out. They obeyed the Lord's order, in accordance with his command through Moses. (Numbers 9:23)

Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies-- make straight your way before me. (Psalm 5:8)

He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. (Psalm 25:9)

Teach me your way, O Lord; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. (Psalm 27:11)

Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me. (Psalm 31:3)

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over

you. (Psalm 32:8)

Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: (Psalm 37:5)

If the Lord delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand. (Psalm 37:23)

He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. (Psalm 40:2)

I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart. (Psalm 40:8)

Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. (Psalm 43:3)

For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end. (Psalm 48:14)

You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory. (Psalm 73:24, NKJV)

Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth. (Psalm 86:11)

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105)

Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me. (Psalm 119:133)

Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul. (Psalm 143:8)

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground. (Psalm 143:10)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure. (Proverbs 11:14)

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise. (Proverbs 12:15, NKJV)

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed. (Proverbs 16:3)

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, But the Lord weighs the hearts. (Proverbs 21:2, NKJV)

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." (Isaiah 30:21)

And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. (Isaiah 42:16)

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 58:11)

I know, O Lord, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps. (Jeremiah 10:23)

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 7:21)

Who are my mother and my brothers? he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother. (Mark 3:33-35)

Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done. (Luke 22:42)

For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. (John 6:38)

If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. (John 7:17)

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. (John 10:27-28)

When He, the Spirit of truth is come (the Holy Spirit), He will guide you into all truth. . . and He will show you things to come and He shall receive of mine (God's will) and show it to you. (John 16:13-14, KJV)

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. (Romans 8:26-27)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to

the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:26)

And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. (Ephesians 1:9-10)

Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. (Ephesians 5:17)

Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. (Philippians 2:12-13)

We have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. (Colossians 1:9)

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" (Hebrews 3:7-1, NKJV)

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. (Hebrews 10:36)

May the God of peace ... equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. (James 1:5-8)

The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:17)

(For a detailed study regarding scriptural guidance, obtain the Harvestime International Network course entitled "*Knowing God's Voice*" available at <http://www.harvestime.org>)

GOSSIP

DEFINITION: Gossip is sharing private information with those who are not part of the circumstances, problem, or solution. It includes idle talk, spreading rumors, or outright slander about someone.

FACTS ABOUT GOSSIP:

Gossip is not limited to spreading information. It includes improper involvement in another person's affairs--what the Bible calls busybodies (1 Timothy 5:13). Gossip is spreading rumors and making false accusations about someone, and it causes division and confusion.

Gossip is sin. The Bible commands: *"You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:16, NKJV).*

Associating with a person who gossips is sin. The Bible says: *"He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; therefore associate not with him who talks too freely" (Proverbs 20:19, AMP)*

Your tongue is unruly. It is compared to a fire (James 3:5); a burning fire (Proverbs 16:27); a world of iniquity (James 3:6); a beast that needs taming (James 3:7-8); a fountain of either fresh or bitter water (James 3:11); a tree bearing either good or evil fruit (James 3:12); an unruly evil (James 3:8); deadly poison (James 3:8); a sharp razor (Psalms 52:2); a sharp sword (Psalms 57:4; 59:7); a poisonous serpent (Psalms 140:3); a deep pit (Proverbs 22:14).

DEALING WITH GOSSIP:

Repent of the sin of gossip. Whether you have been spreading gossip or listening to it, ask God to forgive you.

Ask God to set a watch before your mouth. Pray the prayer of the psalmist: *"Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3).*

Ask forgiveness of anyone whose reputation has been harmed by the gossip you have spread.

In the future, before speaking, ask these questions:

- Will what I am about to say bring glory to God?
- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?
- Will it edify others?
- Have I talked to the person I am talking about?
- Is what I am saying a fact that needs to be shared or is it based on rumors and does not need to be said?
- Is it absolutely necessary that I share this?

Separate yourself from those who gossip. *"Stay away from a foolish man, for you will not find knowledge on his lips" (Proverbs 14:7).* Do not hang out with them and allow them to pour their tidbits of gossip into your spirit. *"A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much" (Proverbs 20:19).* The Bible says to warn a divisive person, then separate from them if they do not listen (Titus 3:10-11).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT GOSSIP:

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. (Exodus 20:16)

Do not spread false reports. Do not help a wicked man by being a malicious witness. (Exodus 23:1)

Do not go about spreading slander among your people. (Leviticus 19:16)

Not a word from their mouth can be trusted; their heart is filled with destruction. Their throat is an open grave; with their tongue they speak deceit. (Psalm 5:9)

Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (Proverbs 12:18)

The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly. (Proverbs 15:2)

A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends. (Proverbs 16:28)

He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. (Proverbs 17:9)

A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered.

Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue. (Proverbs 17:27-28)

The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts. (Proverbs 18:8)

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer. (Psalms 19:14, KJV)

He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets; Therefore company not with him that openeth wide his lips. (Proverbs 20:19 NAS)

Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. (Psalms 34:13)

I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. (Psalms 39:1, KJV)

My enemies say of me in malice, "When will he die and his name perish?" Whenever one comes to see me, he speaks falsely, while his heart gathers slander; then he goes out and spreads it abroad. (Psalm 41:5-6)

You love every harmful word, Oh you deceitful tongue! (Psalm 52:4)

Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret, him will I put to silence. (Psalm 101:5)

Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips. (Psalm 141:3)

Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. (Proverbs 4:24)

Hear; For I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. (Proverbs 8:6-8, KJV)

...Whoever spreads slander is a fool. (Proverbs 10:18)

With his mouth the godless destroys his neighbor, but through knowledge the righteous escape. (Proverbs 11:9)

A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret. (Proverbs 11:13)

A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends. (Proverbs 16:28)

A wicked man listens to evil lips; a liar pays attention to malicious tongue. (Proverbs 17:4)

He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. (Proverbs 17:9)

A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much. (Proverbs 20:19)

The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts. (Proverbs 18:8)

The mouth of the wicked gulps down evil. (Proverbs 19:28)

A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much. (Proverbs 20:19)

Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down. (Proverbs 26:20)

Do not let your mouth lead you into sin...(Ecclesiastes 5:6)

Do not pay attention to every word people say. (Ecclesiastes 7:21)

Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaks with deceit. With his mouth each speaks cordially to his neighbor, but in his heart he sets a trap for him. (Jeremiah 9:8)

Men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.

For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matthew 12:36-37)

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1:29-30)

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things (Romans 2:1)

The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. (Romans 3:13-14)

For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults. (2 Corinthians 12:20, NKJV)

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. (Ephesians 4:29, KJV)

Let all...evil speaking be put away from you...(Ephesians 4:31, KJV)

But now also put off...filthy communication out of your mouth. (Colossians 3:8, NKJV)

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17)

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. (1 Timothy 5:13)

Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men. (Titus 3:1-2)

Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. (Titus 3:10-11)

Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you--who are you to judge your neighbor? (James 4:11)

...be holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, be holy; for I am holy. (1 Peter 1:15-16)

Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. (1 Peter 3:10)

(See also the topic of "Communication" in this database.)

GREED

DEFINITION: Greed is an overwhelming desire to have more of something than is actually needed, especially in regards to possessions and wealth.

FACTS ABOUT GREED:

Money is not evil. It is the love of money and the greed associated with it that is evil. (1 Timothy 6:10). You are commanded to keep your life free from the love of money (Hebrews 13:5).

Greed is a trait of the ungodly. In Romans 1:29-30, the Apostle Paul describes characteristics of ungodly people. Greed is listed as one of the traits.

Greed enslaves a person. Jesus said you cannot serve God and money. You must choose one or the other as the master you will serve (Matthew 6:24).

Greed causes division. Arguments, contention, and division all arise from evil, selfish, greedy desires (James 4:1-3).

Greed affects your prayer life. The Bible says you do not receive if you ask for greedy, selfish motives (James 4:1-3).

One qualification for church leadership is that a person should not be greedy (1 Timothy 3:3, 8).

Greed is a sign that you love the world. The Bible commands you not to love the world, nor the things that are in the world--including money and possessions (1 John 2:15-16).

DEALING WITH GREED:

Ask God to forgive your greed. Repent of your love of money, your desire to have more and more material things, and of coveting the possessions of others.

Learn to be content with what you have. Paul told Timothy that godliness with contentment was great gain (1 Timothy 6:4-10). Jesus told the soldiers to be content with their wages (Luke 3:14). Paul said he had learned to be content--confirming that contentment is a learned behavior (Philippians 4:11). Hebrews 13:5 says to be content with what you have.

Focus on eternal rather than material things. The psalmist said that he focused on the Word of God instead of selfish gain (Psalm 119:36).

Practice giving instead of hoarding. Make it a habit to give of your resources--both possessions

and money--to those who are less fortunate. A good practice is that when you get something new--like a new dress or suit--give one you have away to others. This practice will help you guard against greed and selfish hording.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT GREED:

In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises. He boasts of the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the Lord. (Psalm 10:2-3)

Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. (Psalm 119:36)

A greedy man brings trouble to his family. (Proverbs 15:27)

He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich--both come to poverty. (Proverbs 22:16)

Death and Destruction are never satisfied, and neither are the eyes of man. (Proverbs 27:20)

A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he who trusts the Lord will prosper. (Proverbs 28:25)

Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind. (Ecclesiastes 4:6)

As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owner except to feast his eyes on them? (Ecclesiastes 5:11)

Naked a man comes from his mother's womb, and as he comes, so he departs. He takes nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hand. (Ecclesiastes 5:15)

All man's efforts are for his mouth, yet his appetite is never satisfied. (Ecclesiastes 6:7)

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. (Matthew 6:24)

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:31-33)

Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely--be content with your pay." (Luke 3:14)

Watch out! Be on guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. (Luke 12:15)

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1:29-30)

Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:11-12)

...he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself. Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (1 Timothy 6:4-10, NKJV)

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4:1-3)

Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you. (James 5:1-6)

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and

its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15-16)

(See also "Covetousness" and "Envy And Jealousy" in this database.)

GRIEF **(Bereavement And Sorrow)**

DEFINITIONS: Grief is intense emotional suffering caused by personal loss or tragedies of life. Bereavement is sorrow caused by the loss of a loved one.

FACTS ABOUT GRIEF:

Bereavement is part of life. The Bible says that it is appointed to man to die (Hebrews 9:27). Even the great prophet Elisha--who did many miracles of healing--finally became sick and died (2 Kings 13:14). Bereavement, tragedies, and other losses are part of life. You will experience them if you live very long in this world. You need not fear death, because Jesus conquered it through His own death and resurrection (Hebrews 2:14-15). As a believer, you have eternal life.

God never intended grief, bereavement, and sorrow. These all came into the world because of the original sin of Adam and Eve in the garden (Acts 3). All the losses you experience are due to sin--not necessarily your personal sin--but because of the presence of sin in the world.

Psychologists have identified stages of grief over loss to include the initial shock of a grief-causing event; emotional release through weeping; feelings of regret that one should have done more or done something differently; anger because of the loss; and a period of inertia when one doesn't care to go on or think they can do so. Psychologists say that the grieving period varies. It is longer for some, shorter for others.

But the Bible says that Jesus bore your grief and sorrow. It may be normal for you to experience the stages of grief, but it is not really necessary. The Bible says Jesus was not only familiar--acquainted with grief--but that He bore your grief and sorrow (Isaiah 53:3-5). Jesus bore your sin so that you no longer have to bear it. If He also bore your grief and sorrow, why are you bearing it? Yes--there is a time to mourn over losses, but extended grief is different than experiencing sorrow from a loss. The Bible says you are blessed if you mourn--not because you remain sad, but because the Holy Spirit comforts you: "*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted*" (Matthew 5:4). Jesus carried both your grief and sorrow so that you do not have to do so. He wants to give you the garment of praise for the spirit of mourning (Isaiah 61:3).

Unrequited grief and sorrow manifests in different ways. Unrequited grief can affect you physically, mentally, and spiritually. If you do not cast your grief on Jesus, it may lead to anger, withdrawal, depression, etc.

Grief and sorrow can obscure your recognition of God's presence. We are sometimes blinded spiritually by our sorrow and preoccupied by grief and despair. Mary did not recognize Jesus at the tomb because of her intense grief. Jacob cried out in grief: "*All these things are against me*" (Genesis 42:36), not realizing every sorrow he experienced was leading him to a glorious destiny. God still comes to you in the garden of your sorrows. There are angels in the tomb--the graves of your lost dream, your lost loved one, the sorrow your disappointments. Grief and sorrow over failed ambitions, bad health, fleeting youth, negative circumstances--all of

these can obscure your recognition of God's presence.

Errant spiritual decisions cause grief and sorrow. The rich young man who refused to put all he had into the hands of Jesus went away "sorrowing" (Mark 10:22). Sometimes the root of unrequited grief and sorrow is spiritual--a refusal to surrender some aspect of our lives, abilities, possessions, family, friends, or losses into the hands of the Lord.

The loss of a child is particularly devastating. Although we cannot know why a child died, we know that children are precious to God (Matthew 19:14). We also know that they go immediately into the presence of the Lord and that, as believers, we will be reunited with them again someday. When King David's son died, he declared "...I shall go to him.." (2 Samuel 12:23).

DEALING WITH GRIEF:

Do not try to find reasons for your losses. This was the original sin--wanting to know. Eve wanted to become as God and know all things (Genesis 3). The reasons for some things will be revealed, others will not. You must learn that the secret things belong to the Lord (Deuteronomy 29:29).

Ignore clichés about death, sorrow, and grief. For example: "God needed another angel in Heaven"--which is not only inaccurate, but not at all comforting to the one who lost a loved one. Or "Maybe God took him because he might have not continued to follow the Lord"--again, not comforting and casts aspersions on a loved one's spiritual experience.

Release your feelings to God. If you feel guilty because you did something wrong or could have done something more for a loved one, confess it to God, ask forgiveness. If feelings of guilt try to manifest again, reject them in the name of the Lord. Believe that you did the best possible given your mental, emotional, and spiritual state during difficult times. If you are angry about a loss, confess it to God. Ask God to heal your emotions. Know that the feelings you are experiencing are common in times of loss, but that it is not necessary for you to continue suffering from these because God is able to heal them.

Call upon the Comforter. One of the purposes of the Holy Spirit is to comfort in times of grief and sorrow. When you are overwhelmed with grief, call upon the Holy Spirit to come and fulfill His purpose of supernatural comfort (John 14:6). As a believer, the Comforter is resident within you. He is always available in your times of need. You are not alone. The Lord is near those whose hearts are broken (Psalm 34:18).

Focus on eternal things. As a believer, you have the hope of the resurrection and of seeing your lost loved ones again (John 11:25-26). The words in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 are supernaturally charged to bring you comfort. For a believer, death is not final. It is a new beginning. Your soul and spirit will go to be with God until Jesus returns. Focus on God, eternity, and the promises in the Word of God. Place your hope in God (Psalm 43:5).

Know that all things are working together for your good. God takes all things--even the bad

things, the losses, and sorrows--and weaves them together for good in the fabric of your life (Romans 8:28).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT GRIEF:

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever... (Deuteronomy 29:29)

Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)

You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. (Psalm 30:11-12)

Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. (Psalm 31:9)

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. (Psalm 34:18)

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (Psalm 43:5)

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. (Psalm 116:15)

My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word. (Psalm 119:28)

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (Psalm 147:3)

A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit. (Proverbs 15:13)

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. (Proverbs 17:22)

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die ... a time to weep and a time to laugh ... a time to mourn and a time to dance... (Ecclesiastes 3:1-4)

Death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart. (Ecclesiastes 7:2)

Sorrow is better than laughter, For by a sad countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, But the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. (Ecclesiastes 7:3-4, NKJV)

The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces. (Isaiah 25:8)

The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will

crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. (Isaiah 51:11)

He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:3-5)

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion--to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. (Isaiah 61:3)

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. (Matthew 5:4)

Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. (Luke 6:21)

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." (John 11:25-26)

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. 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 that you also may be where I am. (John 14:1-3)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. (John 14:16)

But the Counselor, 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 14:26-27)

I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. (John 16:20)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. (Romans 14:9)

Then the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality,

then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." (1 Corinthians 15:54)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. (2 Corinthians 5:1-9)

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. (Philippians 1:21-23)

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil---and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. (Hebrews 2:14-15)

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:27-28)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an

inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.(1 Peter 1:3-4)

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4)

(See also the topics of "Suffering" and "Death" in this database.)

GUILT

DEFINITION: Guilt is a feeling of wrongdoing, sinfulness, and a failure to measure up that arises from your conscience. It is the discernment and ability to evaluate your conduct in terms of what is right or wrong.

FACTS ABOUT GUILT:

There are two types of guilt. True guilt and false guilt. For a believer, true guilt results from breaking God's law and is a justified emotion. Sorrow, which arises from real guilt, leads to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10). False guilt--unmerited guilty feelings--occur because of unjustified accusations by Satan who brings up past sins that have already been forgiven by God.

True guilt results from sins of commission and omission. Sins of commission are wrong things you do. A sin of omission is when you know the right thing to do but do not do it (James 4:17).

True guilt is a positive emotion. Feelings of guilt over doing wrong lead you to repent and confess your sin. Godly sorrow--which is also called guilt--leads to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10).

False guilt is a tool of the enemy. Satan will bring up past sins and failures and try to instill false guilt. But the Bible declares that there is no condemnation to those in Christ who have received Jesus as Savior and had their sins forgiven (Romans 8:1).

Guilt results in negative physical and emotional reactions. Unrequited guilt affects your emotions, which ultimately causes stress which can lead to stress-related physical and mental conditions. It can cause you to be critical of and constantly blame others and gives rise to feelings of unworthiness and/or shame.

DEALING WITH GUILT:

Do not try to cover your sin. Adam tried to deal with guilt by blaming Eve. Eve tried to blame the serpent. You will not prosper by covering your sin (Proverbs 28:13). Confess your sin to God, ask forgiveness, and ask Him to remove the guilt you are feeling.

Reject false guilt. When Satan tries to cause guilt over your past sins, remember that these sins have been forgiven and forgotten by God (Psalm 103:12). Since God does not remember them, who are you to do so (Jeremiah 31:34)? Pray that God will give you a conscience that is clear before God and man (Acts 24:16). Immediately reject all attempts of the enemy to plague you with false guilt.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT GUILT:

Read how the Prophet Nathan confronted King David regarding the sin that resulted in his justified guilt (2 Samuel 11-12:25). Read how David dealt with his guilt in Psalm 51.

Forgive my hidden faults. (Psalm 19:12)

Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways. (Psalm 25:7)

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. (Psalm 32:1)

Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord" - and you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Psalm 32:5)

My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear. (Psalm 38:4)

I am troubled by my sin. (Psalm 38:18)

Save me from all my transgressions. (Psalm 39:8)

When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions. (Psalm 65:3)

If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness. (Psalm 130:3-4)

... as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:12)

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)

Though our sins be like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are as red as crimson, they shall be like wool. (Isaiah 1:18)

I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. (Isaiah 43:25)

I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you. (Isaiah 44:22)

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (Jeremiah 31:34)

It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners. (Mark 2:17)

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: (John 1:12)

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:36)

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

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? (Romans 6:1-2)

You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. (Romans 6:18)

I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:18-25)

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1-2)

...Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Romans 10:13)

You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. (2 Corinthians 7:10)

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the

riches of God's grace. (Ephesians 1:7)

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

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

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

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (1 John 1:8-10)

HABITS

DEFINITION: A habit is a routine behavior that is repeated regularly and tends to occur unconsciously. It is a fixed way of thinking, feeling, and acting.

FACTS ABOUT HABITS:

There are good and bad habits. All habits are not bad. Habits like a daily devotional time, prayer, and study of God's Word are good habits to foster. Bad habits are the problems for which you should seek change.

Some examples of bad habits are addictions, laziness, being critical, gossiping, selfishness, cursing, etc. For believers, bad habits are anything that turn you from God and lead you to respond in an unbiblical way.

Habits begin in the mind. Lust conceives the thought, the thought becomes an action, and the repeated action becomes a sinful habit (James 1:13-15). Guard your thoughts because they become words and actions, these become habits, and habits affect your character.

Bad habits become strongholds. Spiritually speaking, a stronghold is anything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). A stronghold is a spiritual point of operation from where Satan can attack you further. Strongholds include things like sinful attitudes and addictions as well as habits that enslave you and result in you doing what you don't want to do.

Habits can be changed. The Bible says: "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*" (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). Your spiritual weapons, described in Ephesians 6, have supernatural power to demolish strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

DEALING WITH HABITS:

Take personal responsibility for your bad habits. Do not blame someone else because they modeled or taught you such behavior.

Analyze the root cause of your bad habit. Why are you doing what you are doing? When did you develop this habit? For example, did you start smoking because everyone else was doing it? Discovering why you are doing something will help you conquer it.

Pray about your habits. Confess sinful habits to God, ask forgiveness, and claim His strength to help you overcome it (Philippians 4:13).

Put off old habits and replace them with new. For each bad habit, attitude, or behavior that the Bible admonishes you to put off, you are also admonished to "put on" good ones to replace them. This means you deliberately--by a decision of your mind--cultivate the opposite of your

negative behaviors. See Appendix Three of this database for behaviors the Bible mandates believers to put off and the new qualities that are to replace them. Focus on building good habits rather than eliminating the bad (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Renew your mind in the Word of God. Habitual behavior begins in the mind. It starts as a decision to act or think in a certain way. As you renew your mind with the Word of God, you will be transformed and break the power of bad habits (Romans 12:1-2).

Use the buddy system. If you are trying to break a bad habit like smoking or binge eating, find someone else who is wanting to eliminate the same habit and encourage one another in the process (James 5:16).

Conquer your bad habits in the strength of the Lord. Philippians 4:13 declares that you can do all things through the strength given by Jesus Christ. Hebrews 4:15-16 states that you will have help in times of need.

Develop positive spiritual habits. Habits like a daily devotional time, prayer, and study of God's Word are excellent habits to foster.

Use your spiritual weapons when Satan tempts you to resume old habits (Ephesians 6 and 2 Corinthians 10:4-5). These weapons have supernatural power to demolish strongholds. Submit yourself to God, resist the devil, and he will flee (James 4:7).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT HABITS:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16)

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away 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)

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (1 John 1:8-10)

HATRED

DEFINITION: Hatred is an intense emotional feeling of hostility towards an individual, a group, or an authority figure in your life.

FACTS ABOUT HATRED:

Hatred is often the root cause of negative emotions like anger, bitterness, rebellion, and hostility.

Hatred never operates in isolation. According to the Word of God, "*hatred stirs up strife*" (*Proverbs 10:12*). Hatred affects others around you because you become an angry and bitter person.

Hatred is multi-faceted. It affects you spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically. Many mental, emotional, and physical maladies have been linked to the negative emotion of hatred.

Hatred usually involves a refusal to forgive someone.

Hatred is sin. The Bible states that if you hate your brother, you are in spiritual darkness (1 John 2 :9). God compares hatred to murder (1 John 3:15).

You cannot love God and hate someone. The Bible declares: "*If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen"* (1 John 4:20).

DEALING WITH HATRED:

Confess hatred as sin. That is what it is, according to the Bible. Ask God to forgive you.

Forgive the one who offended you. You may need to confront the person and ask for or extend forgiveness. You must resolve the root causes behind your hatred.

Pray for your enemy and extend mercy. Luke 6:27-36 directs you to pray for your enemies, respond to their needs, and extend to them the same mercy that a merciful God has extended to you.

Keep your heart from hatred. Do not allow bitterness and unforgiveness to fester into hatred. "*Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life*" (*Proverbs 4:23, NKJV*) You "keep your heart" through prayer and study and application of God's Word.

Ask God to release love to replace the hatred. Study 1 Corinthians 13 and ask God to develop in your life the qualities of love listed there.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT HATRED:

Do not hate your brother in your heart. (Leviticus 19:17)

Do not drag me away with the wicked, with those who do evil, who speak cordially with their neighbors but harbor malice in their hearts. (Psalm 28:3)

Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs. (Proverbs 10:12)

You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:43-44)

But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:27-36)

If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. (Luke 17:3)

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. (Ephesians 4:31)

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

Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him. (1 John 2:9-11)

Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. (1 John 3:15)

If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother. (1 John 4:20-21)

HEALING

DEFINITION: Healing, as used in a biblical sense, refers to being made whole and restored spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically. It is also called divine healing because it is when the one true God reveals His nature, fulfills His promises, and acts upon His provision in the atonement of Christ by curing a person and making him whole in body, soul, and spirit.

FACTS ABOUT HEALING:

Sickness entered the world through sin. God never intended for the spiritual sickness of sin or emotional, mental, or physical illness to be part of our world. Sickness entered the world through sin (Genesis 3). Although God sometimes uses it as punishment on sinners (Deuteronomy 28:22-35), sickness is not a sign of personal sin. See the story of the man born blind in John 9.

Reasons for sickness. Although sickness entered the world through sin, not all sickness is caused by personal sin. Spiritual sickness is, of course, caused by sin and it is true that sometimes physical conditions result from sin. But sickness can also result from a violation of natural laws, i.e., improper diet, overworking, lack of exercise, abuse of drugs and alcohol, or even violating the natural law of gravity. Satanic attacks also result in sickness as in the case of Job (Job chapter 2). Some sickness is caused by demons. See the accounts in Matthew 12:22-23; Matthew 9:32-33; Mark 9:25; and Luke 13:11.

God views sickness as captivity (Job 42:10); bondage (Luke 13:16); and oppression (Acts 10:38).

Healing is a gift from God. The psalmist declared: *"Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits--who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases"* (Psalms 103:1-3).

All true healing comes from God, even when the gifts of natural or medical means are used.

Spiritual healing--salvation from sin--is the greatest healing. It addresses sinful behaviors that need to be corrected. Spiritual "sickness" is anything that adversely affects your spirit.

Emotional healing is the healing of damaged emotions. No wound is so deep that God cannot heal it. A wounded spirit is difficult to bear (Proverbs 18:13). This is why you need inner healing. Your spirit becomes wounded by sin (Psalm 38:4-6,8); by your enemies (Psalm 143:3-4,7); and through anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness. These attitudes must be dealt with in order to receive emotional healing.

Mental healing is a healing of your mind from hurts, actual brain damage, or wrong thinking. (See also "Mind And Thoughts" in this database.)

God has redeemed you from the curse of sin. This includes the curse of sickness that resulted from sin (Galatians 3:13). This does not mean you will never be sick, but it does mean that healing is available for every condition.

Healing is a benefit of the death of Jesus on the cross. The prophet Isaiah declared: *"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed"* (Isaiah 53:5).

Some believe that divine healings no longer occur, but the Bible says Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). As Jesus healed in Bible times, so He heals today. There are also many medically documented healings that have occurred after prayer to God.

Doctors and legitimate medicines are not in opposition to the Bible. Every good gift--such as doctors, legitimate medicines, and natural remedies--come from God (James 1:17). There is no conflict between divine healing and medical healing. Even when doctors and medications are used to facilitate healing, the ultimate healing is from God.

God heals all sickness and diseases--event those classified as incurable or terminal by medicine, because nothing is impossible to God (Luke 1:37).

All believers can minister healing. Jesus declared: *"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover"* (Mark 16:17-18).

Some believers have a special gift of healing. First Corinthians 12:9 speaks of those who have a special gift of ministering healing.

There is a sickness unto death; John 11:4 speaks of a sickness that was not unto death. Second Kings 13:14 speaks of a time when Elisha was sick of the illness of which he would die. As a believer, you should continue to pray for healing unless God reveals that it is a person's time to die. Sometimes a person will say, "I am ready and believe it is my time to go be with the Lord." If they have that assurance, then you need to help them prepare by setting things in order and being with them in death. Draw encouragement from 1 Corinthians 15:51-55; Psalm 116:15; 2 Corinthians 5:1-8.

Not everyone is healed immediately. Job was healed when he forgave his friends and prayed for them. Unforgiveness can block healing, as can personal sin. Sometimes a person does not receive healing because they don't believe in divine healing. Some people don't really want healing because they are using their illness as an excuse not to work or to draw government assistance. Jesus delayed ministering to Lazarus because He had a greater miracle planned. There are many variables involved in healing, and we cannot accurately judge why healing does not occur immediately. This is one of the secret things that belongs to the Lord (Deuteronomy 29:29). Not everyone who hears the gospel gets saved. Not everyone to whom healing is ministered receives healing.

The end result of sickness for a believer is that it is either for the glory of God through divine healing (John 9:3) or it is a sickness unto death to usher you into Christ's presence (2 Kings 13:14). As a believer, you will be either healed in time or eternity, but you will be healed.

DEALING WITH HEALING:

Determine the healing needed. Is it spiritual, emotional, mental, or physical or a combination of these? In order to be whole, each of these areas must be healed. For example, a person may ask for healing for a vision problem, but he may not know Jesus as Savior and his greater need is for spiritual healing.

Study what God's Word says about healing. This will increase your faith to receive and minister healing.

Eliminate any preconceived notions concerning healing. Doctrines such as "healing is not for today" must be eliminated in order to believe for healing. Just as one believes and confesses the Lord Jesus in order to be saved, one must believe and confess He heals in order to be healed.

Seek first the greatest miracle of spiritual healing. Healing from sin is vital to healing in the mental, emotional, and physical realms. If you do not know Christ as your Savior, you need a spiritual healing.

Determine if any conditions are caused by errant behavior. For example, smoking, drugs, and alcohol addictions can affect a person physically, emotionally, and mentally. The behaviors contributing to conditions in any area must be bound spiritual and revoked lest "*a worse thing come upon you*" (John 5:14).

Pray for healing. If the condition is caused by demons, pray for deliverance. If you need an emotional healing, confess your feelings to God and ask Him to heal your inner wounds. Bind Satanic influences over your mind if you need a mental deliverance. Pray for physical healing if you are sick. If you are in a Bible believing church, call for the elders to anoint and pray over you: "*Is any of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up*" (James 5:14-15).

Receive your healing by faith. Just as you received salvation by faith--with no immediate visible signs apparent--so you can receive healing by faith even if there are no immediate signs are apparent. Sometimes there are miraculous signs accompanying a healing. At other times, the healing occurs gradually. When you receive salvation, the outward changes in your life are apparent gradually, and the same is sometimes true in healing.

Act upon your healing. James 2:17 says that faith without action is dead. Do something you could not do before prayer. For example, if you could not bend over, bend over. If you have been under a doctor's care, return to your doctor to confirm your healing.

Maintain your healing. Stand in faith on the Word of God. Rather than believing your

symptoms, believe God's Word. Continue to stand on the promises of healing in God's Word. Commit yourself to total trust in God for healing. Change your lifestyle, if your former way of life contributed to your sickness. Resist the attempts by Satan to cause sickness to return.

Do not become discouraged if healing is not received immediately. Some healings in the Bible were instantaneous, others were delayed. Continue to pray for healing. Continue to build your faith in the Word of God. Where applicable, change your lifestyle and eliminate sinful and unhealthy practices. Claim the promises of God for healing.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT HEALING:

Old Testament

Genesis 17:18-19: God promised to heal Sara's barrenness.

Genesis 21:1-7: Sara's barrenness is healed.

Genesis 20:17: God healed Abimelech.

Exodus 4:1-18: Moses' leprous hand.

Exodus 15:25-26: God reveals His name as "Jehovah-Rapha" which means, "The Lord Your Physician." He promised that none of the diseases of Egypt would come upon Israel.

Exodus 23:25: God promised to take away sickness from among His people.

Leviticus 13:1-46; 14:1-32: Regulations regarding leprosy.

Leviticus 15:1-33: Health regulations.

Leviticus 16:29-30: Healing of sins.

Numbers 12:1-15: Leprosy of Miriam and Aaron.

Numbers 16:41-50: A plague affects Israel.

Numbers 21:4-9: Healing through the symbolic serpent of brass.

Deuteronomy 7:15: Obedience to God results in health.

Deuteronomy 28:1-68: Sickness results when you do not observe God's law.

Deuteronomy 29:22: The Lord lays sickness on the land.

Deuteronomy 30:20: God is life and length of days.

Deuteronomy 32:39: God wounds and heals.

Deuteronomy 7:15; 28:60: Diseases of Egypt.

Judges 13:2-24: Manoah's wife is healed by a "man of God."

1 Samuel 6:3: A trespass offering brought healing.

1 Samuel 16:14-23: An evil spirit troubles Saul.

1 Kings 5:23; 2 Chronicles 16:12: Diseases in the feet.

1 Kings 8:37-40: Plagues in the land.

1 Kings 13:4-6: A man with a withered hand.

1 Kings 17:17-24: Elijah raises a child from the dead.

2 Kings 1:2; 8:8-9: Shall I recover of this disease?

2 Kings 2:19-22: Healing of waters by Elisha.

2 Kings 4:8-37: Raising of the Shunamite's son.

2 Kings 5:1-14: The healing of Naaman.

2 Kings 13:14,21: Elisha is sick with a sickness unto death.

2 Kings 20:1-11: Hezekiah's illness.

2 Chronicles 6:26-31: Prayer of repentance and sickness.

2 Chronicles 7:14: "I will heal their land."
 2 Chronicles 16:12: A man with a serious disease does not seek God.
 2 Chronicles 20:9: God hears when you cry in affliction.
 2 Chronicles 21:12-30: An incurable disease of the bowels.
 2 Chronicles 24:25: Disease is called great.
 2 Chronicles 26:19: Uzziah's leprosy.
 2 Chronicles 30:20: Healing of people by Hezekiah's prayers.
 2 Chronicles 32:24-26: Hezekiah's illness.
 Job 1-2: These chapters reveal the sources of Job's problems, including his sickness.
 Job 5:18; 30:18: Job talks about His disease.
 Psalms 6:2-3: "O Lord heal me."
 Psalms 27:1: "The Lord is the strength of my life."
 Psalms 30:2: "I cried and you healed me."
 Psalms 32:3-5: Acknowledged sin results in healing.
 Psalms 34:19-20: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all."
 Psalms 38:3,7: Anger and sin affects your health; disease is called "loathsome."
 Psalms 41:1-8: "Heal my soul for I have sinned against thee." Disease is called evil.
 Psalms 42:11; 43:5: God is the health of your countenance.
 Psalms 42:1-5: Healing for a downcast spirit.
 Psalms 55:1-2: Persevering prayer and healing.
 Psalms 67:2: "That Your way may be known upon earth, Your saving healing among all nations."
 Psalms 72:13: You are to pity the weak.
 Psalms 91:9,10: "Neither shall any plague come nigh your dwelling."
 Psalms 103:1-5: "Forget not His benefits...Who heals all your diseases."
 Psalms 105:37: Israel came forth without one feeble person among them. Three million people were all well and strong.
 Psalms 107:17-20: "He sent His Word and healed them."
 Psalms 119:25-28: You are strengthened by the Word.
 Psalms 119:67: "Before I was afflicted, I went astray."
 Psalms 147:3: "Who heals all your diseases." Healing for a broken heart.
 Psalms 105:37: "He brought them forth...not one feeble among them."
 Proverbs 3:7-8: How to be healthy.
 Proverbs 4:20-23: The issues of life are affected by your heart attitude. God's promises are life to those that find them and health to all their flesh.
 Proverbs 12:18: The tongue of the wise brings healing.
 Proverbs 15:4,30: A wholesome tongue is life; good reports affect health.
 Proverbs 16:24: The Word of God brings healing to the bones.
 Proverbs 17:22: A broken spirit affects the bones.
 Ecclesiastes 3:3: There is a time to heal.
 Ecclesiastes 5:17: Sorrow and wrath are related to sickness.
 Isaiah 6:10: Understanding, conversion, healing.
 Isaiah 19:22: When God is entreated He heals.
 Isaiah 32:3-4: Healing is part of the Kingdom of God.
 Isaiah 33:24: Inhabitants shall say, "I am not sick."

Isaiah 35:5-6: Healing in the Millennium.
 Isaiah 38:1-12,16: Hezekiah's illness and his return to health.
 Isaiah 53:5: We are promised healing and deliverance through the atonement.
 Isaiah 57:18-19: Draw near for healing.
 Isaiah 58:8: Health shall spring forth.
 Isaiah 61:1: Jesus was sent to bind up the brokenhearted (emotional healing).
 Isaiah 58:8: Health springing forth speedily.
 Jeremiah 3:22: God heals backsliding when you return to Him.
 Jeremiah 8:14-15; 20-22: A time of healing. Bitterness of sin is tied to physical health.
 Jeremiah 15:18: How to deal with an incurable wound.
 Jeremiah 14:19: Is there no healing for us?
 Jeremiah 17:14: "Heal me and I will be healed."
 Jeremiah 30:12-17: God will restore health.
 Jeremiah 33:6: "I will cure them."
 Jeremiah 51:8-9: Healing of Babylon.
 Lamentations 2:13: "Who can heal you?"
 Lamentations 3:33: "God does not willingly afflict."
 Ezekiel 14:19: "Is there no healing for us?"
 Ezekiel 17:14: "Heal me and I will be healed."
 Ezekiel 30:17: "I will restore health."
 Ezekiel 30:12-13: Incurable wounds medicine cannot heal.
 Ezekiel 30:21: What God breaks cannot be healed.
 Ezekiel 33:6: "I will heal them."
 Ezekiel 34:4,16,21: A warning to shepherds who have not healed.
 Ezekiel 47:8-12: Healing of the waters.
 Daniel 4:34,36: Nebuchadnezzar's healing.
 Hosea 5:13: Man cannot cure a wound inflicted by God.
 Hosea 6:1: "He has torn and He will heal."
 Hosea 7:1: Healing for Israel.
 Hosea 11:3: "They knew not I healed them."
 Hosea 14:4: "I will heal their backslidings."
 Nahum 3:19: A terminal condition.
 Zechariah 11:16: A warning to shepherds who do not heal.
 Malachi 4:2: Healing in His wings.

New Testament

Matthew 8:13: The point of contact sets the time.
 Matthew 8:17: Jesus bore our sicknesses.
 Matthew 10:1: Power over sickness and demons is given to the disciples.
 Matthew 18:19-21: Any two agreeing receive what is asked.
 Mark 2:17: Christ came to heal sinners.
 Mark 3:15-17: Christ gives power to heal sicknesses.
 Mark 4:18-19: Healing is part of the anointing; Jesus was sent to heal.

 Mark 11:24: If you believe when you pray (not after you receive), you will receive.

Mark 16:18: In Jesus' name believers will heal sick and cast out demons.
Luke 5:31: The sick need a physician.
Luke 7:6: Unworthiness is viewed by Jesus as faith.
Luke 7:22-23: The most convincing argument is experience.
Luke 17:6: Small faith can bring great results.
Luke 18:7-8: Do not give up before your answer comes.
John 6:53-58: The body and blood of Jesus bring life.
John 10:10: Jesus came so that you can have life. Satan came to kill, steal, and destroy.
John 11:1-45: A sickness not healed immediately leads to a greater miracle.
John 14:12-13: The works Jesus did, you are to do.
John 15:7: The importance of abiding in Christ in relation to asking and receiving.
John 16:24: Ask in His name and you will receive.
Romans 2:4 The goodness of God leads to repentance.
2 Corinthians 4:16: Your outward man perishes, but your inward man can be renewed.
Ephesians 3:20-21: God has the power to work in you above all that you ask or think.
Philippians 2:25-27: The illness of Epaphroditus.
Colossians 4:14: Luke, a physician, was part of Paul's evangelistic team.
2 Timothy 4:20: Trophimus' illness.
Hebrews 4:15: He is touched with your infirmities.
Hebrews 11:1: Faith is the evidence of things (healing) not seen.
James 1:8: You must ask in faith and not waver.
James 1:17: Every good gift (healing, doctors, legitimate medicine) is from God.
James 5:14-15: Call the elders for anointing with oil, the prayer of faith, healing, and forgiveness.
1 Peter 2:24: You are healed by His wounds.
1 John 3:22: Whatever you ask you can receive if you are obedient.
3 John 1:2: Health is related to the condition of your soul.
Mark 7:36, 8:26; Matthew 8:4: Do not sensationalize healing.
Revelation 20:2-3: When Satan is bound, there is no more sickness and death.
Revelation 21:4: The final healing: No more sickness and death.

(For further biblical guidelines on healing, obtain the Harvestime International Network publication entitled "*Battle For The Body*" available at <http://www.harvestime.org>)

HOMOSEXUALITY

DEFINITION: Homosexuality is sexual attraction and sexual intimacy with the same sex--men with men, women with women. The term "homosexual" is used to denote men who engage in such practices, and the term "lesbian" is used for females. In some cultures homosexuals are also referred to as being "gay". Related terms are "transvestite"--one who wears clothing of the opposite sex for sexual gratification--and "transsexuals", people who claim to be of the opposite sex and sometimes seek surgery and hormone therapy in order to become so.

FACTS ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY:

Views about homosexuality. In the past, homosexuality was viewed by most people as being abnormal. In many nations now, the trend is towards acceptance. But the attitudes of people and society are not the important issue. What God says about homosexuality has not changed: *"Forever, O Lord. Your word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89, NKJV).*

Homosexuality is sin. Romans 1 explains how homosexuality develops. It is not learned behavior and you are not born that way, neither do you become that way because of your environment. We are all born with the basic sin nature, and homosexuality is one manifestation of sin. As with all sins, forgiveness from God must be sought by one engaging in such activities.

Homosexuality is classified as fornication in the Bible. Fornication is sexual intercourse between people who are not married according to the biblical definition of marriage--which is one man with one woman. Any form of sexual activity outside of marriage is considered fornication by the Bible. Homosexuality is just one of several sins that are called fornication.

Jesus condemned fornication. In Matthew 19:1-8, Jesus condemned any sinful sexual relationships outside of marriage--which includes homosexuality. The established order was to be one man married to and engaging in sex with one woman for life. Homosexuality is a departure from God's established order for the sexes.

The book of Jude condemns "strange flesh." It describes how certain men in the church had gone after "strange flesh", which means "another flesh with the same quality." A so-called "gay or homosexual church" is not part of the true church because they are not teaching and living by the mandates of God's Word.

A practicing homosexual who refuses to repent is not a Christian. If you are a practicing homosexual, you are sinning according to God's Word. As with any sin and other acts of fornication, a true believer can be tempted and drawn into this sin through his lust. But, as with all regressions into evil, you must seek forgiveness and extricate yourself immediately from the sinful lifestyle.

A person who claims to be bi-sexual--desiring and having relations with both men and women --is committing fornication according to the Word of God.

Homosexuality, as all sin, will be judged by God. The good news is that you can be forgiven and escape this judgment: *"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).*

You can be set free from homosexuality. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17, TLB)*

You can overcome homosexual temptation. *"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." (1 Corinthians 10:13).*

DEALING WITH HOMOSEXUALITY:

Do not reject a relative or friend if they are a practicing homosexual or lesbian. Continue to love and pray for them just as you would someone who is unsaved and bound by drugs, prostitution, or other immoral conduct. Condemn the sin, not the sinner. You must, however, take a firm scriptural stand when questioned.

If you are a homosexual or lesbian seeking help, the first step is to agree with what God says about it. It is sin. It is not learned behavior and you were not born that way.

Ask God for forgiveness. Homosexuality is sin, and as with any sin it must be confessed and forgiven. If you are not a born-again believer, accepting Christ as your Savior is the first step towards eliminating homosexuality. If you are a believer who has been tempted and/or committed homosexual acts, ask God for forgiveness (1 John 1:8-9).

Pray a prayer of deliverance. Ask God to deliver you from homosexuality and to restore a healthy, God-given sexual desire.

Do not associate with practicing homosexuals. Seek friends who are not involved in or sympathetic towards the homosexual lifestyle.

Do a spiritual housecleaning. If you have any music, videos, pictures, literature, or clothing that promotes homosexuality, get rid of it. If you are a member of a "gay" group, resign. Remove any homosexual sites from your Internet links.

Renew your mind and keep your new commitment through the Word of God, prayer, and affiliation with a Bible-believing church.

Know that you will be tempted again. Satan will return to tempt you, but you can be assured

on the basis of God's Word that... *"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."* (1 Corinthians 10:13). When Satan comes with temptation, take control of your mind immediately, submit yourself to God, rebuke Satan, and he will depart (James 4:7). Take the way of escape!

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY:

They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing." (Genesis 19:5-7)

Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable. (Leviticus 18:22)

If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable... (Leviticus 20:13)

For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths. (Proverbs 5:21)

The look on their faces testifies against them; they parade their sin like Sodom (a city that flaunted homosexuality); they do not hide it. Woe to them! They have brought disaster upon themselves. (Isaiah 3:9)

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. (Romans 1:26-27)

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:11-14, 22-23)

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. (1 Corinthians 6:13)

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:18-19)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17, TLB)

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. (Galatians 6:1)

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:1-5)

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. (Ephesians 5:3)

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8)

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (Hebrews 2:18)

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. (1 John 3:6)

HOPELESSNESS

DEFINITION: Hope is an optimistic attitude of anticipation and confidence based on expectations of positive outcomes in the circumstances of one's life, the future, and the world at large. Hopelessness is the loss of hope.

FACTS ABOUT HOPELESSNESS:

The Bible is the ultimate source of eternal hope. *"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15:4).*

What you think is a faith crisis may be a hope crisis. Hebrews 11:1 speaks of faith being the substance of hope. If you are hopeless, you have no substance for your faith and it is affected.

Some causes of hopelessness include associating with negative people, unanswered prayer, failure to control your thoughts, disappointment in other people, devastating circumstances, world conditions, and weariness from prolonged adversity.

How hope can be generated. Hope comes by making peace with God through Jesus, rejoicing in the hope of your eternal destination, and rejoicing despite sufferings: *"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (Romans 5:1-5).*

Hope is an anchor for your spiritual experience. Hebrews 6:19 refers to hope as an "anchor of the soul". As an anchor prevents a boat from drifting off course, hope will do likewise for you spiritually. Hope continually pulls you back to the ways of God. Hope is related to your heart condition because "hope deferred makes the heart sick" (Proverbs 13:12). Hope is related to your joy, in that you rejoice in hope (Romans 12:12). Hope is also related to your salvation, as you are saved by hope (Romans 8:24).

DEALING WITH HOPELESSNESS:

Ask God to renew your hope. *"Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord" (Psalm 31:24).*

Put your hope in God instead of man. Very often, hopelessness results when you have been disappointed by trusting in man instead of God. The Psalmist said: *"Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him" (Psalm 62:5).*

Spend time in God's Word. It is the source of eternal hope and your hope will be renewed as

you study and practice its mandates. The Word of God was given so that we, through the scriptures, might have hope (Romans 15:4).

Choose hope-filled associates. Do not maintain close relationships with people who are negative, despondent, and hopeless. You learn the ways of those with whom you associate (Proverbs 22:24).

Control your mind. Negative, uncontrolled thoughts often lead to hopelessness. See the topic of "Mind And Thoughts" in this database.

Encourage yourself in the Lord as the psalmist did (1 Samuel 30:6). He said: *"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God" (Psalm 42:5).*

Realize the purpose of tribulation is not to create hopelessness, rather it leads to developing hope: *"...we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (Romans 5:3-5).*

Start a gratitude journal where you record what God is doing for you and the things for which you are grateful. When you see how God is working in your life and all the things for which you can be thankful, your hope will be strengthened.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT HOPELESSNESS:

No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame. (Psalm 25:3)

You are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. (Psalm 25:5)

Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord. (Psalm 31:24)

May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you. (Psalm 33:22)

Those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land. (Psalm 37:9)

For you have been my hope, O Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth. (Psalm 39:7)

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (Psalm 42:5)

In your name I will hope, for your name is good. (Psalm 52:9)

Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. (Psalm 62:5)

But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you. (Psalms 71:5)

But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. (Psalm 71:14)

I have put my hope in your word. (Psalm 119:74)

Sustain me according to your promise, and I will live; do not let my hopes be dashed. (Psalm 119:116)

My soul faints with longing for your salvation, but I have put my hope in your word. (Psalm 119:81)

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life. (Proverbs 13:12).

Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him. (Lamentations 3:21-25);

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. (Romans 5:1-5)

But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. (Romans 8:24-25)

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. (Romans 12:12)

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (Romans 15:4)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. (2 Corinthians 3:12)

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. (Ephesians 1:18-19)

Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of

Christ. (Ephesians 2:12-13)

There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called--one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation--if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. (Colossians 1:21-23)

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-15)

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. (1 Thessalonians 2:16-17)

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

... so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:7)

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. (Hebrews 6:19)

Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses]. (Hebrews 11:1, AMP)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-5)

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1 Peter 1:13)

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. (1 Peter 3:15-16)

Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. (1 John 3:3)

HYPOCRISY

DEFINITION: Hypocrisy is the claim or pretense of holding standards, beliefs, qualities opinions, virtues, and behaviors that one does not actual possess. In a biblical sense, a hypocrite confesses and claims salvation and spiritual maturity when they are actually void of these qualities. Some versions of the Bible translate "hypocrite" as "godless person." A hypocrite is one who acts a false part, makes a false profession, and is a deceiver, imposter, and cheater.

FACTS ABOUT HYPOCRISY:

Hypocrisy is instigated by Satan. The Word describes Satan as a "liar," and that is exactly what hypocrites do: They lie and deceive. 1 Timothy 4:2 speaks of "deceiving spirits", and that is what operates in the lives of hypocrites.

Hypocrisy is sinful. Because lies and deceit are condemned by God, they are sinful.

There are hypocrites in every realm of life. Just as you would not judge all businessmen by one dishonest businessman, do not judge true believers by what you see in the life of a hypocrite.

Jesus taught against hypocrisy. He condemned the Pharisees, who were the religious leaders of the day, for their hypocrisy. See Matthew 6:2-6 and Matthew 23:13-32.

Hypocrites are legalists. First Timothy 4:3 states that hypocrites forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods. They demand of others what they, themselves, do not adhere to (Matthew 23:2-3).

Hypocrites are critical. Jesus described them as being concerned over a "speck of sawdust" in the eyes of others, while ignoring the "plank" in their own eyes (Matthew 7:3-5).

Their worship is in vain. Jesus said that hypocrites honor Him with their speech, but their hearts are far from Him, so their worship is in vain (Matthew 15:7-9).

Hypocrites look good on the outside. By outward appearances, you might think they are true believers, but they are not (Luke 11:39-44).

Hypocrites teach demonic doctrines. According to 1 Timothy 4:3, deceiving spirits and things taught by demons cause people to abandon the faith.

DEALING WITH HYPOCRISY:

Ask God to forgive you if you have been living a hypocritical life. Hypocrisy is sin, and as all sin, must be confessed and forgiven.

Study the Word of God. The Word is truth and will help you live in truth rather than by deceitful doctrines that foster hypocrisy.

Separate yourself from hypocrites. Do not make hypocrites your close friends because you become like those with whom you associate (Proverbs 22:24).

Do not sit under the teaching of hypocrites. If the life-style of your minister, teacher, or spiritual leader does not line up with their confession, do not continue to sit under their teaching. It is deceptive and will cause you to depart from the faith (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT HYPOCRISY:

For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he may gain much, if God takes away his life? (Job 27:8, NKJV)

The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor, But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered. (Proverbs 11:9, NKJV)

So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:2-6)

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:3-5)

You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men." (Matthew 15:7-9)

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. (Matthew 23:2-3)

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are. Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.' You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers! You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? (Matthew 23:13-32)

These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men. You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men. (Mark 7:6-8)

Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? But give what is inside [the dish] to the poor, and everything will be clean for you. Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all

other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have

practiced the latter without leaving the former undone. Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which men walk over without knowing it." (Luke 11:39-44)

Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time? (Luke 12:56)

Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely. (Luke 20:46-47)

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. (1 Timothy 4:1-2)

IDOLATRY

DEFINITION: Idolatry is the worship of idols and false gods. Idolatry includes putting anything before the one true and living God who is revealed in the Holy Bible. This also includes excessive adoration of a person, obsession with an activity, money, or materialism.

FACTS ABOUT IDOLATRY:

Idolatry is sin. The first of the ten commandments is *"You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below."* (Exodus 20:3). Idolatry is also listed as one of the works of the flesh (acts of the sinful nature) in Galatians 5:19-20 and in Colossians 3:5.

Idolatry is more than just worshiping an idol. It is any commitment to a person or group of people, activities, or material things that you put before God--you love these more than you love God.

Proud and arrogant behavior is idolatry. The Bible says: *"For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry"* (1 Samuel 15:23). When you are rebellious and arrogant, you are establishing yourself as an idol! Deciding to do it "your way" instead of God's way is rebellion and is compared to the sins of witchcraft and idolatry.

Materialism is idolatry. Money in itself is not wrong, but the Bible says that the love of money is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10). Those who worship money and material things err from the faith and experience many sorrows.

You cannot worship God and still worship an idol. Dualism in worship is idolatry because God is not in first place and is not receiving your total allegiance and worship (Matthew 6:24). Any form of idolatry estranges you from God (Ezekiel 14:5). You cannot be a temple for both God and idols (2 Corinthians 6:16).

Doing things because "everyone else is doing them" is idolatry. The Lord said that Israel imitated the sinful nations around them, although God had ordered them not to do so. They followed idolatrous people and became idolatrous themselves (2 Kings 17:15). When you decide to do something because "everyone else is doing it", you are establishing those people as an idol--imitating them and adhering to their standards instead of following God.

You are not to keep company with idolaters. This does not mean you cannot minister to them, but that they should not be your close friends (1 Corinthians 5:11).

Those who worship idols will become as worthless as their idols (2 Kings 17:15) and be put to shame (Psalm 97:7). They will become like the idols they worship (Psalms 115:4-8).

Idols have no power. They are made by men and are powerless to aid you in times of trouble (Psalms 115:4-8). Idolatry--the worship of idols--is very powerful however. It is a practice that has drawn many to serve false gods.

Idolaters will not inherit the Kingdom of God. *"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters ..."* (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). The destination of idolaters is the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8).

How to recognize idolatrous behavior. Bowing down before an idol, making one, praying to one, and using items designated for worship of an idol are immediately recognizable as idolatry. But idolatry also includes anything or anyone that consumes your passion, your thoughts, and your time more than serving God. Things that in themselves are not wrong--like a hobby or an activity--can become an idol in your life if these things become more important than your commitment to God. Ezekiel 14:3-4 speaks of "idols in the heart"--meaning anything in your heart that comes before God.

DEALING WITH IDOLATRY:

Repent of idolatry. Idolatry is sin and, as in the case of all sins, you must confess and repent of it. Repent of any rebellious, proud, or arrogant behavior. When you do, God has promised: *"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols."* (Ezekiel 36:25). He also promised that you...*"will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God"* (Ezekiel 37:23). Ask God to forgive you if you have put a person, an activity, or material things before God.

Determine you will worship and serve only the true God. There is only one true God, and that is the God revealed in the Holy Bible which is His Word (1 Corinthians 8:4-6).

Eliminate idolatrous objects. These include any idols, charms, books, music, or other items used to worship of false gods. Eliminate posters and pictures of performers, movie stars, and sports heroes--anyone you have idolized before God (Exodus 23:24).

Foster a new love for God. Your love will grow by spending time with God in prayer and worship, studying the Word, and by attending a Bible-believing church.

Keep your focus on God instead of the things of the world. All that is in the world--including your idols--will pass away: *"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever"* (1 John 2:15-17).

Keep yourself from idols. The Bible cautions: *"Dear children, keep yourselves from idols"* (1

John 5:21). You can keep yourself from idolatrous behavior by immersing yourself in God's Word and refraining from participating in any activity that draws you away from His plan and purposes for your life. Things that in themselves are not wrong--like a hobby or an activity--may be wrong for you if it becomes an idol in your life. It is your responsibility to eliminate these things. The Bible commands you to put idolatry to death (Colossians 3:5-6).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT IDOLATRY:

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments. (Exodus 20:3-6)

Do not make any gods to be alongside me; do not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold. (Exodus 20:23)

Do not bow down before their gods or worship them or follow their practices. You must demolish them and break their sacred stones to pieces. (Exodus 23:24)

Do not turn to idols or make gods of cast metal for yourselves. I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 19:4)

Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it. I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 26:1)

Make sure there is no man or woman, clan or tribe among you today whose heart turns away from the Lord our God to go and worship the gods of those nations; make sure there is no root among you that produces such bitter poison. (Deuteronomy 29:18. See also through verse 29)

Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless. (1 Samuel 12:21)

For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. (1 Samuel 15:23)

They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their fathers and the warnings he had given them. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the Lord had ordered them, "Do not do as they do," and they did the things the Lord had forbidden them to do. (2 Kings 17:15)

They would not listen, however, but persisted in their former practices. Even while these people were worshipping the Lord, they were serving their idols. To this day their children and grandchildren continue to do as their fathers did. (1 Kings 17:40-41)

For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. (Psalm 96:5)

All who worship images are put to shame, those who boast in idols... (Psalm 97:7)

But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them. (Psalms 115:4-8)

And the idols he shall utterly abolish... (Isaiah 2:18)

"I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols." (Isaiah 42:8)

I will expose your righteousness and your works, and they will not benefit you. When you cry out for help, let your collection [of idols] save you! The wind will carry all of them off, a mere breath will blow them away. But the man who makes me his refuge will inherit the land and possess my holy mountain." (Isaiah 57:12)

This is what the Lord says: "What fault did your fathers find in me, that they strayed so far from me? They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves." (Jeremiah 2:5)

How I have been grieved by their adulterous hearts, which have turned away from me, and by their eyes, which have lusted after their idols. They will loathe themselves for the evil they have done and for all their detestable practices." (Ezekiel 6:8-9)

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols." (Ezekiel 36:25)

"They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God." (Ezekiel 37:23)

Of what value is an idol, since a man has carved it? Or an image that teaches lies? For he who makes it trusts in his own creation; he makes idols that cannot speak. Woe to him who says to wood, 'Come to life!' Or to lifeless stone, 'Wake up!' Can it give guidance? It is covered with gold and silver; there is no breath in it. (Habakkuk 2:18-19)

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. (Matthew 6:24)

But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. (1 Corinthians 5:11)

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters ... (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

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

Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." (1 Corinthians 10:7)

Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. (1 Corinthians 10:14)

Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. (1 Corinthians 10:19-21)

...I do not wish you to be ignorant... somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to dumb idols. (1 Corinthians 12:1-2)

What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:16-18)

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-20)

For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. (Ephesians 5:5)

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5-6)

...They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,...(1 Thessalonians 1:9)

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (1 Timothy 6:10)

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

Dear children, keep yourselves from idols. (1 John 5:21)

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)

IMPATIENCE

DEFINITION: Impatience is defined as annoyance with aggravating circumstances or people. Patience, the opposite of impatience, is the ability to cheerfully bear an unbearable situation or person.

FACTS ABOUT IMPATIENCE:

Patience, the opposite of impatience, is referred to as longsuffering, perseverance, and endurance in various translations of the Bible.

God mandates that you have patience. You are to be longsuffering (patient) with joyfulness (Colossians 1:11). You are called to be longsuffering (Ephesians 4:2). You are to preach the Word of God with longsuffering (2 Timothy 4:2) and put on longsuffering as a spiritual quality (Colossians 3:12). Many verses in Proverbs extol the benefits of patience (Proverbs 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; 19:2,11; 15:18).

The Bible provides positive examples of patience. God is depicted as being patient and longsuffering in the following verses: Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18; Psalms 86:15; Romans 2:4. Patience was a quality evident in the ministry of the Apostle Paul (2 Timothy 3:10). James refers to the patience of the prophets and the long-suffering Job (James 5:10-11).

Impatience leads to wrong responses. Angry, hurtful words and actions often result from impatience.

When you are impatient with God, you are not trusting His timing and will for your life. Abraham became impatient and birthed Ishmael of his own flesh and created problems that last to this day. King Saul became impatient because Samuel didn't arrive on time, acted in haste, and it cost him the kingdom. What will impatience cost you?

Patience is a hallmark of true love. First Corinthians 13:4 states that true love is patient.

Patience is developed through tribulations As you learn to develop patience in difficulties, it sets in motion an important spiritual process so that you can ..."*glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us*" (Romans 5:3-5, KJV).

You are to make an effort to develop patience. 2 Peter 1:5-8 mandates: "*For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

DEALING WITH IMPATIENCE:

Ask God to forgive your impatience. Since God's Word mandates patience and long-suffering, then impatience is a sinful response to annoying people and circumstances. When you are impatient with God, you are not trusting His timing and will for your life.

Ask God to manifest the Fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life. One of the Fruit is long-suffering (patience): *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).*

Develop self-control through spiritual growth. *"For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:5-8).*

Identify and correct annoying circumstances. Some circumstances that trigger impatience can be corrected. Analyze the circumstances to see if there is a way to correct annoying situations so that you won't be tempted to be impatient. For example, if constant interruptions by the phone annoy you when you are working, let your calls go to voice mail. Set a certain time to return all calls after you are done working. Practical solutions to irritations like this can eliminate many annoying circumstances in life.

Forgive annoying people that contribute to your impatience responses. *"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:12-13).*

Take time to think before you speak or act. Is what you are about to say or do representative of a true believer or is it a response arising out of impatience?

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT IMPATIENCE:

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. (Psalm 37:7)

I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. (Psalm 40:1-2)

A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly. (Proverbs 14:29)

A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel. (Proverbs 15:18)

Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city. (Proverbs 16:32)

It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way. (Proverbs 19:2)

A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense. (Proverbs 19:11)

The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride. Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools. (Ecclesiastes 7:8-9)

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Romans 5:3-5, KJV)

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. (Romans 12:12)

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. (1 Corinthians 13:4)

Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; (2 Corinthians 6:3-7)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. (Ephesians 4:1-2)

And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully. (Colossians 1:10-11)

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:12-13)

And we urge you, brothers, warm those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. (1 Timothy 6:11, NKJV)

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction. (2 Timothy 4:2)

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. (Hebrews 12:1,NKJV)

Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. (James 5:7-8)

Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. (James 5:10-11)

But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. (1 Peter 2:20-21)

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:5-8)

INCEST

DEFINITION: Incest is sexual relations between close relatives..

FACTS ABOUT INCEST:

Incest is against the law in many nations. It is punishable by imprisonment and, in some societies, by death.

Incest is sin. Whether or not incest is considered illegal by the society in which you live or whether or not it is consensual, it is sin in God's sight. Leviticus 18:6-18 is very clear about this.

Incest is abuse. Incest is abusive, with one person exercising sexual power over another. Such abuse results in many other problems. For example, sexually abused children often suffer from low self-image, are depressed, and harbor thoughts of suicide. Many run away from the abusive situation and get involved in addictions and other deviant sexual behaviors such as prostitution and homosexuality.

Incest can result in genetic disorders. Congenital disorders, birth defects, disabilities, and death are caused by inbreeding.

DEALING WITH INCEST:

If you are committing incest--stop it immediately. Admit it as sin and seek forgiveness from God and from the person against whom or with whom you committed this sin. As with all sin, forgiveness is available through Jesus Christ.

If you are presently a victim of incest--tell someone. Tell a trusted friend who can help you escape and/or confront the abuser. If you are underage, tell authorities who have the power to remove you from the situation. Do not be intimidated by family members who do not believe you or do not want you to reveal the truth.

If have been a victim of incest--forgive your abuser and ask God to heal you from the mental, emotional, and physical effects of the abuse. God has promised to heal the brokenhearted (Psalm 147:3). If you were a victim, the incest was not your fault. You were forced to do something degrading and you are not responsible for the wrong that was done to you.

Turn to God's Word and prayer for comfort, healing, and deliverance. Make these practices part of your everyday life. Whether you were a victim of incest or a perpetrator of it, prayer and the Word will heal your pain and change your life.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT INCEST:

No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the Lord. Do not dishonor your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her. Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife; that would dishonor your father. Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere. Do not have sexual relations with your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter; that would dishonor you. Do not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father's wife, born to your father; she is your sister. Do not have sexual relations with your father's sister; she is your father's close relative. Do not have sexual relations with your mother's sister, because she is your mother's close relative. Do not dishonor your father's brother by approaching his wife to have sexual relations; she is your aunt. Do not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. She is your son's wife; do not have relations with her. Do not have sexual relations with your brother's wife; that would dishonor your brother. Do not have sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter. Do not have sexual relations with either her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter; they are her close relatives. That is wickedness. Do not take your wife's sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living. (Leviticus 18:6-18)

If a man marries his sister, the daughter of either his father or his mother, and they have sexual relations, it is a disgrace. They must be cut off before the eyes of their people. He has dishonored his sister and will be held responsible. (Leviticus 20:17)

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 5:1-5)

INFERIORITY

DEFINITION: Inferiurity is a belief that you are not as good as or of less value than other people. You feel that you continuously fail to meet standards of quality, ability, or achievement. Inferiurity is a lack of self-worth and self-respect.

FACTS ABOUT INFERIORITY:

Everyone feels inferior at times. Moses felt inferior for the task to which he was called (Exodus 3:11-12). Jeremiah felt too immature to fulfill God's plan (Jeremiah 1:6-7). Gideon thought he was the least of all in the tribe of Israel (Judges 6:15). The great Apostle Paul confessed to weakness, fear, and trembling (1 Corinthians 2:3). The nation of Israel saw themselves as grasshoppers in the eyes of their powerful enemies (Numbers 13:33). Often, when you are out of the "comfort zone" of your environment, friends, and family, you may feel inferior or inept.

The causes of inferiority may include your physical appearance, your abilities, social adaptability, and the environment from which you come. Your parents may have instilled inferiority feelings through constant criticism. Continual failure can also breed feelings of inferiority--you just never seem to succeed like other people. Satan also causes feelings of inferiority, as he constantly brings accusations against God's people (Revelation 12:10).

Fear is related to inferiority. The fear of others and the fear of failure contribute to inferiority. (See "Fear" in this database for guidelines on overcoming fear.)

Inferiurity can lead to destructive behaviors. If you think you aren't worth much, then it can lead to destructive behaviors such as sexual promiscuity, addictions, self-mutilation, etc.

Inferiurity is a feeling. Faith is a fact. As a believer, you live by faith and not by feelings. You must, by faith, believe you are who God says you are rather than believe what your feelings dictate.

God does not accept inferiority as an excuse. When the prophet Jeremiah said he felt too immature to accomplish God's purposes, the Lord rebuked him (Jeremiah 1:6-8).

DEALING WITH INFERIORITY:

Realize that you are created in the image of God. He created mankind in His image and declared His creation to be good. (Genesis 1;26-31).

See yourself as God sees you. If you are a believer, God sees you as a son or daughter, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ (Galatians 4:6-7). It is not self-esteem that should be your focus, rather it is Godlike esteem--who you are because of who He is within and through you.

Do not compare yourself to others. Many feelings of inferiority arise when you compare

yourself to others. The Bible indicates this is not wise (2 Corinthians 10:12).

Live by faith and not by feeling. Romans 1:17 declares *"For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'"*

Don't dwell on your past. Do not focus on past failures to live up to your own expectations or those of others. God says: *"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:18-19).*

Avoid friends who pull you down. Seek friends who encourage your efforts and accept you as you are--a work in progress.

Control your thoughts. Do not allow thoughts of inferiority to remain in your mind. When they try to enter, reject them immediately. (See "Mind And Thoughts" in this database for guidelines for controlling your thoughts.)

Confess sufficiency in God. Confess Philippians 4:13: *"I can do everything through him who gives me strength."* It is not who you are, but who you are in God that is important.

Learn from the lives of biblical characters who felt inferior. Moses, Gideon, Jeremiah, the Apostle Paul, and the nation of Israel are examples of people who had inferior feelings, yet rose above them to become mighty people of God. You can do the same!

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT INFERIORITY:

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? (Isaiah 43:18-19).

"Ah, Sovereign Lord," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord." (Jeremiah 1:6-8)

For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith (*not feeling*). (Romans 1:17)

We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. (2 Corinthians 10:12)

Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. (Galatians 4:6-7)

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
(1 Peter 2:9)

(See also "Self-Esteem" in this database.)

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(1 Peter 2:9)

(See also "Self-Esteem" in this database.)

INSOMNIA

DEFINITION: Insomnia is difficulty in sleeping, an inability to fall asleep or remain asleep long enough to feel properly rested.

FACTS ABOUT INSOMNIA:

There are varied causes for insomnia. Some common causes are illness, pain, certain medications, grief, worry, regret, a poor sleeping environment, or demonic torment. Caffeine and eating big meals before bedtime may also cause difficulty in sleeping.

Insomnia can be spiritual. The young Samuel was awakened by God to receive a divine revelation (1 Samuel 3:9-11). The Lord may wake you up to give you a revelation or to have you intercede for someone.

Much insomnia is caused by worry over the future or regret over the past. Real rest comes when you believe God is sovereign over both the past and the future. Forget yesterdays, and do not fret about tomorrow.

Insomnia can be a faith crisis rather than a medical crisis. Sleep is actually the ultimate demonstration of faith where you release control to God as you rest in Him. You transition into a state where you are no longer trying to assert control and you leave all of your concerns in His hands.

The common treatment for insomnia is medication. Doctors prescribe sleeping aids, but this often does not get to the root of the problem. What is causing your insomnia?

DEALING WITH INSOMNIA:

Discover the root cause of your insomnia and deal with it.

- If it is due to illness or pain, seek healing from God and/or medical help.
- If the insomnia is caused by medication, ask the doctor to change the prescription.
- If you are worrying about the future or regretfully rehearsing the past--stop these thoughts the minute they enter your mind. Rebuke them in the name of Jesus!
- If you are fearful, know that the One who keeps watch over you never sleeps (Psalm 121:4).
- If you are wrestling with unforgiveness and bitterness, get rid of these. They not only will inhibit your sleep, they are sin!
- If you believe your insomnia is demonic, bind the spirit of sleeplessness and command it to go in the name of Jesus.

Prepare for sleep before you go to bed. Do not ingest caffeine or sugar-based treats right before bedtime. Do not eat a big meal right before going to bed. Do not deal with personal problems or bill-paying, watch stimulating programs on TV, or play video games. Listen to soft Christian music. Read a devotional book or the Bible. Prepare yourself for rest.

Create an environment conducive to sleep. Correct a poor sleeping environment. Turn off electronics and lights in the room. Make sure there is proper ventilation. If you are bothered by nearby noises, try running an electric fan to mask the sounds or playing recordings of soothing music or nature sounds. Some people opt for using earplugs.

Don't medicate spiritual insomnia. What if Samuel had taken a sleeping pill and gone back to sleep? If you believe your insomnia is from the Lord, then pray for revelation or intercede as the Holy Spirit directs. This type of sleeplessness will not be tormenting or tiring. God will provide divine strength for any loss of sleep you experience.

Pray when you are ready to go to sleep. Ask God to give you a good night's sleep. Jesus said to ask and you shall receive! James observed that you do not have because you do not ask (James 4:2). Claim biblical promises for sleep in the following list of references.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT INSOMNIA:

I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. (Psalm 3:5)

I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. (Psalm 4:8)

I will praise the Lord who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. (Psalm 16:7)

By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me...(Psalm 42:8)

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. (Psalm 91:1)

In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat, for he grants sleep to those he loves. (Psalm 127:2)

... when you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. (Proverbs 3:24)

The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep. (Ecclesiastes 5:12)

I sleep, but my heart is awake; It is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, "Open for me, my sister, my love, My dove, my perfect one..." (Song of Solomon 5:2)

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:31-34)

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

INTEGRITY

DEFINITION: Integrity refers to the quality of possessing and steadfastly adhering to high moral principles and professional standards. Biblically, it refers to adhering to the standards set forth in God's Word.

FACTS ABOUT INTEGRITY:

Your integrity affects your relationship with God. Psalms 24:3-5 describes a person of integrity and states that it is this type of person who will stand in God's presence. If you refuse to adhere to the principles of the Word of God, how can you maintain a close relationship with Him?

Integrity determines your reputation. The general opinion that people hold regarding you is determined by whether or not you are a person of integrity.

"A good name" is a phrase that describes a person of integrity. According to the Bible, having a good name is better than possessing riches (Ecclesiastes 7:1; Proverbs 22:1).

"A person of character" also describes a person of integrity, meaning that they have positive qualities and a good, moral reputation.

It is easy to lose your integrity. Just one foolish act can ruin your reputation. The Bible warns: *"As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor"* (Ecclesiastes 10:1).

DEALING WITH INTEGRITY:

If you are not a person of integrity, repent. Lack of integrity means that you have not been living up to the standards of God's Word and that is sin. As in the case of all sin, this requires confession and repentance.

Immerse yourself in the Word of God and prayer. These will change your life and make you a person of high moral standards (Romans 12:1-2).

Ask forgiveness and make restitution. If your lack of integrity has affected other people, ask for forgiveness and make restitution if possible. For example, if you cheated on a business deal, ask forgiveness and make things right.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT INTEGRITY:

As long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, and my tongue will utter no deceit. (Job 27:3-4)

Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? He whose walk is

blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman, who despises a vile man but honors those who fear the Lord, who keeps his oath even when it hurts, who lends his money without usury and does not accept a bribe against the innocent. (Psalm 15:1-5)

Though you probe my heart and examine me at night, though you test me, you will find nothing; I have resolved that my mouth will not sin. (Psalm 17:3)

The Lord has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord; I have not done evil by turning from my God. All his laws are before me; I have not turned away from his decrees. I have been blameless before him and have kept myself from sin. The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight. (Psalm 18:20-24)

Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God his Savior. (Psalms 24:3-5)

May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope is in you. (Psalm 25:21)

Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have led a blameless life; I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth. I do not sit with deceitful men, nor do I consort with hypocrites; I abhor the assembly of evildoers and refuse to sit with the wicked. I wash my hands in innocence, and go about your altar, O Lord, proclaiming aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds. I love the house where you live, O Lord, (Psalm 26:1-8)

But I lead a blameless life; redeem me and be merciful to me. (Psalm 26:11)

I know that you are pleased with me, for my enemy does not triumph over me. In my integrity you uphold me and set me in your presence forever. (Psalm 41:11-12)

The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out. (Proverbs 10:9)

The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity. (Proverbs 11:3)

The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful. (Proverbs 12:22)

Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a fool whose lips are perverse. (Proverbs 19:1)

The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him. (Proverbs 20:7)

A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.

(Proverbs 22:1)

Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a rich man whose ways are perverse. (Proverbs 28:6)

A good name is better than fine perfume... (Ecclesiastes 7:1)

As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor. (Ecclesiastes 10:1)

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

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

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)

Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. (2 Corinthians 4:2)

For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men. (2 Corinthians 8:21)

Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. (Ephesians 6:6-8)

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

Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. (Hebrews 13:18)

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25)

JUDGING

DEFINITION: Being judgmental or judging is to make and express assumptions about the moral and personal conduct of others.

FACTS ABOUT JUDGING:

God is the judge. God is the judge of us all (Romans 14:12-13). When you take it upon yourself to judge others, you are trying to assume a function of God.

You will be judged the same way you judge others. Think about that when tempted to criticize others (Matthew 7:2).

When you judge others, you condemn your own self. Very often, you are doing the same things you are criticizing others for--if not worse (Romans 2:1).

When you judge your leaders, you are criticizing God Himself. Israel criticized Moses and Aaron, but God viewed it as criticism of Himself because He had set these men in places of leadership (Numbers 14:27).

DEALING WITH JUDGING:

Ask God to forgive your judgmental spirit. Since Jesus said not to judge others, then it is a sin when we do so.

Focus on dealing with issues in your own life. Instead of judging and criticizing others, focus on your own moral and spiritual condition (Matthew 7:1-5).

Ask God to help you guard what you say. David said, "*Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, keep watch over the door of my lips*" (Psalm 141:3).

View others as God sees them. God sees you and others not as you are, but as you have the potential to become. Look at a person's potential, not their problems.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT JUDGING:

Will not the Judge of all the earth do right? (Genesis 18:25b)

Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips. (Psalm 141:3)

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. (Luke 6:37)

For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no

attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:1-5)

And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. (Luke 18:7-8)

You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. (John 8:15-16)

For at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. (Romans 2:1)

So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? (Romans 2:3)

Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. (Romans 14:1)

You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. (Romans 14:10)

Each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. (Romans 14:12-13)

The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment. (1 Corinthians 2:15)

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 till the Lord comes. (1 Corinthians 4:3-5)

Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you--who are you to judge your neighbor? (James 4:11-12)

JUSTICE

DEFINITION: Justice is fairness in protection of rights and the punishment of wrongs.

FACTS ABOUT JUSTICE:

Most legal systems aim to uphold the ideal of justice through proper administration of the laws of their land. It is possible, however, to have unjust laws and miscarriages of justice.

Injustices occur because we live in a sinful world. No one is perfect--this includes law enforcement officers, judges, juries, and courts involved in the legal system. Injustices also occur in business dealings and personal relationships.

Injustice breeds further injustice. *"Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil"* (Ecclesiastes 8:11, NKJV).

Justice is not always fairly dispensed. Injustices are often experienced by people without funds for proper representation in a court of law or a business transaction. Injustices sometimes occur because of race or religious beliefs.

God is a God of justice. He keeps perfect records. Although someone may escape justice in this world, he will not escape in the world to come unless he repents and comes to Jesus Christ.

Our standard of justice is the Word of God. We are citizens of the Kingdom of God, and we are governed by the mandates of the Word.

DEALING WITH JUSTICE:

Look to God for justice. God is a righteous judge and the true judge of us all (Romans 14:12-13). Look to God for justice instead of man (Psalm 140:12).

Do not seek revenge. Do not seek revenge for injustices committed against you. The Bible says that God forbids revenge (Leviticus 19:18). Vengeance for injustice is God's responsibility (Romans 12:19).

Love your enemies. God's strategy for dealing with someone who commits an injustice against you is to show them love and compassion (Luke 6:27)

Seek to resolve offences. To the best of your ability, try to resolve offenses that cause injustices and set right any wrongs.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT JUSTICE:

Will not the Judge of all the earth do right? (Genesis 18:25b)

Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly. (Leviticus 19:15)

Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord. (Leviticus 19:18)

Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you. (Deuteronomy 16:20)

Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow. Then all the people shall say, "Amen!" (Deuteronomy 27:19)

I thought in my heart, "God will bring to judgment both the righteous and the wicked, for there will be a time for every activity, a time for every deed." (Ecclesiastes 3:17)

The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. (Psalm 103:6)

I know that the Lord will maintain The cause of the afflicted, And justice for the poor. (Psalm 140:12)

Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the Lord, and he will deliver you. (Proverbs 20:22)

Evil men do not understand justice, But those who seek the Lord understand all. (Proverbs 28:5, NKJV)

The righteous considers the cause of the poor, But the wicked does not understand such knowledge. (Proverbs 29:7, NKJV)

Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. (Ecclesiastes 8:11, NKJV)

Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow. (Isaiah 1:17, NKJV)

Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him! (Isaiah 30:18)

Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations. (Isaiah 51:4)

For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity. (Isaiah 61:8)

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other." (Zechariah 7:9-10)

And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. (Luke 18:7-8)

You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. (John 8:15-16)

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. (Romans 12:19)

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. (1 Peter 3:9)

K

NO LISTINGS

LAZINESS

DEFINITION: A lazy person is one who is resistant to or refuses to work and is disposed to idleness and worthless pursuits. The Bible refers to a lazy person as a "sluggard."

FACTS ABOUT LAZINESS:

Work was instituted by God. When He created Adam and Eve: *"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it"* (Genesis 2:15).

The Bible condemns laziness, slothfulness, and idleness. For examples see Proverbs 15:19; 19:24; 22:13; and 26:13-16.

If you refuse to work when you are physically and mentally able to do so, there should be consequences. The Bible teaches that if a man does not work, he should not eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

Failure to provide for your family is equated with denying the faith. First Timothy 5:8 warns: *"If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."*

DEALING WITH LAZINESS:

Pray about your laziness. Laziness is a habit and/or a learned behavior that can be corrected. Ask God to forgive you and to help you be an example of industriousness.

Provide for yourself and your family. If you are physically and mentally able, get a job and provide for yourself and your family. Don't borrow money, steal, or live off of other people.

Do everything as unto the Lord. Any legal, legitimate job is something to be proud of and you can do it as unto the Lord (Colossians 3:17).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT LAZINESS:

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (Genesis 2:15).

Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest - and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man. (Proverbs 6:6-11)

Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth. (Proverbs 10:4)

As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is a sluggard to those who send him. (Proverbs 10:26)

Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor. (Proverbs 12:24)

The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied. (Proverbs 13:4)

All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty. (Proverbs 14:23)

Laziness brings on deep sleep, and the shiftless man goes hungry. (Proverbs 19:15)

A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing. (Proverbs 20:4)

Do not love sleep or you will grow poor; stay awake and you will have food to spare. (Proverbs 20:13)

The fool folds his hands and ruins himself. (Ecclesiastes 4:5)

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

If a man is lazy, the rafters sag; if his hands are idle, the house leaks. (Ecclesiastes 10:18)

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17)

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. (Colossians 3:23-24)

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and who does not live according to the teaching you received from us. (2 Thessalonians 3:6)

For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12)

We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. (Hebrews 6:12)

LONELINESS

DEFINITION: Loneliness is a sense of separation from people, often accompanied by isolation, depression, and feelings of rejection and self-pity. It is a lack of meaningful relationships with others.

FACTS ABOUT LONELINESS:

Loneliness is not the same as being alone. A person can be alone, and yet not be lonely. Conversely, one can be with many people and still feel lonely.

God never intended for you to live disconnected from others. One of the first things God did was establish a relationship with Adam and then provide him with a wife. God said it was not good to live in isolation (Genesis 2:18). God's plan was for you to have a meaningful relationship with Him and others.

Alienation was a result of the fall. When Adam and Eve sinned, they were alienated from God and began having problems in their relationship--blaming one another. All broken relationships are rooted in sin.

Intimacy with God is necessary in order to develop proper relationships with others. You will never be able to develop positive horizontal relationships with others until your vertical relationship with God is right. The only time Jesus expressed loneliness was when He was on the cross, alienated from the Father because He was bearing the sins of the world (Matthew 27:46).

Loneliness can be self-inflicted. If you do not try to make friends, you won't have any: *"A man who has friends must himself be friendly..."(Proverbs 18:24) .*

You are never really alone. Jesus promised to be with you always and He sent the Holy Spirit to be with you and dwell within you (John 14:17).

DEALING WITH LONELINESS:

Determine the cause for your loneliness. Deal with the root cause. Are you isolating yourself from others? Do you harbor unforgiveness? Are you staying too busy and disconnected from people? Have difficult circumstances--such as a tragedy or death--caused you to withdraw from others? Are you depressed?

Pray about your loneliness. Bind the spirits of isolation and self-pity that develop through loneliness. Release the comfort of the Holy Spirit who lives within you to operate in your life.

Restore broken relationships. If your loneliness is because of alienation from someone, seek to restore the relationship through forgiving and seeking forgiveness.

Develop godly friendships. Foster positive relationships with other believers. Do not be

unevenly yoked in a friendship with an unbeliever (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Get involved with the Body of Christ. Join a church, attend a Bible study, or become part of a prayer group. Many friendships are formed through association with others in the Church. Start a special interest group in your church and recruit others who enjoy doing what you like to do.

Serve others. Squash self-pity and isolation by serving others. Volunteer at a homeless shelter or a food kitchen. Visit the elderly and shut-ins. Tutor a child. Volunteer for missions, prison ministry, or for service in your church. The opportunities are endless, and as you put yourself out there to serve, you will develop positive relationships with others.

Learn how to be a true friend. The biblical emphasis on relationships is evident when we note the number of times the words "one another" occurs, particularly in Paul's letters. We are commanded to:

- love one another: John 13:35
- be devoted to one another: Romans 12:10
- honor one another: Romans 12:10
- live in harmony with one another: Romans 12:16
- comfort one another: 1 Thessalonians 4:18
- encourage one another: Hebrews 3:13
- stir up one another to love and good works: Hebrews 10:24
- show hospitality to one another: 1 Peter 4:9
- employ the gifts of God for the benefit of one another: 1 Peter 4:10
- clothe yourself with humility towards one another: 1 Peter 5:5
- pray for one another: James 5:16
- confess your faults to one another; James 5:16
- speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs: Ephesians 5:19
- submit to one another: Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5
- consider others better than yourself: Philippians 2:3
- be concerned about the interests of others: Philippians 2:4
- bear with one another: Colossians 3:13
- teach one another: Colossians 3:16
- build up one another: Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- be likeminded towards one another: Romans 15:5
- accept one another unconditionally: Romans 15:7
- admonish one another: Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16
- care for one another: 1 Corinthians 12:25
- serve one another: Galatians 5:13
- bear one another's burdens: Galatians 6:2
- forgive one another: Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13
- be patient with one another: Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13
- be kind and compassionate to one another: Ephesians 4:32

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT LONELINESS:

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31:6)

Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me. (Psalm 27:10)

A man who has friends must himself be friendly... (Proverbs 18:24) .

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54:10)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (John 14:16-18)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? (Romans 8:35)

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

See also Psalm 139. You were never alone--not even in your mother's womb!

(See also "Friendship" in this database.)

LOVE

DEFINITION: Love is a feeling of tender affection and devotion for someone. First Corinthians chapter 13 provides a complete biblical definition of love. The problems you may experience in the area of love are an inability to understand and receive God's love, love Him in return, and love others--including your enemies and the unlovable.

FACTS ABOUT LOVE:

God is a God of love. He loves you and loves through you. *"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us" (1 John 4:8-12).* Love originated with God (1 John 4:7). He shows His love by saving, healing, and comforting you and by supplying all of your needs. God even demonstrates His love when it is necessary to chastise and correct you (Hebrews 12:6).

Some people question why they suffer if God loves them. It is because we live in a sinful, fallen world where bad things happen. Just because you are a believer does not mean you are immune to adversity. You will not understand everything that happens to you (Deuteronomy 29:29), but God has promised to work all things--the good and the bad--together for your good (Romans 8:28). You also can develop positive spiritual virtues in times of adversity (1 Peter 5:10).

True love was not really understood until Calvary. The death of Jesus on the cross redefined the meaning of love: *"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).* God so loved the world that He sacrificed His only Son to die for the sins of all mankind (John 3:16).

You love because you are loved. We love God because He first loved us (1 John 4:10).

Love identifies you as a true believer: Jesus commanded that you love others and said your love would identify you as a believer: *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35).* If you are hostile in your interactions with others, you are not demonstrating the love of God that should be the identifying characteristic of your life.

God's Word rests on the foundation of love. The entire revelation of God's Word rests upon this premise: *"Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:37-40).*

The Bible says you must love others so that you can properly love God. *"We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother" (1 John 4:19-21).*

Scriptures direct you to love your enemies. Jesus said: *"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven..." (Matthew 19:43-45).*

Love is the most important Christian virtue. It is a Fruit of the Holy Spirit that is to be manifested in all believers (Galatians 5:22). It is greater than any other spiritual quality in a believer's life (1 Corinthians 13).

Love is the opposite of lust. Love is a strong feeling of affection for another person, while lust centers on meeting your own personal desires. Love is a pure feeling coming from a pure heart. Lust is a passion for something that is wrong and comes from an evil heart. True love would never ask you to do something contrary to God's Word or anything that would be hurtful or violate your conscience.

You demonstrate your love for God by loving others (1 John 4:21); through devotion to His will and His Word (Psalm 40:8); time spent with Him in prayer (Jeremiah 29:12-14); and your service for Him (1 Corinthians 15:58).

DEALING WITH LOVE:

Confess your lack of love and your need for the love to God to be manifested in your life. Barriers to love include jealousy, pride, bitterness, hatred, unforgiveness, conceit, selfishness, etc. Search your heart and ask God to forgive these attitudes if they are present in your life.

Forgive those who have wronged you. This is the first step towards fulfilling the command to love your enemies.

Make a declaration that you will love God (Deuteronomy 6:5) and love others unconditionally (Matthew 19:43-45). Love is first an act of the will, not an emotion. Remember that confession is not only necessary for salvation, it is also required for other spiritual attainments as well. Just as you first confessed Christ and then learned to live a new life in Him, you must first confess your love for God and others and then learn how to live this love out on a daily basis.

Study 1 Corinthians 13. It is the most complete biblical definition of love. Ask God for these qualities of love to be manifested in your life.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT LOVE:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. (Deuteronomy 6:5)

Love the Lord your God and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always. (Deuteronomy 11:1)

Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs. (Proverbs 10:12)

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven... (Matthew 19:43-45)

Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40)

But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. (Luke 6:27-31)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35)

As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. (John 15:9-14)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10)

For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:9-10)

1 Corinthians chapter 13

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:13-14)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:4-5)

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. (Ephesians 4:2)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (Ephesians 5:25)

Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. (1 Thessalonians 4:9)

Keep on loving each other as brothers. (Hebrews 13:1)

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:8)

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1)

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (1 John 4:7-11)

We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

(1 John 4:19-21)

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

And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love. (2 John 6)

LUST

DEFINITION: Lust is a strong or uncontrolled desire for someone or something. It is also called evil desire and a work of the flesh in the Bible.

FACTS ABOUT LUST:

Lust is a work of the flesh. Paul lists several works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21 and concludes by saying that those who do such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Lust conceives and gives birth to sin. The Bible says that sin starts in the heart with lust, which when conceived, brings forth sin. Sin, when it is finished, results in death (James 1:15).

God does not tempt you to lust. The Bible says: "*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*" (James 1:13-15, KJV).

You cannot defeat lust in your own strength. Read Romans 7 where Paul describes his struggle in this area.

You can overcome lust through the power of the Holy Spirit. Read Romans 8 where Paul explains how to walk in victory over the flesh.

DEALING WITH LUST:

Ask forgiveness. Lust is sin, and as in the case of any sin, forgiveness from God must be sought. If your lust has affected another person (i.e., led to pre-marital sex), then you must seek forgiveness from the person who was wronged.

Internalize God's Word. The psalmist said: "*I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you*" (Psalm 119:11). The more of God's Word you have in you, the less that fleshly lusts will operate.

Pray regularly. Prayer will help you overcome the sins of the flesh.

Control your mind. Lust begins in the mind and culminates in sin. Discipline your mind to think only on good things (Philippians 4:8).

Walk in the Spirit. You lived your old life according to the dictates of the flesh, doing what you wanted when you wanted. Now you must live life in the Spirit according to the Word and will of God: "*So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want*"

(Galatians 5:16-17).

Avoid compromising situations. Avoid being alone with someone for whom you have had lustful feelings. Don't flirt, as this leads to lustful behavior. Stay away from places where lust is being manifested openly, ie., discos, bars, ungodly parties, and places where drugs are being used.

Guard your senses. Be careful about what you view, what you read, and what you listen to, as the ear-gate and eye-gate are often where Satan gains access to your mind.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT LUST:

I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl. (Job 31:1)

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. (Psalm 119:11)

Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control. (Proverbs 25:28)

You have heard that it was said, "Do not commit adultery." But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28)

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. (Romans 6:12)

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. (1 Corinthians 10:6)

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. (Galatians 5:16-17)

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:24)

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5)

Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity. (1 Timothy 5:1-2)

Let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and hope of salvation as a helmet. (1 Thessalonians 5:8)

Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those

who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (2 Timothy 2:22)

Encourage the young men to be self-controlled. (Titus 2:6)

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away 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)

You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4:2-3)

For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do--living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. (1 Peter 4:3)

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

LYING

DEFINITION: A lie is a statement that deviates from or perverts the truth. It is also called bearing false witness in the Bible.

FACTS ABOUT LYING:

Satan is the father of lies. This means all lies are instigated by satanic or demonic influences (John 8:44).

Lying is sin. Leviticus 19:11 declares: *"Do not lie. Do not deceive one another" (Leviticus 19:11).*

Lying is one of the main sins God hates. See Proverbs 6:16-19.

Lying begins in your heart. *"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander" (Matthew 15:19).*

Lying can become compulsive. Lying can become a deeply ingrained habit and you can eventually become what is known as a "pathological liar"--you lie about everything.

DEALING WITH LYING:

Ask God to forgive you. Lying is sin, and as with all sins, forgiveness from God must be sought.

Ask forgiveness of others. Seek forgiveness from the ones you lied to or about. If you lied about finances or your lie resulted in any type of losses for someone, make restitution.

Bind the spirit of lying. In the name of Jesus, bind the demonic spirit of lying from operating in your life. Loose the Spirit of Truth to operate.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT LYING:

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. (Exodus 20:16)

Do not lie. Do not deceive one another. (Leviticus 19:11)

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. (Deuteronomy 5:20)

You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the Lord abhors. (Psalm 5:6)

Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. (Psalm 34:12-13)

You love evil rather than good, falsehood rather than speaking the truth. (Psalm 52:3)

No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence. (Psalm 101:7)

I hate and abhor falsehood but I love your law. (Psalm 119:163)

There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers. (Proverbs 6:16-19)

The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity. (Proverbs 11:3)

Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment. (Proverbs 12:19)

The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful. (Proverbs 12:22)

The righteous hate what is false, but the wicked bring shame and disgrace. (Proverbs 13:5)

He whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble. (Proverbs 17:20)

Better to be poor than a liar. (Proverbs 19:22)

An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips. (Proverbs 24:26)

Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me through your law. (Psalm 119:29)

Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is the man who gives false testimony against his neighbor. (Proverbs 25:18)

Like a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows is a man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I was only joking!" (Proverbs 26:18-19)

A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin. (Proverbs 26:28)

Keep falsehood and lies far from me. (Proverbs 30:7-8)

O Lord, do not your eyes look for truth? (Jeremiah 5:3)

Friend deceives friend, and no one speaks the truth. They have taught their tongues to lie; they weary themselves with sinning. (Jeremiah 9:5)

For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matthew 12:37)

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. (Matthew 15:19)

"You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.'" (Luke 18:20)

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)

For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:9-10)

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. (Ephesians 4:25)

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. (Colossians 3:9-10)

MARRIAGE

DEFINITION: Biblically, marriage is the union of one man with one woman and the relationship that exists between them.

FACTS ABOUT MARRIAGE:

Fifty-percent of all marriages end in divorce. That is why it is important to deal with marriage problems before they intensify. (For counsel regarding divorce, see "Divorce" in this database.)

The biblical plan is that two people become one (Genesis 2:24). God intends for marriage to be between one man and one woman for life (Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11; Jeremiah 32:19; Mark 10:9).

Be sure you marry "in the Lord." Believers are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers (1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14). If you are already married to an unbeliever, you are to remain with them unless they decide to depart because it is possible that you will be able to win them to the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:15-16).

Do not marry someone in need of reform. The problems that you have with them now will only intensify. Marriage was not intended to be a "reform school."

Pre-marital checklist.

- Marriage should be only with the opposite sex--one man, one woman, for life: Genesis 2:18,22.
- You are required to cease dependence on your parents: Genesis 2:24.
- You must live together as one in legal and sexual union: Genesis 2:24.
- You must love and dwell with your partner for a lifetime: Mark 10:9.
- Believers must not marry unbelievers: 2 Corinthians 6:14-15,17.
- Be sure you have discussed and agreed on spiritual matters of faith, finances, communication, children, child discipline--every major area that will affect your union

Do not expect:

- Marriage to solve your personal problems.
- Religious differences to be insignificant.
- To change the attitudes, beliefs, or conduct of your spouse.
- That sexual passion alone will sustain your marriage.

Problems arise because of carnality. Whether in the church, the home, or between friends and

family members, problems arise because of carnality in the lives of believers (1 Corinthians 3:3). In a marriage, problems arise most frequent in the areas of sexual compatibility, in-law problems, finances, discipline of children, and spiritual issues.

A good marriage is based on God's will and His Word. Unless the Lord builds your marriage and your home, you are laboring in vain (Psalm 127:1).

A good marriage is based on basic tenets of respect for your mate, realistic expectations of one another, acceptance of your mate, and an ability to forgive. Good communication is vital to a good marriage, as is a genuine commitment to one another. Spiritual unity is most important.

God can heal all wounds. Whether it be a small misunderstanding or a major problem in a marriage, the Lord will heal your relationship if you will let Him (Jeremiah 30:17).

Note: Do not remain in a marriage where there is physical violence, child abuse, or illegal activities. Many innocent partners have suffered dire consequences because they did not remove themselves and their children from such environments--including violent death or criminal prosecution for not protecting their children.

DEALING WITH MARRIAGE:

Make a commitment to each other and to the relationship. Do not accept excuses for a poor relationship such as: "We never should have been married in the first place"; "Our families don't get along"; or "We have grown apart." All of these are issues that can be resolved on the basis of God's Word which mandates forgiving and being forgiven.

Seek the root cause of problems. What is causing the problems in your marriage? Is it unforgiveness, inability to accept each other, adultery, finances, problems with in-laws, spiritual disunity, disagreements over children, sexual incompatibility, communication problems, etc? These are some of the main problems in marriages. Deal with the root causes of the surface manifestations of marital unhappiness and disharmony.

Examine what you have done to try and solve these problems. Has what you have tried worked? Have you tried God's way--including forgiving one another, praying, and studying the Bible together so you can build your marriage on the Word of God?

Ask forgiveness. Seek forgiveness from God and from your spouse. If adultery was involved, the adulterous relationship must be totally severed by the offending party.

Pray together. Pray about your problems instead of fighting about them.

Study the Word of God together. All problems in marriage can be resolved by application of biblical principles. The question is, are you willing?.

Attend church together. Find a Bible-believing church with a strong couples ministry where you can continue to strengthen your marriage and establish biblical goals for your marriage.

Fellowship with couples who have strong marriages. Do not hang out with couples who fight and bicker. Develop relationships with those who model qualities of a positive marriage and learn from them.

Agree to these standards.

- We commit ourselves to live for God and allow Him to control our marriage.
- We commit to growing together spiritually.
- We commit our finances, communication, sex life, and children to the Lord and will follow His direction in each of these areas as well as every area of our lives.
- We will pray individually about a matter before we come together to talk about it.
- We will not discuss things in an angry, hostile, loud manner.
- We agree to hear the other person's opinion and accept alternate views.
- We will not go to bed angry.
- We agree to forgive--not dwelling on a past offense by continuing to bring it up.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT MARRIAGE:

Marriage relationships in general.

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." (Genesis 2:18)

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. (Genesis 2:23-24)

Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. (Psalm 127:1)

"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:28)

"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery. (Matthew 5:32)

"Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery." (Matthew 19:7-9)

But at the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they

are no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate. (Mark

10:6-9)

You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? (1 Corinthians 3:3)

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders (1 Corinthians 6:9)

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)

A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. (1 Corinthians 7:39)

Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. (1 Corinthians 11:3)

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14)

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. (Hebrews 13:4)

Husbands.

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table. Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord. (Psalm 128:3-4)

He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord. (Proverbs 18:22)

But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:28)

But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery. (Matthew 5:32)

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church--for we are members of his body. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh... However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. (Ephesians 5:22-29, 33)

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. (Colossians 3:19)

If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her... But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife? (1 Corinthians 7:12, 15-16)

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. (1 Peter 3:7)

Wives.

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." (Genesis 2:18)

Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you. (Genesis 3:16)

A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones. (Proverbs 12:4)

The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down. (Proverbs 14:1)

Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the Lord. (Proverbs 19:14)

A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping. (Proverbs 19:13)

Better to live in a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife. (Proverbs 21:9)

Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife. (Proverbs 21:19)

A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day; restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand. (Proverbs 27:15-16)

Proverbs chapter 31: The model wife.

And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife? (1 Corinthians 7:13-14,16)

Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. (1 Corinthians 11:3)

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. (Ephesians 5:22-24)

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. (Colossians 3:18)

In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. (1 Timothy 3:11)

So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. (1 Timothy 5:14)

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you. Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. (1 Peter 3:1-2)

Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. (1 Peter 3:3-4)

MEDIA **(Negative Effects Of)**

DEFINITION: The word "media" refers to the Internet, literature, movies, TV, radio, music, video games, etc.

FACTS ABOUT MEDIA:

Music and dance are gifts from God. In Exodus 15:20-21 we see God's people singing and dancing before the Lord. It isn't long until Satan pollutes these joyful expressions as God's people sing and dance before an idol (Exodus 32).

The media industry is controlled by unbelievers. Because of this, much of the music, video games, movies, etc., contain unwholesome content and do not promote positive values.

Spiritual powers inhabit music. When believers praise and worship God, His presence is there (2 Chronicles 5:13-14). It stands to reason that when ungodly music is played, Satan's presence is manifested.

Music affects a person mentally and spiritually. Music affects the emotions and the spirit. For example, when David played his harp, the evil spirits departed from King Saul (1 Samuel 16:23)

Many secular musicians/actors engage in drugs and illicit sex. The reason? Their music and movies often promote it.

Pornography is addictive and victimizes people. The more you view pornographic material, the more you want to view. Pornography has victims, including the one addicted to it and the ones that performed the degrading acts. Pornography can also escalate from fantasies to actual acts.

Video games, the Internet, and television can become addictive. An addiction to anything--even a game--is not productive. Violent video games have been linked to crimes and atrocities.

Unwholesome literature can also be addictive, and contributes nothing to spiritual growth or positive mental development.

DEALING WITH MEDIA:

Ask God for forgiveness for participating in ungodly media. As in the case of all sins, these are transgressions for which forgiveness must be secured through the blood of Jesus.

Do a spiritual housecleaning. Get rid of any ungodly movies, games, or literature you own.

If you are addicted to ungodly media, eliminate all possible sources. Some people have

disconnected the Internet and television because of their addiction. Get rid of ungodly music, games, books, magazines, etc. (See also "Addictions" in this database.)

Establish new standards for selecting media. Set positive standards for the types of programs and music you will view or listen to and the music, literature, or games you will purchase. Ask God to help you make better choices.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT MEDIA:

Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing. Miriam sang to them: "Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea." (Exodus 15:20-21)

Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him. (1 Samuel 16:23)

When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes. As they danced, they sang. (1 Samuel 18:6-7)

The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang: "He is good; his love endures forever." Then the temple of the Lord was filled with a cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God. (2 Chronicles 5:13-14)

I will set before my eyes no vile thing. (Psalm 101:3)

Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. (Psalm 150:1-6)

Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you." (Luke 11:34-36)

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:36)

Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. (Romans 13:14)

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart

to the Lord. (Ephesians 5:19-20)

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil. (2 Thessalonians 5:21-22)

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. (Philippians 4:8)

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

MENTAL ILLNESS

DEFINITION: Mental illness is any impairment of an individual's mental capacities that affects cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functioning. Synonyms are mental disease or mental disorder.

FACTS ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS:

Causes of mental illness. Mental illness can be caused by infections, prenatal damage, substance abuse, brain injuries, and even poor nutrition. Heredity can make a person more susceptible to mental illness. Severe psychological trauma such as emotional or sexual abuse can also result in mental illness, as can post traumatic stress disorders. Some mental disorders are caused by Satan, as in the case of the Gadarene demoniac (Mark 5). Satan, of course, is behind all illness in the world including mental afflictions.

The range of mental illnesses. Mental illness can range from impairment caused by depression all the way to full-blown schizophrenia which may render a person totally dysfunctional.

The root cause of mental illness. As in all dysfunctions in the human body, mental illness exists in the world because of sin, but it is not necessarily the result of a person's personal sin.

DEALING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS:

Determine the root cause of the mental illness. If it is a medical condition--a brain injury, birth defect, etc.--then the person may not be accountable for their behavior. If the mental illness is caused by unresolved issues, a person must be held responsible for their behavior and correct it. Read the account of King Nebuchadnezzar's mental illness in Daniel chapter 4. His mental issues resulted from his spiritual condition and were corrected when he acknowledged the true God.

Acknowledge that God is greater than mental illness. What is impossible with man is possible with God (Luke 18:27).

Pray for forgiveness. If a mental condition is due to spiritual issues, repent of any transgressions and ask God for mental and emotional healing.

Seek God for healing. No matter what your mental condition, God's power is greater. Jesus had and still has the power to heal mental illness. See the examples in Matthew 17:13-18 where a boy kept throwing himself in the fire and in Matthew 4:24 where lunatics received healing.

Use legitimate medical options. Legitimate medicines are a gift from God to aid in healing--both physical and mental. These should not be the first line of attack, however. Prayer for healing and deliverance should be made first and, if necessary, medical options used until the healing is manifested.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS:

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. (Isaiah 26:3)

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits--who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalms 103:2-5)

Jesus replied, "What is impossible with men is possible with God." (Luke 18:27)

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, (Philippians 2:5)

Read the account of Nebuchadnezzar's mental illness and subsequent healing in Daniel chapter 4.

(See also "Mind And Thoughts" in this database.)

MIND AND THOUGHTS

DEFINITION: The part of a person that thinks, reasons, feels, and remembers.

FACTS ABOUT THE MIND AND THOUGHTS:

The mind is complex. The mind is one of the most complex and least understood parts of the human body.

Satan uses many strategies against your mind. These include questioning the authority of God, deception, seduction, lust, depression, discouragement, rebellion, and wrong attitudes, emotions, and motives. Satan also accuses and condemns, causes confusion, and promotes compromise, rebellion, and tormenting thoughts like fear. Satan also blinds the minds of unbelievers.

What you program into your mind affects your thinking. What you watch, listen to, read, and the people with whom you interact--these all affect your thinking.

God wants you to have a victorious mind. He wants you to have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16).

DEALING WITH THE MIND AND THOUGHTS:

Ask forgiveness for wrong thinking. If you have been thinking negative and/or sinful thoughts, ask God to forgive you.

Guard what you see and hear. Do not program negative and sinful things into your mind. Do not let your mind become a dumping ground for dirty jokes and gossip.

Take control of your thoughts. The Bible says that as believers *"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ"* (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Set your mind on God by immersing yourself in His Word. Isaiah 26:3 declares: *"You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you."*

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT THE MIND THOUGHTS:

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)

Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth. (Psalm 26:2-3)

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. (Isaiah

26:3)

Yet you know me, O Lord; you see me and test my thoughts about you. (Jeremiah 12:3)

The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks. (Luke 6:45)

Those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. (Romans 8:5)

But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:16)

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5)

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. (1 Corinthians 13:11)

Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. (1 Corinthians 14:20)

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5)

Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things. (Philippians 4:8)

Watch your life and doctrine closely. (1 Timothy 4:16)

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus. (Hebrews 3:1)

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

Improper Thinking.

In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. (Psalm 10:4)

How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? ... But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. (Psalm 13:2-6)

The Lord detests the thoughts of the wicked, but those of the pure are pleasing to him. (Proverbs 15:26)

Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. (Isaiah 55:7)

Wash the evil from your heart and be saved. How long will you harbor wicked thoughts? (Jeremiah 4:14)

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man "unclean"; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him "unclean." (Matthew 15:19-20)

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment." (Matthew 22:37-38)

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Romans 1:21)

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires. The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. (Romans 8:5-7)

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)

Many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. (Philippians 3:18-19)

Negative mindsets to avoid.

- A carnal mind: Romans 8:6-7
- A mind alienated from God: Colossians 1:21
- A defiled mind: Titus 1:15
- A fleshly mind: Ephesians 2:3
- A hardened mind: Daniel 5:20
- A doubtful mind: Luke 12:29
- A vain mind: Ephesians 4:17
- A blinded mind: 2 Corinthians 3:14
- A seared mind and conscience: Titus 1:15

- A despitiful mind: Ezekiel 36:5
- An evil mind: Acts 14:2
- An unbelieving mind: 2 Corinthians 4:4
- A fainting mind: Hebrews 12:3
- A reprobate mind: 2 Timothy 3:8
- A double minded mind: James 1:8; 4:8
- A corrupt mind: 1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 3:8; 2 Corinthians 11:3
- A reprobate mind: Romans 1:28-32.

Positive mental qualities to develop:

- A ready mind: 2 Corinthians 8:19; 1 Peter 5:2; Acts 17:11
- A pure mind: 2 Peter 3:1
- A stayed mind: Isaiah 26:3
- A renewed mind: Ephesians 4:23; Romans 12:2
- A humble mind: Colossians 3:12; Acts 20:19
- A sober mind: Titus 2:6
- A sound mind: 2 Timothy 1:7
- A mind of love: Matthew 22:37
- A serving mind: Romans 7:25
- A fully persuaded mind: Romans 14:5
- A fervent mind: 2 Corinthians 7:7
- A willing mind: 2 Corinthians 8:12

MURDER

DEFINITION: To murder is to take the life of another with willful malice and forethought.

FACTS ABOUT MURDER:

Murder is sin. One of the ten commandments given by God was, "*You shall not murder*" (*Exodus 20:13*). Murder is sin, but it is not the unpardonable sin. You can be forgiven by God.

Murder begins in the heart. "*For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander*" (*Matthew 15:19*). Murder is a work of the flesh--the old sinful nature (*Galatians 5:19-21*).

Murder is not the same as self-defense or an accidental killing. Self-defense is permitted by the laws of most governments. People who killed someone accidentally in Bible times were protected from penalties.

Abortion of an unborn child is murder. It is the termination of the life of a human being. An unborn child is a living soul from the moment of conception (*Jeremiah 1:5*; *Psalms 139:13-16*). (See the topic of "Abortion" in this database.)

Murder affects more than the person who was killed. The loss of a life is most tragic, of course, but the friends and family of the one murdered and the one doing the killing are also tragically affected by this sinful act.

The New Testament definition of murder was expanded to include anyone who hates another person: John wrote: "*Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him*" (*1 John 3:15*). You may not have actually murdered someone physically, but you are considered a murderer if you hate someone. The New Testament also makes it clear that if you offend in one sin, you are guilty of all (*James 2:10-11*).

DEALING WITH MURDER:

Ask God for forgiveness. Murder is sin and, as with all sin, you must confess it to God and ask forgiveness. If you have not physically harmed someone but you hate them, you should seek forgiveness for your hatred which, in the New Testament, is equated with murder. These things are works of the flesh--the old sinful nature--and if you continue in them without seeking forgiveness, you will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Ask friends and family for forgiveness. Ask forgiveness of the friends and family of the one you killed. Ask forgiveness of your own friends and family for the tragic circumstances which you put them through.

Make restitution. You will most likely be required to make legal restitution by serving time in prison and you may also make restitution by providing financially for the victim's family.

Forgive yourself. Do not live under the shadow of shame. Although murder is a terrible crime, your sin is forgiven and Jesus bore both your sin and the shame of it on the cross (Hebrews 12:2).

If you are a friend or family member of a murder victim, you must forgive the one who murdered your loved one. The biblical concept of forgiveness is not just for the minor offences in life, but also for the major tragedies that affect our lives.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT MURDER:

You shall not murder. (Exodus 20:13)

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body (Psalm 139:13-16)

This is what the Lord says - he who made you, who formed you in the womb. (Isaiah 44:2)

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart..." (Jeremiah 1:5)

You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment...(Matthew 5:21-22)

"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:38-48)

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. (Matthew 15:19)

Jesus replied, "Do not murder..." (Matthew 19:18)

They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. (Romans 1:29)

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:19-21)

The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Romans 13:9)

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. (James 2:10-11)

You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4:2-3)

If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. (1 Peter 4:15)

Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. (1 John 3:15)

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)

N

NO LISTINGS

OCCULT

DEFINITION: The word "occult" means to "hide or conceal a thing." Cults are organized groups of people who participate in phenomena that is satanically originated. Cults hide and conceal these evil practices behind the cloak of religion. Sometimes they even worship Satan and demons.

FACTS ABOUT THE OCCULT:

The occult is real. Its power is derived from Satan.

The occult has many Satanically-inspired practices. These include astrology and horoscopes which use stars to predict events and give guidance, Ouija boards, levitation, astral projection, and séances. Reading of tea leaves, tarot cards, pictures, bumps on the head, palms of the hand and crystal balls are occult practices used for guidance. Witchcraft is part of the occult--using spells, potions, charms, magic, rituals, séances, divinations, methods of chance, divining rods, visions, drawings, and similar unscriptural methods of guidance. Shamanism, Santeria, New Age, mystics, gurus, and communication with the dead are all part of the occult. As a believer, you are to look to the Lord for guidance, not occult practices like astrology, fortune telling, reading palms or tea leaves (Psalm 37:23; Isaiah 30:21).

You need not fear the occult. If you are a believer, walking in fellowship with God, and not dabbling in Satanic rituals and practices, then the occult holds no power over you (1 John 4:4; Luke 10:19).

Participating in the occult is sin. God warned Israel to avoid every type of Satanic influence. He said to "...destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places" (Numbers 33:52). Read the additional instructions in Deuteronomy 18:9-14. God's people were to have no contact with the work of Satan in any form.

DEALING WITH THE OCCULT:

Pray for forgiveness for participating in the occult. God expressly forbids participating in such practices. It is sin.

Verbally renounce the occult. Renounce any evil oaths you have made and your allegiance and participation in demonic practices.

Destroy anything that relates to the occult. This would include idols, lucky charms, potions, amulets, crystal balls, games, divining devices, and other similar items. This is what people did in the New Testament when they became believers (Acts 19:19). Destroy any evil literature, music, movies, games, etc.

Do not spend time in places where there is demonic influence. The Bible records that God manifested Himself in special places such as in the temple and the upper room of a house on the Day of Pentecost. It is equally true that Satanic power is manifested in places dedicated to evil. This would include places where evil pictures are shown, drinking and riotous behavior is

occurring, séances are being held, worship of Satan is occurring--anywhere sinful practices are going on. Avoid such environments, because Satan's power is especially strong there. You cannot pray the Lord's prayer, "Lead me not into temptation" and then deliberately put yourself in such a place. Do not associate with leaders, teachers, prophets, or ministers of the occult (1 Corinthians 10:20).

Bind the spirits of the occult so that they can no longer operate. Jesus said: *"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven"* (Matthew 18:18).

Avoid anything related to the occult. This includes literature, movies, music, rituals, objects, and fellowship with others in the occult.

Establish habits of prayer and study of God's Word. To avoid being deceived by occult teachings and practices, examine all you hear in light of God's Word. Be like the Bereans of New Testament times who *"...were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so"* (Acts 17:11). Through regular prayer and Bible study, demonic powers will be broken over your life.

Reject any doctrine that is not in the Word of God. The Apostle Paul warned: *"...but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we or an angel from Heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed"* (Galatians 1:7-8).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT THE OCCULT:

Do not practice divination or sorcery. (Leviticus 19:26)

Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 19:31)

I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people. (Leviticus 20:6)

Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols, and demolish all their high places. (Numbers 33:52)

Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12)

When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? (Isaiah 8:19)

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." Then you will defile your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold; you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them, "Away with you!" (Isaiah 30:21-22)

Let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month, let them save you from what is coming upon you. (Isaiah 47:13)

So do not listen to your (*false*) prophets, your diviners, your interpreters of dreams, your mediums or your sorcerers...(Jeremiah 27:9)

No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. (Daniel 2:27-28)

I will destroy your witchcraft and you will no longer cast spells. (Micah 5:12)

"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 18:18)

I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. (Luke 10: 19)

Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power. (Acts 19:18-20)

...I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. (1 Corinthians 10:20-21)

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! (Galatians 1:8-9)

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

Command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work--which is by faith. (1 Timothy 1:3-4)

Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourselves to be godly. (1 Timothy 4:7)

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)

They did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood --idols that cannot see or hear or walk. Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts. (Revelation 9:20-21)

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)

Outside are... those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. (Revelation 22:15)

OPPRESSION

DEFINITION: Oppression is a feeling of being heavily burdened, mentally or physically, by troubles, adverse conditions, anxiety, etc.

FACTS ABOUT OPPRESSION:

Oppression is not the same as possession by evil spirits. Oppression is a spiritual attack from the outside rather than inward possession by demonic powers. Oppression is usually caused by an attack of Satan upon your mind with fear, doubt, worry, torment, etc., that results in a heaviness of spirit--almost like a cloud that surrounds you. A believer can be oppressed, but not possessed because the Holy Spirit cannot abide in the same vessel with a demon.

Oppression can include physical conditions. Read the story of the woman who was oppressed with a physical condition for years and was healed by Jesus (Luke 13:10-11). This woman was not possessed, rather she was oppressed by a demonically-caused physical condition.

How oppressing spirits gain access. Evil spirits of oppression gain access through what you hear and see, through circumstances, and through negative influences by media or people around you.

Jesus came to deliver those oppressed by the devil. That includes you! The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. (1 John 3:8)

God has given you power over oppression--not only over oppression, but over all the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19).

DEALING WITH OPPRESSION:

Recognize that oppression is Satanic. In Luke 13:10-17, the woman's condition was caused by oppression of the enemy. Satan also creates difficult circumstances which cause oppression. These can be easily recognized because they result in confusion--and God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Recognize the signs of oppression. It may be a chronic sickness or a mental oppression that includes mental torment, confusion, doubt, restlessness, or an inability to reason. Emotional manifestations such as withdrawal and crying may also be present.

Determine how oppression is gaining access to your life. Satan causes oppression, but other sources contribute to it such as difficult circumstances and negative input from TV, Internet, music, and unwholesome literature. Deal with these issues and eliminate what is sinful.

Seek forgiveness for oppression that is the result of sin. Confess any sins that may have contributed to the oppression. For example, viewing pornography can result in shame and oppression by the enemy.

Pray a prayer of deliverance. Focus your prayer on the specific problems associated with your oppression. Go to the root cause: Satan and his demonic forces. Bind the spirits of oppression so that they are unable to operate.

Praise and worship the Lord. Satan hates praise and worship and the power of oppression will be broken in the presence of your sacrifice of praise (1 Samuel 16:23). Do it whether you feel like it or not. That is the meaning of a sacrifice of praise.

Eliminate practices that contribute to oppression. These include television programs, music, literature, and negative associates that are contributing to your oppression.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT OPPRESSION:

He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, (Luke 6:17-18)

Behold! I have given you authority and power to trample upon serpents and scorpions, and [physical and mental strength and ability] over all the power that the enemy [possesses]; and nothing shall in any way harm you. (Luke 10:19, AMP)

Read the story of the deliverance of the oppressed woman in Luke 13:10-16.

How God anointed and consecrated Jesus of Nazareth with the [Holy] Spirit and with strength and ability and power; how He went about doing good and, in particular, curing all who were harassed and oppressed by [the power of] the devil, for God was with Him. (Acts 10:38 AMP)

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. (1 John 3:8)

PEACE

DEFINITION: Peace is a condition of quiet, calm, tranquility, and harmony. It is the absence of strife, anxiety, and concern. Peace is not just passivity, because maintaining peace requires directed action on the part of a peacemaker. In Greek, "peace" means to bind together in wholeness.

FACTS ABOUT PEACE:

There are two types of peace. The first is peace *with* God which comes through accepting Christ as Savior (Romans 5:1). After you have made peace with God, you can have the peace *of* God manifested in your life (Philippians 4:7).

You must know God to experience true peace. You will never experience true peace apart from making peace with God. You do this by confessing and repenting of sin and--if you are not a believer--accepting Jesus Christ as Savior. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, enabling you to have both peace with God and the peace of God (Ephesians 2:14).

Lack of peace results from wrong attitudes and sinful actions. Worries over provision--a job, housing, clothes, food, money to pay bills--often result in a lack of peace. Jesus said not to concern yourself with these things (Matthew 6:31-34). Unconfessed sin will also cause you to lose your peace.

Lack of peace can be caused by tormenting spirits. Demonic spirits bring tormenting thoughts that steal your peace.

Peace is a gift from God. It is a spiritual legacy bestowed by Jesus: *"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 14:27).

Peace is a Fruit of the Holy Spirit. As one of the Fruit of the Spirit, it is a virtue that is to be developed in the lives of all believers (Galatians 5:22).

Peace is a benefit of the atonement of Christ. The Prophet Isaiah declared: *"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed"* (Isaiah 53:5).

Confusion is the opposite of peace. God is not the author of confusion, rather He is the God of peace (1 Corinthians 14:33).

DEALING WITH PEACE:

Make peace with God. If you do not know Jesus as Savior or there is known sin in your life, make peace with God. Confess, repent, and ask forgiveness. There is no peace without the Prince of Peace. You must have peace with God in order to experience the peace of God.

Bind tormenting spirits. Bind the spirits that bring confusion and the tormenting thoughts that cause you to lose your peace. Loose the spirit of peace to operate in your life.

Accept peace as a gift from God. Just as you accepted salvation, accept peace as God's gift to you (John 14:27) and a Fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

Ask God to transform your mind. Lack of peace begins with your thought life...*"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:1-2).*

Keep your mind focused on God. Despite adversities and the circumstances of life, keep your mind focused on God (Isaiah 26:3). You can do this through continual prayer and study of the Word, for one of the purposes of the Word is to bring peace (John 16:33).

Allow peace to reign. You must allow or "let" the peace of God to reign in your life despite the circumstances: *"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace" (Colossians 3:15).*

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT PEACE:

I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.
(Psalm 4:8)

The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace. (Psalm 29:11)

Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. (Psalm 34:14)

Consider the blameless, observe the upright; there is a future for the man of peace. (Psalm 37:37)

When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.
(Proverbs 3:24)

When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.
(Proverbs 16:7)

The beginning of strife is like releasing water; Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts. (Proverbs 17:14, NKJV)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. (Isaiah 26:3)

The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. (Isaiah 32:17)

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea. (Isaiah 48:18)

"There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked." (Isaiah 48:22)

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54:10)

All your sons will be taught by the Lord, and great will be your children's peace. (Isaiah 54:13)

You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. (Isaiah 55:12)

"I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future ." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. (Matthew 5:9)

Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another. (Mark 9:50, NKJV)

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 14:27)

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have

trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; (Romans 8:6)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. (Romans 12:18)

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (Romans 14:17)

Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. (Romans 14:19, KJV)

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Romans 15:13)

For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. (1 Corinthians 14:33)

...Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. (2 Corinthians 13:11)

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

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. (Ephesians 2:14-18)

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3)

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7, NKJV)

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (Colossians 1:19-20)

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. (Colossians 3:15).

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all. (2 Thessalonians 3:16, NKJV)

Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14)

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace. (James 3:17-18, ASV)

Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. (1 Peter 3:11, NKJV)

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

PEER PRESSURE

DEFINITION: Peer pressure is the influence that a group or an individual exerts over someone that encourages them to change their attitudes, values, or behaviors to conform to group norms.

FACTS ABOUT PEER PRESSURE:

There are both positive and negative influences in life. You must make decisions each day about which of these you will allow to influence you. Positive peer pressure that encourages you to do good is not a problem. It is the negative peer pressure of ungodly influences in your life which you must learn to confront and conquer.

You are influenced by those with whom you associate. The Bible says *"Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character"* (1 Corinthians 15:33). Proverbs warns: *"Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared"* (Proverbs 22:24-25). Substitute any negative influence for the words "hot-tempered" and the result is the same--if you run with someone who is dishonest, you learn their ways. If you hang out with a liar, you will become one too.

You should be an example instead of following bad examples. Paul told a young believer named Timothy: *"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity"* (1 Timothy 4:12-13). Jesus said you were to follow His example (John 13:15) and that as a believer you are His ambassador to the world (1 Corinthians 5:20). Do not be a clone. Be an example. You are to be the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13). Tasteless salt is worthless (Mark 9:50). As a follower of Christ it is your responsibility to flavor the world around you so it will be positively impacted for God.

Doing things because "everyone else is doing them" is idolatry. The Lord said that Israel imitated the sinful nations around them, although God had ordered them not to do so. They followed idolatrous people and became idolatrous themselves (2 Kings 17:15). When you decide to do something because "everyone else is doing it", you are establishing those unsaved people as an idol in your life--imitating them and adhering to their standards instead of following God.

DEALING WITH PEER PRESSURE:

Do not blame God when you yield to peer pressure. The Bible 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 one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away 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).

Repent of conforming to negative peer pressure. If you have been yielding to pressure to do things that are not in harmony with God's Word, you have sinned. Confess, repent, and ask God

to forgive you.

Rebuke the fear of man. The Bible says that the fear of man is a spiritual snare which entraps you in their ways (Proverbs 29:25).

Determine that you will obey God rather than man. The disciples took their stand against "peer pressure", even when facing possible imprisonment and death. Peter and the other apostles declared: "*We must obey God rather than men!*" (Acts 5:29).

Renew your mind in the Word of God. This will enable you to be transformed instead of conforming to the world (Romans 12:1-2).

Do not be unequally yoked in relationships. The Bible warns believers: "*Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." "Therefore come out from them and be separate," says the Lord. "Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters"*" (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). Break close relationships with those who exert pressure for you to look, act, think, or talk in ways that are not in harmony with God's Word.

Form positive relationships. Make friends with fellow-believers who are seeking to live by the Word of God. You can be friendly to everyone, but your close relationships should be with those who have like spiritual goals. Find friends at church, at Bible study groups, or through Christian social organizations. Find a prayer partner as well, one with whom you can pray regularly.

Do not become involved in the troubles of others. Some people want to involve you in their messes and even take delight in getting you into trouble. The moment you are tempted to become involved in another person's issues, you end up as part of their troubles. The Bible warns: "*Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence"* (Proverbs 4:14-17, KJV).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT PEER PRESSURE:

Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. (Exodus 23:2)

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2)

Away from me, you evildoers, that I may keep the commands of my God! (Psalm 119:115)

My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them. If they say, "Come along with us; let's lie in wait for someone's blood, let's waylay some harmless soul; let's swallow them alive, like the grave, and whole, like those who go down to the pit; we will get all sorts of valuable things and fill our houses with plunder; throw in your lot with us, and we will share a common purse"--my son, do not go along with them, do not set foot on their paths; for their feet rush into sin, they are swift to shed blood. (Proverbs 1:10-16)

Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. (Proverbs 4:14-17. KJV)

Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared. (Proverbs 22:24-25)

Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags. (Proverbs 23:20-21)

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe. (Proverbs 29:25)

Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!" (Acts 5:29)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transform. (Romans 12:1-2)

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." "Therefore come out from them and be separate," says the Lord. "Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters. (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character. (1 Corinthians 15:33)

Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ. (Galatians 1:10)

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12-13)

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away 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)

PERFECTIONISM

DEFINITION: Perfectionism is the rigorous rejection of anything that is less than perfect, a driving demand to be absolutely flawless in every area.

FACTS ABOUT PERFECTIONISM:

We live in an imperfect world. We are created in God's image, and as He desires perfection so do we. But there is nothing absolutely perfect in this world other than God. That is why a relationship with Him is the only thing that satisfies the need for perfection. Even the great Apostle Paul described a less than perfect missions outreach: *"We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life" (1 Corinthians 1:8).* The Apostle James pointed out that *"...we all stumble" (James 3:2).*

Perfectionism is a form of pride. You cannot admit to yourself or others that you are less than perfect. You take pride in everything you do being absolutely flawless. Perfectionism is performance-based rather than faith-based conduct.

Extreme perfectionism leads to and results from other problems. These include fear of failure and feelings of rejection because you are less than perfect. A poor self-image and an attitude of defeatism may result because nothing is ever good enough. An obsessive compulsive disorder can also develop, a driving force that dictates that everything has to be flawless and causes you to repeat actions excessively to be sure things are absolutely perfect.

Perfectionism is not the same as maturity in Christ. The Bible has many commands for believers to be "perfect" When the Bible speaks of being perfect in Christ it means to be complete in Christ and spiritually mature. It does not mean you will never sin or make mistakes.

We all fall short of being perfect. A major purpose of the Word is to confirm that we fall short of perfection: *"This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:22-24).*

DEALING WITH PERFECTIONISM:

Admit that you are not perfect. We have all sinned and we all make mistakes (Romans 3:22-24).

Forget the past and focus on the future. The Apostle Paul, who made many mistakes in his past, declared: *"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12-14).*

Accept God's gift of grace. God's grace covers your past, present, and future sins and mistakes. Accept His gift of grace to cover your sins and imperfections: *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"* (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Accept that Jesus bore your sins. All of your sins, imperfections, and mistakes were taken by Jesus to the cross. He bore them so that you do not have to bear them: *"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all"* (Isaiah 53:6).

Rely on God's perfection instead of your own. God and His Word are perfect. Rely on these instead of your own effort. *"As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless"* (Psalm 18:30). It is God who will make your way--all that you do and say--perfect (Psalm 18:32). Instead of relying on your perfectionism, focus on His Presence.

Focus on spiritual growth. Focus on eternal values rather than emphasizing temporal performance. Many of the imperfections that you fret over are temporal things of the world which will pass away (1 John 2:15). Keep your focus on eternal things *"...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 1:6).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT PERFECTIONISM:

As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless. (Psalm 18:30)

It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. (Psalm 18:32)

There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins. (Ecclesiastes 7:20)

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

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

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift

of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

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

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12-14)

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

...we all stumble....(James 3:2)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (1 John 1:8-10)

PERSECUTION

DEFINITION: Persecution is the act of subjecting someone to cruel and unfair treatment because of their ethnic origin, political views, or religious beliefs. The biblical definition includes harassing, punishing, oppressing, or even killing those who serve God and refuse to deny Him.

FACTS ABOUT PERSECUTION:

The targets of persecution. The Bible reveals that true believers--those who proclaim God's Word and live by His commandments--are the targets of persecution.

All who live godly will suffer persecution. The Apostle Paul warned: *"In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12).*

Reasons for persecution include misunderstanding, jealousy, revenge, opposition, hatred of God and His Word, and Satanically-inspired motives.

The root causes of persecution in a biblical sense are wicked men who are motivated by Satanic powers to oppose God, His Word, all that is good, and believers who choose to follow the Lord. The world hates believers because they are not of this world (John 17:14-18).

You are actually blessed when you are persecuted. Matthew 5:11-12 says: *"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

DEALING WITH PERSECUTION:

Pray that you will be delivered from persecution. "Deliver us from evil" is part of the model prayer (Matthew 6:13). Paul said to *"...pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith" (2 Thessalonians 3:2).* David prayed *"save and deliver me from all who pursue me" (Psalm 7:1).*

Forgive those who persecute you. You must extend to those who persecute you the same forgiveness that you have received (Matthew 6:12).

Love those who persecute you. Jesus said, *"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies..."(Matthew 5:43).*

Pray for your enemies. Jesus said: *"...pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:44-45).* You are to pray blessings over those who persecute you (Romans 12:14).

Know that nothing can separate you from God's love--not even persecution or death (Romans 8:35-39).

Keep your focus on eternity. If you suffer with Him and in His behalf, you will be glorified with Him (Romans 8:16-18)

Know that God's grace is sufficient. No matter what you suffer, His grace is sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). You will have sufficient grace to help you in times of need (Hebrews 4:16).

Do not back down. If you are suffering because of your Christian witness, do not back down. The disciples suffered in this way, but they determined to continue to minister the Gospel and to obey God rather than man (Acts 4:18-20; 5:28-29).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT PERSECUTION:

O Lord my God, I take refuge in you; save and deliver me from all who pursue me. (Psalm 7:1)

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:10-12)

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:43-45)

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (Matthew 6:12)

But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. This will result in your being witnesses to them. But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. All men will hate you because of me. But not a hair of your head will perish. By standing firm you will gain life. (Luke 21:12-19)

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me (John 15:18-21)

All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this, so

that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you. (John 16:1-4)

I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. (John 17:14-16)

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:18-20)

"We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood." Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!" (Acts 5:28-29)

They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. (Acts 14:21-22)

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. (Romans 12:14)

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. (2 Corinthians 4:8-9)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith. (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2)

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (2 Timothy 3:12)

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. (Hebrews 11:24-26)

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. (1 Peter 4:12-16)

POLYGAMY

DEFINITION: Polygamy is having multiple spouses at the same time. While this is forbidden by law in many nations, it is still practiced in some cultures.

FACTS ABOUT POLYGAMY:

God's plan is one man, one woman for life. God created a wife for Adam and His plan was that the two become one (Matthew 19:4-6). Divorce was not in God's original plan, but was permitted later because of the "hardness of man's heart" (Matthew 19:8). Polygamy was permitted in Old Testament times, but was not God's original plan.

The first polygamous marriage was Lamech, who took two wives (Genesis 4:19).

Polygamous relationships, although common in the Old Testament, were not successful.

For an example, study the family of the Old Testament patriarch Jacob. There was constant friction between his two wives, Leah and Rachel, and their children. Abraham did not officially marry his wife's hand-maiden, Hagar, but he had sexual relationships with her and it resulted in trouble between her and Sarah and their children. The wives of Solomon caused great difficulties and eventually turned his heart away from God (1 Kings 11:3-4). Polygamous relationships in the Old Testament demonstrate the wisdom of God's original plan for one man to have one wife for life.

Polygamy is adultery on a permanent basis. The New Testament says that marriage to another partner while the first partner is still living is adultery (Romans 7:1-3).

A polygamous person should not be a leader in the church. First Timothy 3:2 requires that an elder in a congregation be the husband of only one wife. This does not mean that if a former wife has died or he has a biblically justified divorce he cannot serve. It means that he should not have any polygamous unions.

Polygamy is sin. No one who continues in sexual sins will inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

Sexual sin can be forgiven. As in the case of all sin of which you confess and repent, God will forgive sexual sin. First Corinthians 6:9-10 lists many types of sins, including fornicators and adulterers. Then 1 Corinthians 6: 11 declares: *"And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."* These believers repented of their sexual sins and were forgiven.

Who is the true mate? In a culture where a man is married to multiple wives, the first wife is the rightful mate if she desires to remain. Since the husband has actually committed adultery by taking additional wives, she has a right to leave according to God's Word. If she chooses to remain, the other wives must be dealt with in an honorable way. The husband should provide financially for them and children of their union.

DEALING WITH POLYGAMY:

Repent of polygamy. As with any other sin, confession and repentance is required.

Change your lifestyle. A man with multiple wives should remain with his first wife--if she agrees--while continuing to provide for his other wives and children financially. Sexual relationships with all other wives should cease.

Cease any involvement with polygamy. This would include religions that foster it, people that practice it, and Internet websites, literature, or media that promote it.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT POLYGAMY:

Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. (Genesis 2:22-24)

He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. (Deuteronomy 17:17)

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." (Matthew 19:4-6)

I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery. (Matthew 19:9)

...by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. (Romans 7:2-3)

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. (1 Corinthians 7:2)

Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. (1 Timothy 3:2-3)

PORNOGRAPHY

DEFINITION: Pornography is sexually explicit material including films, magazines, books, photographs, images, and Internet sites that are intended to cause sexual arousal.

FACTS ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY:

Pornography is sin. Jesus said if you even look and lust after a person, it is the same as committing the sin of adultery (Matthew 5:28). Because pornography is sin, even a married couple should not engage in it together. By lusting after the images they view, they are sinning. They are also supporting the porn industry by purchasing and viewing such materials. Would you take a porn magazine to church with you? God is just as present in your bedroom as He is at church because you are His temple.

Pornography is not a victimless crime. The person who posed for the erotic photo or movie is a victim, as well as the one viewing it because you have become a mark for pornographers to peddle their evils. If you are married, your mate is also a victim because you are secretly committing adultery in your heart by lusting after these images. Pornography also victimizes innocent children who are used to produce porn and results in sexually transmitted diseases and feelings of low self-worth in those who produce it. It is not a victimless crime!

Pornography leads to sex crimes. Many convicted rapists and murderers have stated that the first step on their road to crime was viewing pornography. A prime example in the United States was convicted serial killer Ted Bundy, who confirmed that pornography is what led to his raping and killing numerous women.

Pornography is associated with drugs. Many of the people who pose for photos or perform sex acts for pornographic movies must get "high" in order to perform such degrading acts.

Temptation enters through the eye gate. Read the story of David's adultery recorded in 2 Samuel 11. His sin began with temptation that began by viewing Bathsheba bathing on a roof top and noting that she "was very beautiful to look upon."

DEALING WITH PORNOGRAPHY:

Ask God for forgiveness. Pornography is sin and, as any sin, requires confession and repentance before God.

Bind the pornographic spirit from operating. Pornography is lust, and lust is a demonic spirit. Pray a prayer rejecting it and binding it from operating in your life.

Make no provision for your flesh (Romans 13:14). Do a spiritual housecleaning and get rid of any pornographic material--literature, videos, pictures, etc. Do not access porn sites on the Internet. If cable TV and the Internet are too great of temptations to you for viewing porn, have them disconnected.

Make Psalm 51 your prayer: This is the Psalm prayed by David after his adultery with Bathsheba which began by lustful "looking." Make this psalm your prayer.

Make a new commitment to your spouse. Ask their forgiveness for the behavior in which you have been engaging.

Make a new commitment to the Word of God and prayer. Use the time you were spending on porn to develop positive spiritual habits. Turn to the Word of God and prayer anytime you are tempted to view porn.

Memorize some of the verses listed below and quote them when you are tempted.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY:

I will set before my eyes no vile thing. (Psalm 101:3)

Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word. (Psalm 119:37)

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. (Proverbs 4:23)

"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:27-28)

Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good (Romans 12:9)

Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. (Romans 13:14)

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. (2 Corinthians 6:9-10)

Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. (Ephesians 5:11-12)

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy---think about such things. (Philippians 4:8)

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7)

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away 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)

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. (1 Peter 2:11)

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

PRAYER

DEFINITION: Prayer is talking to God and with God, whether it be spoken or silent conversation. Prayer is a direct line to Heaven, allowing you to communicate with God. It includes praise and worship, petition, confession, repentance, and intercession.

FACTS ABOUT PRAYER:

The greatest prayer. The greatest prayer is the prayer asking forgiveness for sin and accepting Christ as Savior (Luke 18:13).

Prayer is described as calling upon the name of the Lord (Genesis 12:8); crying unto God (Psalms 27:7; 34:6); drawing near to God (Psalms 73:28; Hebrews 10:22); looking up (Psalms 5:3); lifting up the soul (Psalms 25:1); lifting up the heart (Lamentations 3:41); pouring out the heart (Psalms 62:8); pouring out the soul (1 Samuel 1:15); crying to Heaven (2 Chronicles 32:20); beseeching the Lord (Exodus 32:11); seeking God (Job 8:5); seeking the face of the Lord (Psalms 27:8); making supplication (Job 8:5; Jeremiah 36:7).

There are three levels of intensity in prayer. Asking, seeking, and knocking (Matthew 7:7-8). Asking is the first level of prayer. It is simply presenting a request to God and receiving an immediate answer. Seeking is a deeper level of prayer where answers are not as immediate as at the asking level. Knocking is prayer that persists when answers are longer in coming.

Believers have great power in prayer. Through prayer, you have power over the enemy (Luke 9:1); power over sin (John 20:23); power to extend the gospel (Matthew 9:37); and power to bind and loose spiritual forces (Matthew 12:28-29; 16:19). Your prayers are powerful because of the name of Jesus (John 16:23-24) and His blood that secured your victory (Hebrews 10:19-23).

The Bible reveals that prayer is answered immediately at times (Isaiah 65:24; Daniel 9:21-23); delayed at times (Luke 18:7); different from your desires (2 Corinthians 12:8-9); and beyond your expectations (Jeremiah 33:3; Ephesians 3:20).

Organizing for prayer. Prayer can be made on an individual basis (Matthew 6:6); with two people praying together (Matthew 18:19); and in small groups (Matthew 18:20).

DEALING WITH PRAYER:

Never condemn a person or feel condemned for lack of prayer. Prayer is a wonderful opportunity, not an obligation that must be fulfilled. View prayer as something you might be missing rather than something you should be doing. It is not a burden, but an opportunity.

Set a special time and place to pray to God each day. You can pray anytime as you go throughout the day--and you should--but you should also have a set time and place to devote yourself solely to prayer. You plan for dinner, recreation, work, and others things. Plan for prayer!

Open your heart to receive God's guidance when you pray. Let Him know that you want to change, and invite Him to guide you in living a Spirit-filled life and being a better person. Give thanks for both good and bad circumstances in your life, as both carry lessons to teach you the right and wrong ways to approach life. Use your prayer time to ask God for help and to give thanks, confess your sins, and seek comfort and guidance.

Use the model prayer in Mathew 6:9-13 as a format for your prayer. Each phrase can be used as an outline point through which you can worship God, pray for His Kingdom around the world, pray that His will be done in your life and the lives of others, ask for and extend forgiveness, ask for provision in every area of life, and intercede for protection from temptation and the evil powers of Satan. The prayer includes an appeal for "daily bread", so it assumes that you will talk to God each day on a regular basis.

Listen for God to speak to you Prayer is communication, and a one-way conversation does not last long. When you pray, expect God to speak to you. Most often He will do this through His written Word or by a "still small voice" that seems to speak to your heart. Sometimes He will give you a vision, a prophetic word, or interpret back to your spirit what you have prayed in your heavenly prayer language.

Align your life with the purposes and priorities of God. Pray for wisdom concerning every area of your life and the forthcoming day (James 4:2). God will show you the things that need to be done and how to do things better. He will help you discern what is and is not important, and how to use your time to accomplish His priorities and purposes.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT PRAYER:

Biblical guidelines for prayer. Study the following references in your Bible.

-Prayer is to be made to God:	Psalms 5:2
-Quality rather than quantity is stressed:	Matthew 6:7
-Empty repetition is forbidden, but sincere repetition is not:	Daniel 6:10; Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-8
-Pray with understanding (in a known tongue):	Ephesians 6:18
-Pray in the Spirit in tongues:	Romans 8:26; Jude 20
-Intercede according to the will of God:	1 John 5:14-15
-Pray in secret:	Matthew 6:6
-Pray always:	Luke 21:36; Ephesians 6:18
-Pray continually without ceasing:	Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:17
-Intercede to the Father in the name of Jesus:	John 14:13-14
-Pray with a watchful attitude:	1 Peter 4:7
-Pray using the example of the model prayer:	Matthew 6:9-13
-Pray with a forgiving spirit:	Mark 11:25
-Pray with humility:	Matthew 6:7
-Accompany prayer with fasting:	Matthew 17:21
-Intercede fervently:	James 5:16; Colossians 4:12
-Pray with submission to God:	Luke 22:42
-Use the strategies of binding and loosing:	Matthew 16:19

What to pray for. Study the following Biblical references which reveal what you are to

intercede for:

-The peace of Jerusalem:	Psalms 122:6
-Laborers in the harvest:	Matthew 9:38; Luke 10:2
-That you enter not into temptation:	Luke 22:40-46;
-Those who despitely use you (your enemies):	Luke 6:28
-All the saints:	Ephesians 6:18
-The sick:	James 5:14
-For others (bearing others burdens):	James 5:16; 1 Samuel 12:23
-For all men, kings, and those in authority:	1 Timothy 2:1-4
-For daily needs:	Matthew 6:11
-For wisdom:	James 1:5
-For healing:	James 5:14-15
-For forgiveness:	Matthew 6:12
-For God's will and Kingdom to be established:	Matthew 6:10
-For relief from affliction:	James 5:13
-For unity in the Body of Christ:	John 17
-For the persecuted church around the world:	Hebrews 13:3

Hindrances to effective prayer. Identifying hindrances to your prayer life is not enough. You must also ask God to help you to eliminate them. Also remember that what seems to be unanswered prayer does not mean there are spiritual hindrances in your prayer life. Answers to prayer may be delayed (Luke 18:7) or answered differently from your desires (2 Corinthians 12:8-9). Here are some common hindrances to effective prayer.

-Sin of any kind:	Isaiah 59:1-2; Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 1:15; Proverbs 28:9
-Idols in the heart:	Ezekiel 14:1-3
-An unforgiving spirit:	Mark 11:25; Matthew 5:23 Proverbs 21:13; James 4:3
-Power hungry, manipulative prayers:	James 4:2-3
-Wrong treatment of marriage partner:	1 Peter 3:7
-Self-righteousness:	Luke 18:10-14
-Unbelief:	James 1:6-7
-Not abiding in Christ and His Word:	John 15:7
-Lack of compassion:	Proverbs 21:13
-Hypocrisy, pride, meaningless repetition:	Matthew 6:5; Job 35:12-13
-Not asking according to the will of God:	James 4:2-3
-Not asking in Jesus' name:	John 16:24
-Satanic demonic hindrances:	Daniel 10:10-13; Ephesians 6:12
-Not seeking first the Kingdom:	Matthew 6:33

When you don't know how to pray, allow the Holy Spirit pray through you: Romans 8:26

Study Christ's prayer for you. John 17

PREJUDICE

DEFINITION: Prejudice is an unfavorable opinion formed on the basis of insufficient knowledge, inaccurate stereotypes, or irrational feelings. It is an unfounded hatred, fear, or mistrust of a person or group based on race, nationality, religious, or social status.

FACTS ABOUT PREJUDICE:

Prejudice can take many forms. It may appear in how one talks--through slander, criticism, innuendos, or inappropriate racial jokes. It may also affect one's actions through discrimination, avoidance, cliques, exclusion, abuse, and even murder.

Prejudice hinders positive relationships. It causes you to close your mind and heart towards other people and different people groups.

Prejudice can be learned. For example, if parents are prejudice against a certain race of people by their conversation or actions, they may pass these prejudicial attitudes on to their children.

Prejudice can be the result of negative experiences. For example, a black man who is attacked by a white man, may develop a prejudice against all white people.

God does not show favoritism. According to Romans 2:11, God does not show favoritism, nor should we.

God does not judge by external appearance. God looks on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). He does not judge by external factors (Galatians 2:6).

DEALING WITH PREJUDICE:

Ask forgiveness for your prejudices. The Bible says your own judgment or prejudice condemns you: *"You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things"* (Romans 2:1).

Forgive those who have shown prejudice against you. If you have been discriminated against in employment, housing, or personal relationships, forgive the offender. By forgiving, you are not setting them free from their sinful prejudices, but you are setting yourself free from the effects of it.

Stop judging by mere appearances and make a right judgment based on God's Word: *"Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment"* (John 7:24).

Accept others as Christ accepts you. Accepting others with the same grace and mercy that you are accepted by Christ brings glory to God. (Romans 15:7)

Make friends among different racial, social, and religious groups. How can you reach them

with the gospel if you are prejudice against them and isolate yourself?

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT PREJUDICE:

Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him. (Exodus 22:21)

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. (Acts 10:34-35)

Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment. (John 7:24)

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. (Romans 2:1)

For God does not show favoritism. (Romans 2:11)

For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile-the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'" (Romans 10:12-13)

Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. (Romans 12:16)

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. (Romans 15:7)

As for those who seemed to be important--whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance (Galatians 2:6)

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:26-29)

And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him. (Ephesians 6:9)

My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong? If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment! (James 2:1-12)

PRIDE

DEFINITION: Pride is a feeling of haughty superiority demonstrated by someone who thinks they are better than others. It is an inflated sense of one's self-worth, skills, intelligence, accomplishments, or position. Conceit, vanity, arrogance, boasting, egotism, and haughtiness are other words that describe pride.

FACTS ABOUT PRIDE:

Pride was the original sin. It was because of pride that Satan fell from his exalted position in heaven (Isaiah 14:13). It was the appeal of pride--knowing all things--that resulted in the first sin by mankind (Genesis 3).

Attributes of pride. Boasting is one evidence of pride. Another is putting other people down to elevate self and gloating over the misfortunes of others. Pride is also marked by a haughty attitude and a tendency to perform good deeds in order to receive honor from men (Matthew 23:5-6, 13-16). Pride makes one self-sufficient apart from God. Pride deceives you into thinking you are better than others and that you cannot fall into sin. Pride keeps you from seeking God (Psalm 10:4) and exalts self against the knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Pride is a sin. Pride is rebellion against God because it attributes to self the honor due to God alone. God hates pride (Proverbs 6:16) and everyone who is proud is an abomination to the Lord (Proverbs 16:5).

Pride is the root of all sin. As the first sin, pride is the root of all sin. All sins can be traced back to the original root of pride.

DEALING WITH PRIDE:

Ask God to reveal pride in your life. Prideful behavior may have been such a part of your life that you do not even recognize its manifestations. Ask God to show you attitudes or attributes of pride in your life so you can deal with them.

Ask God for forgiveness. Pride is sin--in fact it is one of the seven sins most hated by God. As with any other sin, pride requires confession and repentance.

Humble yourself before God. Humility is the opposite of pride. We are commanded to "humble ourselves" as an act of our will (James 4:10). Seek to serve others rather than being a "star".

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT PRIDE:

You will save the humble people; But Your eyes are on the haughty, that You may bring them down. (2 Samuel 22:28, NKJV)

Read 2 Kings 5: Naaman's pride almost caused him to miss a miracle!

In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises. He boasts of the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the Lord. In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. (Psalm 10:2-4)

May the Lord cut off all flattering lips and every boastful tongue that says, "We will triumph with our tongues; we own our lips--who is our master?" (Psalm 12:3)

You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty. (Psalm 18:27)

For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin. (Psalm 36:2)

Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods. (Psalm 40:4)

Why do you boast of evil, you mighty man? Why do you boast all day long, you who are a disgrace in the eyes of the God? (Psalm 52:1)

Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. (Psalm 73:6)

Whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, him will I not endure. (Psalm 101:5)

Though the Lord is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar. (Psalm 138:6)

He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble. (Proverbs 3:34)

There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers. (Proverbs 6:16-19)

To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. (Proverbs 8:13)

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. (Proverbs 11:2)

Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice. (Proverbs 13:10)

The Lord tears down the proud man's house but he keeps the widow's boundaries intact. (Proverbs 15:25)

The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 16:5)

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18)

Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor. (Proverbs 18:12)

A haughty look, a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked are sin. (Proverbs 21:4)

By humility and the fear of the Lord Are riches and honor and life. (Proverbs 22:4)

It is not good to eat too much honey, nor is it honorable to seek one's own honor. (Proverbs 25:27)

Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth. Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips. (Proverbs 27:1-2)

A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor. (Proverbs 29:23)

The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride. (Ecclesiastes 7:8)

The eyes of the arrogant man will be humbled and the pride of men brought low; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. The Lord Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled), (Isaiah 2:11-12)

The arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled. (Isaiah 2:17)

I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. (Isaiah 13:11)

You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. (Isaiah 14:13-15)

For this is what the high and lofty One says--he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite. (Isaiah 57:15)

This is the one I esteem: He who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word. (Isaiah 66:2)

And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit. (Ezekiel 16:50)

Read Daniel 4. King Nebuchadnezzar's pride resulted in a harsh punishment from God.

But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal

throne and stripped of his glory. He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like cattle; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and sets over them anyone he wishes. (Daniel 5:20-21)

"The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, 'Who can bring me down to the ground?' Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down," declares the Lord. (Obadiah 3-4)

For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. (Matthew 23:13)

He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'" (Mark 7:21-23)

He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones, but has lifted up the humble. (Luke 1:51-52)

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. (Luke 14:11)

So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty." (Luke 17:10)

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

For they loved praise from men more than praise from God. (John 12:43)

They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1:30-32)

Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. (Romans 12:3)

Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10)

Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. (Romans 12:16)

He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. (1 Corinthians 1:28-29)

Let him who boasts boast in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 1:31)

So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. (1 Corinthians 3:7)

For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

But, Let him who boasts boast in the Lord. For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends. (2 Corinthians 10:17-18)

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

If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. (Galatians 6:3)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. (Philippians 2:3)

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. (Philippians 2:5-7)

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God--having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (James 4:6)

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (James 4:10)

You boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. (James 4:16)

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the

humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. (1 Peter 5:5-6)

For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:16-17)

PROFANITY

DEFINITION: Profanity is language or behavior that shows disrespect for God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit including misuse of their names. It is vulgar and irreverent language or behavior, including jokes or innuendos that mock that which is holy.

FACTS ABOUT PROFANITY:

Your words are powerful. The Bible says that death and life are in your words (Proverbs 18:21). When you use profanity, you are speaking words of death because profanity is sin and God will judge it.

The tongue is unruly. It is compared to a fire (James 3:5); a burning fire (Proverbs 16:27); a world of iniquity (James 3:6); a beast that needs taming (James 3:7-8); a fountain of either fresh or bitter water (James 3:11); a tree bearing either good or evil fruit (James 3:12); an unruly evil (James 3:8); deadly poison (James 3:8); a sharp razor (Psalms 52:2); a sharp sword (Psalms 57:4; 59:7); a poisonous serpent (Psalms 140:3); a deep pit (Proverbs 22:14).

What you speak comes from your heart. Profane words come from your own heart--not because someone made you angry or because you learned the words from your parents or friends. (Matthew 12:34).

Profanity is sin. The Bible declares: *"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name"* (Exodus 20:7).

DEALING WITH PROFANITY:

Recognize your mouth is your responsibility. You will give account for every word you speak, including profanity that takes the name of God and holy things in vain. (Matthew 12:36-37)

Ask God to forgive you. Profanity is sin and, as in the case of all sin, requires confession and repentance.

Ask God to change your heart. The words you speak come from your heart, so you need a change of heart (Matthew 15:18-20).

Ask God to guard your words. David said: *"...I have resolved that my mouth will not sin"* (Psalm 17:3b).

Think before you speak. Proverbs says to clap your hand over your mouth if necessary (Proverbs 15:28).

Separate yourself from those who cannot control their tongues. The Bible says to *"Stay away from a foolish man, for you will not find knowledge on his lips"* (Proverbs 14:7). Do not hang out with them and allow them to pour their filthy, godless, profane words into your spirit.

Excuse yourself when others are using profanity. If they ask why you are leaving, tell them! If they are bold enough to use that kind of language, you should be bold enough to confront it.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT PROFANITY:

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. (Exodus 20:7)

...I have resolved that my mouth will not sin. (Psalm 17:3b)

I said, "I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth. "
(Psalm 39:1-2a)

They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. (Psalm 139:20)

Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. (Proverbs 4:24)

The lips of the righteous know what is fitting, but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse.
(Proverbs 10:32)

The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.
(Proverbs 15:28)

The tongue has the power of life and death... (Proverbs 18:21)

Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a fool whose lips are perverse. (Proverbs 19:1)

Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest.
(Proverbs 26:2)

Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. (Ecclesiastes 5:6)

But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matthew 12:36-37)

But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. (Matthew 15:18-19)

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. (Ephesians 4:29)

Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. (Ephesians 5:4)

But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. (Colossians 3:8)

If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. (James 1:26)

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do... (1 Peter 1:15)

Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. (1 Peter 3:10)

(See also "Communication" in this database.)

PROMISCUITY **(Adultery, Fornication, Premarital Sex, Prostitution)**

DEFINITION: Promiscuity is defined as having multiple sexual partners. Another biblical name for it is fornication. Prostitution--performing sexual favors for financial gain or using someone else to do this--is included in this definition, as are premarital sex and adultery.

FACTS ABOUT PROMISCUITY:

Promiscuity is sin. Fornication, adultery, prostitution, and all sexual relationships outside of marriage are addressed in the Bible as sin. In some cultures, standards of morality have been lowered to where sex outside of marriage is acceptable, but God's Word does not change. Sexual promiscuity in any form is sin.

Believers must obey the laws of the land. You cannot just live with someone and claim you are married in God's sight (Romans 13:1). You must be legally married according to the mandates of the government under whose authority you live.

The biblical mandate is that sex is to be confined to marriage. *"Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure..." (Hebrews 13:4a).* The world's view of sex is not the biblical view. The world's view is that sex is for personal pleasure and is okay between two consenting adults. The biblical view is that sex is to be reserved only for marriage and any other type of sexual relationship is wrong. Sexual relations within a marriage are fulfilling and unite a couple in a special bond of intimacy. Sexual relationships outside of marriage are destructive.

Promiscuity affects your health. Diseases are transmitted through promiscuity, including some for which there is no known cure.

Promiscuity causes negative emotions. Regret, shame, guilt, and emotional pain all result from promiscuous sexual relationships.

Sexual sins weaken the marriage covenant. They destroy trust and often lead to divorce.

God will judge the sexually promiscuous. *"...God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral" (Hebrews 13:4b).*

DEALING WITH PROMISCUITY:

Avoid temptation. Avoid compromising situations that put you in a place of temptation, alone with a handsome man or beautiful woman. If you are never alone with someone of the opposite sex who is not your spouse, then promiscuity will probably not become an issue. Sexual relationships often begin when with emotional ties that develop when men and women spend extended time alone in working or social environments.

Ask forgiveness of God. Promiscuity is sin, and as with all sin, must be confessed and forgiven by God.

Seek forgiveness from those you have wronged. If you are married, you have sinned against your mate by your promiscuous behavior. You have also sinned against the person with whom you have had sex outside of marriage. Humbly ask their forgiveness.

Break ungodly relationships. Break promiscuous relationships with your adulterous partners. Make a total break: No more communication in any form. *"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).*

Bind the spirit of lust. At the root of adultery, fornication, prostitution, and premarital sex is lust. Bind the spirit of lust from operating in your life.

Do a spiritual housecleaning. Get rid of any erotic materials whether it be books, pictures, movies, Internet sites, or sex toys.

Have a medical examination. Be sure you have not contracted sexually transmitted diseases. If you have, then you must notify your previous sex partners.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT PROMISCUITY:

You shall not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14)

Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor's wife and defile yourself with her. (Leviticus 18:20)

Do not degrade your daughter by making her a prostitute, or the land will turn to prostitution and be filled with wickedness. (Leviticus 19:29)

You shall not commit adultery. (Deuteronomy 5:18)

Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes, for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life. (Proverbs 6:25-26)

Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths. Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death. (Proverbs 7:25-27)

For a prostitute is a deep pit and a wayward wife is a narrow well. (Proverbs 23:27)

A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father, but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth. (Proverbs 29:3)

You are to abstain from ... sexual immorality. (Acts 15:29)

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
(1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. (1 Corinthians 6:13)

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with the spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:15-20)

We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did--and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. (1 Corinthians 10:8)

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. (Galatians 5:19-21)

I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:21)

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. (Ephesians 5:3)

For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. (Ephesians 5:5)

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; 6 and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-6)

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. (Hebrews 13:4)

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)

(See also the related topics of "Sexuality", "Adultery", "Homosexuality", and "Incest" in this database.)

PURPOSE AND GOALS

DEFINITION: A sense of purpose is having a resolve and plan to accomplish a goal or objective. For a believer, purposes and goals are actually "faith statements" of what they believe God wants them to accomplish through their lives in the future.

FACTS ABOUT PURPOSE AND GOALS:

Every believer is a steward of resources. God has given you talents, spiritual gifts, abilities, material resources, and finances. It is required that you are faithful in managing these resources.

Purpose helps you understand your part in God's plan. You will know specifically what God wants you to do with your life and ministry.

Goals help you properly manage your resources to accomplish your purpose. Knowing your purpose and formulating goals to reach that purpose permit you to properly manage the resources with which God entrusts you.

Jesus knew His purpose and goals. He said: *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor"* (Luke 4:18-19).

Jesus encouraged planning. To illustrate this, He used an example of building, saying that one should make sure they have proper resources to finish before beginning. He also used the example of a ruler going to war who wisely prepares before the battle (Luke 14:28-32).

Goals have positive benefits. Planning permits you to establish priorities for your life and ministry, make proper decisions, and act rather than react to circumstances. Setting goals makes you accountable for your resources, permits wise use of what you possess, eliminates confusion, and provides standards by which to evaluate your progress.

Goals are faith statements. The Holy Spirit within has the mind of God and reveals God's plans and purposes to you. When you pray, study God's Word, and plan under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it is a productive spiritual activity that results in faith statements concerning what you plan to do with the help of the Lord.

Plans fail because of lack of vision, lack of training, improper use of resources, lack of prayer, unclear plans, fear, doubt, procrastination, slothfulness, and disobedience. People also fail to revise plans as necessary and fail to learn from experience. Plans also fail because of lack of attention to detail, lack of leadership, and inadequate funding and workers. You never truly fail, however, until you stop trying, and it is always too soon to quit!

When you aim at nothing, you hit it every time! If you have no purpose or goals, you will achieve nothing.

DEALING WITH PURPOSE AND GOALS:

Pray for direction regarding your specific purpose in God's plan and the goals to set to achieve that purpose. Always make sure your plans are in harmony with God's will.

Write out your purpose and goals. The prophet Habakkuk said to "*write the vision and make it plain*" (Habakkuk 2:2). David wrote out the plans for the tabernacle. He said: "*All this,*" David said, "*I have in writing from the hand of the Lord upon me, and he gave me understanding in all the details of the plan.*" (1 Chronicles 28:19).

Clearly state your goals. State what you are going to do, how you are going to do it, and by when it should be accomplished. If your goals require finances, include a plan as to how these will be obtained. By clearly stating your goals, you can evaluate whether or not you achieve them and how they contribute to your specific purpose.

Organize your goals. Some will be immediate goals, while others will be long-range goals. For example, if you want to go to Mexico as a medical missionary, that is a long-term plan. Some short-term goals to achieve that purpose would be to study Spanish, take medical classes, raise support, gather supplies, etc.

Be flexible and open to change. The Apostle Paul planned to go to Asia, but was redirected by the Holy Spirit to go to Macedonia (Acts 16:7-10). God's plans and purposes may be different than what you think, so be open to His divine appointments and adjustments to your schedule.

Evaluate your goals. Did you do what you said you would do? Do you need to adjust the goals you have or set new ones? You may need to change the completion date, readjust the budget, or change the short-term steps leading to the long-term goal.

Acknowledge the sovereignty of God. Make your plans acknowledging that "if it is God's will" you will accomplish them. (James 4:13-15). The Bible is clear that: "*In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps*" (Proverbs 16:9).

Realize that planning is a continuous cycle. Throughout life, you should continue to make plans by faith and set and adjust goals to accomplish your divine purpose.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT PURPOSE AND GOALS:

"All this," David said, "I have in writing from the hand of the Lord upon me, and he gave me understanding in all the details of the plan." (1 Chronicles 28:19)

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105)

The Lord will fulfill [his purpose] for me; your love, O Lord, endures forever--do not abandon the works of your hands. (Psalm 138:8)

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed. (Proverbs 16:3)

In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps. (Proverbs 16:9)

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

The Lord Almighty has sworn, "Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand." (Isaiah 14:24)

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord, "they are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11 TLB)

Then the Lord replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it." (Habakkuk 2:2)

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19)

Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. (Luke 4:28-32)

If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. (1 Corinthians 3:12-13)

But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way. (1 Corinthians 14:40)

...Live purposefully and worthily and accurately...Making the very most of the time--buying up each opportunity--because the days are evil. (Ephesians 5:15-16, AMP)

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." (James 4:13-15)

Study further on planning:

- In Genesis 1-3, God planned all creation, made plans for man, and revealed His plan for salvation.
- Noah made plans to build the ark: Genesis 6.
- Abraham set objectives for his servant, Eleazar: Genesis 24.
- Joseph planned for the years of famine: Genesis 41.
- Moses was given a plan to deliver Israel from slavery: Exodus 3-6.
- The plan for the tabernacle was quite detailed: Exodus 24:12-40:38.
- In the book of Numbers, plans are made to number the people (1:1-54) and arrange the camp (2:1-34).
- Joshua made detailed plans to lead Israel to conquer and divide their promised land: Book of Joshua.
- In the book of Judges, God gave numerous plans for deliverance.
- Ruth followed the plan of Naomi in regards to Boaz: Book of Ruth.
- David prepared to kill the giant: 1 Samuel 17.
- King Hezekiah prepared plans to unify Israel, repair the temple, and build a water system for Jerusalem: 2 Chronicles 28-31; 2 Kings 16-20.
- Nehemiah made plans to rebuild the wall: Book of Nehemiah.
- The Old Testament prophets revealed God's plans for the nations.
- Jesus: The Gospels are filled with statements made by Jesus about His purpose and plans to fulfill God's will for His life and ministry. Jesus also communicated this purpose and plans to His followers and to all believers in general.
- The Apostle Paul made plans: If he had no plans then the Holy Spirit could not have changed them as indicated in Acts 16:6-10.
- The book of Revelation reveals God's plans for the future.

Read about planning in the book of Proverbs. See Proverbs 13:16; 14:8; 15:22; 16:3,9; 24:3-4; 29:18.

Jesus had a clear understanding of His part in God's purpose and plans. Study the following references:

Matthew: 5:17; 8:3,7; 9:13; 10:34-35; 13:41-42; 15:24; 18:11,20; 19:28-29; 20:18-19,28; 21:13; 24:35; 25:31; 26:24,29,32,39,64

Mark: 1:38; 2:17; 10:33-34,45; 14:21

Luke: 2:49; 4:18-19,43; 5:32; 9:22,56; 11:49; 12:51; 13:32-33; 19:5,10; 22:37,69; 24:44,46-47

John: 3:16-17; 4:34; 5:30,43; 6:37-40,51; 7:16,33; 8:26,29,49-50; 9:4, 38-39; 10:10,16-18; 12:24-27,32,46,49-50; 13:5; 14:2,16-18; 18:36; 16:12,22,25; 18:37; 12:24-27; Study all of John chapter 17 as it communicates much about His purpose.

Study the purposes established for followers of Jesus.

Matthew: 7:33; 9:37-38; 10:7-8,38-39; 16:24-25; 28:18-20

Mark: 1:17; 16:15-18; 8:34-35

Luke: 5:10; 9:2; 10:2-9; 12:29; 14:26-27,33; 22:29; 24:46-49

John: 4:35; 6:27; 15:16; 20:21

Acts: 1:4-5,8

(For further instruction regarding purpose and goals, obtain the Harvestime International Network publication entitled "*Management By Objectives*" available at:
<http://www.harvestime.org>)

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NO TOPICS

REBELLION

DEFINITION: Rebellion is opposition towards a person or group in authority and a refusal to obey rules or normal standards of behavior. Biblically, it is opposition to God's authority, His Word, and God-ordained authorities.

FACTS ABOUT REBELLION:

Rebellion occurs for various reasons. The most common is that people want to be in control of their own lives and do what they desire. They do not want to live by God's mandates. Children often rebel because they do not want to abide by their parents' rules. A rebellious spirit can also develop when someone in authority over you is wrong or you think they are wrong. Rebellion also results from not understanding God's structure of submission. (See also the topic of "Submission" in this database.)

Rebellion is sin. Rebellion is a serious sin, considered as the sin of witchcraft (1 Samuel 15:23).

Rebellion was instigated by Satan. He was a rebellious angel who sinned against God and was instrumental in the first rebellion of mankind in the garden of Eden. He still works through a spirit of rebellion.

DEALING WITH REBELLION:

Admit rebellion and ask forgiveness. Rebellion is sin, and as in the case of all sin, you must admit it to God and ask forgiveness. You may also need to ask forgiveness of a parent, employer, spiritual leader, or someone else in authority against whom you have rebelled.

Ask God to put a new heart within you. Ask for a heart that is pliable and submissive to His will: *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws"* (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Train your children in the ways of the Lord. Discipline them to obey you and God at an early age and raise them up knowing the Word of God (Proverbs 22:6 and 2 Timothy 3:15). These practices will prevent rebelliousness later in life.

If an adult child rebels, continue to love them and pray for them without condoning their sin. Do not feel that you have failed as a parent if your adult child rebels. There comes an age of accountability where each person must choose whether or not they will serve God. Children sometimes rebel because of the influence of unbelieving associates. Pray for such negative relationships in their lives to be broken.

Claim this promise and personalize it for your children: *"And all your [spiritual] children shall be disciples [taught by the Lord and obedient to His will], and great shall be the peace and undisturbed composure of your children"* (Isaiah 54:13, AMP).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT REBELLION:

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. (Exodus 20:12)

Only do not rebel against the Lord... (Numbers 14:9a)

Cursed is the man who dishonors his father or his mother. (Deuteronomy 27:16)

Far be it from us to rebel against the Lord and turn away from him today by building an altar for burnt offerings, grain offerings and sacrifices, other than the altar of the Lord our God that stands before his tabernacle. (Joshua 22:29)

But if you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your fathers. (1 Samuel 12:15)

For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. (1 Samuel 15:23)

Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. (Proverbs 1:8)

My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father, the son he delights in. (Proverbs 3:11-12)

A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother. (Proverbs 10:1)

A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke. (Proverbs 13:1)

He who scorns instruction will pay for it, but he who respects a command is rewarded. (Proverbs 13:13)

A fool spurns his father's discipline, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence. (Proverbs 15:5)

A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish man despises his mother. (Proverbs 15:20)

He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding. (Proverbs 15:32)

To have a fool for a son brings grief; there is no joy for the father of a fool. (Proverbs 17:21)

A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him. (Proverbs 17:25)

He who robs his father and drives out his mother is a son who brings shame and disgrace. (Proverbs 19:26)

Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right. (Proverbs 20:11)

Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.
(Proverbs 23:22)

Fear the Lord and the king, my son, and do not join with the rebellious. (Proverbs 24:21)

But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts; they have turned aside and gone away. They do not say to themselves, 'Let us fear the Lord our God, who gives autumn and spring rains in season, who assures us of the regular weeks of harvest.' Your wrongdoings have kept these away; your sins have deprived you of good. (Jeremiah 5:23-25)

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

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (Ephesians 6:1)

(See also "Submission", "Authority", and "Chastening And Discipline" in this database.)

REJECTION AND ABANDONMENT

DEFINITION: The original meaning of the word rejection was to throw back. Rejection occurs when a person or group of people excludes an individual and refuses to acknowledge or accept them. Abandonment is a similar term, meaning to desert someone, to leave and never return.

FACTS ABOUT REJECTION AND ABANDONMENT:

Rejection takes many forms. It may occur through the ending of a relationship, unrequited affection for someone, losing a job, or through criticism. Feelings of rejection also can arise from emotional or physical abandonment by friends or family or close relations such as a parent or a spouse. Failure to achieve a goal like being accepted by a college or hired for a job can also cause feelings of rejection.

Reactions to rejection may include disappointment, anger, sadness, depression, and feelings of isolation and abandonment. Rejection may cause you to stop trying because of fear of rejection. You may experience feelings of inferiority and develop a critical spirit towards yourself or those by whom you were rejected. You may have difficulty in forming relationships because of rejections experienced in the past. Feelings of rejection can actually cause you to miss God's plan for your life when you withdraw to nurse your wounds.

You are not alone in your rejection. Many people in the Bible experienced rejection. The Old Testament prophets were often rejected and disrespected. They ended up in lions' dens, pits, and were martyred. Joseph, whose story is recorded in Genesis, was rejected by his family and his brothers sold him into slavery. Moses experienced repeated rejection before Pharaoh. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul was stoned by one group of people, run out of town, and escaped with his life by being let over the wall in a basket. Peter and John were imprisoned and Stephen experienced the ultimate rejection--he was martyred after preaching one of the greatest messages recorded in the New Testament. Everyone experiences rejection. It is impossible to go through life without feeling rejected at some time.

God experienced rejection. In Numbers 14:11 the Lord asked Moses: *"How long will these people reject me? How long will they not believe me, with all the signs which I have performed among them"* (Numbers 14:11, NKJV).

Jesus experienced rejection. The prophet Isaiah said concerning Jesus: *"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not"* (Isaiah 53:3). Jesus came to His own people and they rejected him (John 1:11) and He was rejected in His own hometown (Mark 6:4). Like Jesus, you will be rejected because you are not of this world (John 15:18-19).

DEALING WITH REJECTION AND ABANDONMENT:

Pray about your rejection issues. Turn your disappointment, hurt, anger, sadness, depression over to the Lord. Ask Him to heal your wounded emotions. The Bible directs us to give thanks in everything, so thank God that He is guiding your life, even through the pain of rejection and abandonment.

Determine that you will live by faith. Rejection is a feeling, but we do not live the Christian life on the basis of feelings. We live by faith in God. We do not live in the natural. We live in the supernatural.

Permit the power of the Holy Spirit to work in your life. As a born-again believer, the Holy Spirit dwells within you. Just because you feel rejected, you are not incompetent. You are fully equipped, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to accomplish all that God has called you to do: *"I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).*

Know that you are who God says you are. Regardless of what others think about you, as a believer you are who the Lord says you are. You belong to the family of God (Romans 8:16). You are so valuable that Jesus died for you (John 3:16).

Know that you are really never alone. Jesus said *"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:16-18).*

Do not view rejection as a negative thing. If you have made Jesus the Lord of your life, then He is guiding each aspect of your life. The fact that you are rejected by a person, group, job, college, etc., may be part of His plan for you. God guides us through closed doors as well as open doors. The Bible says that "all things" work together for your good when you are a true believer who loves God: *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).*

Use rejection as a cause to examine yourself. Honestly assess your actions, attitudes, and responses to others to see if there is a legitimate reason for being rejected. For example, if you were rejected for a job was it because you did not interview well? If you are repeatedly rejected by others, could there be reasons? If you discover legitimate reasons for rejection in any area, correct these with the help of the Lord.

Do not let rejection hinder you from fulfilling your destiny. God has a plan for your life. Perhaps rejection has blocked the way you were planning to go, but if your goals and purposes are God-given, you will still achieve them--perhaps just not in the way you thought. Do not let rejection stand in your way. Get up and try again. You never truly fail unless you stop trying, and it is always too soon to quit!

Overcome your fear of rejection by putting God first. When the disciples were imprisoned and threatened by the authorities because of their stand for the Gospel, they declared: *"We must obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:29).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT REJECTION AND ABANDONMENT:

Read the story of the woman at the well in John chapter 4. Because of her lifestyle, this woman had obviously been rejected by society, as she came to draw water when no one else was there--perhaps to avoid the feelings of rejection and the gossip. Jesus accepted her as she was and changed her life. She overcame her feeling of rejection and became a powerful evangelist--she brought the whole city out to meet Jesus.

... for you are a people holy to the Lord your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the Lord has chosen you to be his treasured possession. (Deuteronomy 14:2)

How long will these people reject me? How long will they not believe me, with all the signs which I have performed among them. (Numbers 14:11, NKJV).

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. (Psalm 34:17)

For the Lord will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance. (Psalm 94:14)

The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. (Psalm 118:22)

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. (Psalm 139:13-16)

I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, 'You are my servant'; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:9-10)

Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me. (Isaiah 49:15-16)

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Isaiah 53:3)

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:11-12)

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" (Matthew 21:42)

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:20)

Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith. (Mark 6:4-6)

He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me. (Luke 10:16)

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' (Luke 13:34-35)

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (John 1:10-131)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (John 14:16-18)

If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. (John 15:18-19)

We must obey God rather than men. (Acts 5:29)

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. (Romans 8:16-17)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple. (1 Corinthians 3:16)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will--to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. (Ephesians 1:3-8)

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)

As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." (1 Peter 2:4)

REPENTANCE

DEFINITION: Repentance is the act of expressing sorrow for something wrong you have done. Biblically, it is a change that occurs in the mind and heart, permeates the soul and spirit, and results in changes in outward actions and spiritual direction. Conversion is a similar word, meaning to turn from the wrong way to the right way, from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 11:21, 26:18).

FACTS ABOUT REPENTANCE:

Repentance is not just an emotional response. Some people associate repentance with emotions like shedding tears and feeling sorry for wrong actions and thoughts. Repentance is not an emotion. It is a decision. Emotion sometimes accompanies repentance, but it is possible for a person to feel great emotion and shed many tears and yet never truly repent.

Repentance is not fulfilling a religious requirement. Some people associate repentance with meeting special religious requirements. This is sometimes called "doing penance" for a wrong. It is possible to fulfill many religious requirements and yet never repent in the true Biblical sense.

Repentance is important. God commands it (Acts 17:30); it is necessary to avoid spiritual death (Luke 13:3); it is necessary to receive eternal life (Acts 11:18); and essential in order to be forgiven by God (Acts 2:38) and enter His Kingdom (Matthew 4:17).

Repentance is God's desire for all. God does not want anyone to experience the spiritual death of eternal separation from God in Hell (2 Peter 3:9).

Everyone needs to repent and be converted. The Bible says: *"...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23, NKJV). This means that everyone must repent of sin and accept Christ as Savior. This is called a born-again or conversion experience.

Believers need to repent on a regular basis. The prayer for forgiveness is part of the Lord's Prayer, our pattern for daily prayer. Believers in Corinth were mandated to repent (2 Corinthians 7:9). The Ephesians were told to repent (Revelation 2:5), and believers at Pergamos, Sardis, and Laodicea were called to repentance (Revelation 2:16; 3:3; 3:19).

People are drawn to repentance by the goodness of God (Romans 2:4); the preaching of the Word of God (Matthew 12:41); the call of Christ (Matthew 9:13); and by being drawn by God the Father (John 6:44). Rebuke, which is correction from the Word of God, also draws men to repentance (Luke 17:3), as does godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10).

DEALING WITH REPENTANCE:

If you are an unbeliever, ask God to forgive your sin and accept Christ as Savior. This inward decision will result in an outward change in you thinking, attitudes, emotions, and behavior.

Make repentance part of your everyday prayer. Use the model of the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). You do not need to get "saved" again every time your sin, nor do you need to repent for past sins already forgiven. The daily prayer for forgiveness is to make you aware of your continued need for repentance.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT REPENTANCE:

Psalm 51: An example of true repentance.

Exodus 9:27-35: An example of insincere repentance.

Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. (Isaiah 45:22)

Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. (Isaiah 55:7)

But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. (Ezekiel 18:21)

From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 4:17)

The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news! (Mark 1:15)

On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mark 2:17)

They went out and preached that people should repent. (Mark 6:12)

I tell you,...unless you repent, you too will all perish. (Luke 13:3)

I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. (Luke 15:7)

He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:46-47)

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him..." (John 6:44)

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus. (Acts 3:19-20)

In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. (Acts 17:30)

Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? (Romans 2:4)

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23)

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

Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it--I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while--yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. (2 Corinthians 7:8-10)

Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning. (1 Corinthians 15:34)

Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth., and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:25-26)

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

Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. (Revelation 2:5)

Remember therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you. (Revelation 3:3)

SALVATION

DEFINITION: Biblically, salvation means the act of snatching others by force from serious spiritual danger, saving a person from spiritual death, and delivering one from the penalty, peril, and power of sin.

FACTS ABOUT SALVATION:

Salvation implies that you are delivered from something to something. You are saved from sin and reconciled with God. You are saved from the Kingdom of Satan and born-again in the Kingdom of God. You are delivered from spiritual death to spiritual life.

Salvation is a gift. There is nothing you can do to earn it (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9).

God's goodness leads you to repentance. Romans 2:4 indicates that it is God's goodness--not His judgment--that draws you to repent.

Salvation comes only through Jesus Christ. There are not "many roads to God". The Bible says there is one way to God, and that is through Jesus Christ.

Salvation is attained by repentance and confession. Confession is necessary in order to receive forgiveness: *"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives" (1 John 1:8-10).*

You are not required to confess to another person. Jesus Christ is the mediator between you and God, and you can confess directly to Him. Some people find it helpful, however, to ask a spiritual leader to help them confess their sins to God. If you do this, prayerfully select someone who will keep your confidences.

Public confessions are not necessary in order to receive forgiveness. In fact, public confessions are sometimes disruptive in a church fellowship. Confessing your faults and asking for prayer as mentioned in James 5:16 is different than confessing specific sins. For example, you might say "I need prayer for my problem with unforgiveness" rather than pointing out specific people in the church you are unable to forgive! You should, however, always confess and ask forgiveness of anyone you have wronged.

Benefits of salvation include not only reconciliation with God, but also the gift of hope (1 Thessalonians 5:8-10); provision (Matthew 6:33); eternal life (John 3:16-17); freedom from the bondage of sin (2 Corinthians 3:17); release from sin, shame, and guilt (Isaiah 53:3-5); and abundant life in this world and eternal life in the one to come (John 3:16-17).

DEALING WITH SALVATION:

Confess your sins to God in the name of Jesus. Confess your known sins, and He will forgive them and then cleanse you from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8-9). Confession is part of the model prayer that is to be prayed daily by believers (Matthew 6:9-13).

Do not keep confessing sins of the past. Once confessed, God forgives you. The Bible says that God takes your sins, casts them as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12), and remembers them no more (Isaiah 43:25).

Realize that you are a new creature in Christ. The Bible teaches that man is body, soul, and spirit. When you accept Jesus as Savior, you experience a spiritual rebirth (John 3:5-8). You are a totally new person in Christ.

You must allow your spirit to rule. For years, your soul ruled your spirit and your body. Whatever your soul desired or dictated, you did—whether it be drugs, alcohol, pornography, immorality, etc. You did not exercise control over emotions such as anger, unforgiveness, and bitterness. You went where you wanted to go and did what you wanted to do. You got to where you are today by doing what you did. If you want things to change, you must do something different. You must learn to let your redeemed spirit control your body and your soulish nature—your mind, will, and emotions.

When your old soulish nature rises up and you sin again, it does not mean you were not saved. You do not need to accept Jesus as Savior again. You simply need to confess and ask God to forgive you (1 John 1:8-9).

Break the strongholds of habitual sin. Habitual sin enslaves you and erects spiritual strongholds in your life are erected. This is why you should never deliberately sin. Study about the struggle of Apostle Paul in Romans 7:15-21 and the glorious solution in Romans 8. God has given a way of escape in every temptation. Take it! *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it* (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Recognize the difference between conviction and condemnation. *Condemnation* is general. You believe you are a bad person, you can never change, etc. These thoughts come from the enemy to discourage you in your new life. *Conviction* is specific and is from the Holy Spirit to reprove you for wrong so you can correct it. For example, you feel convicted because you lied to someone. This is the Holy Spirit working with you to help you live out your new life of faith.

Continue to grow in your faith.

- Study the Word of God. You cannot grow without food. Just as natural food supplies energy for your physical growth, the Holy Bible is the food which supplies energy for your spiritual growth. Your spiritual growth will be in direct proportion to your increasing knowledge of God's Word. Personal Bible study must become a part of your daily routine. Start by reading the book of John.
- Pray. Use the pattern of the Lord's prayer to guide you in daily prayer (Matthew 6:9-13).
- Attend a local Bible-believing church so your new faith will grow.
- Make friends with other believers who will strengthen your faith.

Ask God to remove spiritual blindness from the minds of the unsaved. Ask the Father to draw your unsaved loved one to Him (John 6:44, 2 Corinthians 4:4). Pray for the Holy Spirit to convict and convince them (John 16:8, AMP). Continue to believe for household salvation and never give up (Acts 16:31, Luke 18:1, AMP).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT SALVATION:

Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord--and you forgave the guilt of my sin." (Psalm 32:2-5)

Read David's great psalm of confession: Psalm 51.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:12)

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)

I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. (Isaiah 43:25)

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:3-6)

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become

children of God--children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (John 1:12-13)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16)

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."
(John 5:24)

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. (John 10:27-28)

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus. (Acts 3:19-20)

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:23)

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. (Romans 10:9-10)

...Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Romans 10:13)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

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

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

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved. (Hebrews 10:35)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-5)

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

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (1 John 1:8-10)

And this is what he promised us--even eternal life. (1 John 2:25)

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)

(See also "Repentance" and "Confession" in this database.)

SELF-ESTEEM

DEFINITION: Self-esteem is confidence in your own merit as a person, the quality of feeling worthy of esteem or respect by yourself and others. It is how you honestly feel about your abilities and limitations. Low self-esteem is when you feel unworthy, alienated, and incompetent.

FACTS ABOUT SELF-ESTEEM:

There is a difference between self-esteem and Christ-centered esteem. It is not who you are, but who He is and what He has done in your life. *"Let him who boasts boast in the Lord. For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends"* (2 Corinthians 10:17-18). Apart from Christ, you can do nothing and are nothing (John 15:5).

Low self-esteem makes you believe you are incompetent at everything, that you are loser, a failure, you will never amount to anything, and you don't fit in. Because of these feelings, you may withdraw from others and find it difficult to establish meaningful relationships.

Many low self-esteem issues result from verbal abuse by parents, spouses, or friends who speak negative things into your life.

Biblical self-esteem is not pride. It is acknowledging who you are in Christ Jesus and giving Him glory for anything and everything you achieve in life.

DEALING WITH SELF-ESTEEM:

Do not compare yourself to others: This often causes self-esteem issues. The Bible says: *"We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise"* (2 Corinthians 10:12). Do not try to be like someone else. Do not criticize yourself for not being as beautiful, popular, or smart as others.

Do not focus on yourself, focus on Him. It is not who you are, but who He is in you. When you focus on the great power of God that is resident within you, your self-esteem issues will vanish (2 Corinthians 10:17-18). Realize that apart from God, you are nothing and can do nothing (John 15:5).

Accept yourself as a product of God's grace. the Apostle Paul said: *"But by the grace of God I am what I am..."* (1 Corinthians 15:10). He knew it was not about him, rather it was about God's grace manifested in and through him. Paul had a weakness that he asked God to remove, but his request was denied three times. He learned to accept his weaknesses and even glory in them because it provided an opportunity for God's strength to be manifested (2 Corinthians 12:8-9).

Focus on your successes instead of your failures. God has given you all you need to be

successful. He has given you His power, His love, and a sound mind: *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"* (2 Timothy 1:7, KJV). God has guaranteed success to those who walk in the ways of the Lord (Psalm 1).

Acknowledge who you are in God. You are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:16-17). The very hairs of your head are numbered (Luke 12:7). You are God's workmanship (Ephesians 2:10). He made you as you are (Exodus 3:11). When you put yourself down, you are putting down the workmanship of God. God thinks so highly of you that He not only created you in the womb, but He planned all the days of your life (Psalm 139:13-18).

Reprogram your mind with God's Word. Low self-esteem feeds on negative thoughts. Reprogram your mind with the Word of God and what God says about you and your thinking will be transformed. The book of Ephesians is a good place to start.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT SELF-ESTEEM:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:16-17)

But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11)

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. (Psalm 8:3-5)

I said to the Lord, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing." (Psalm 16:2)

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you. (Psalm 139:13-18)

Rich and poor have this in common: the Lord is the maker of them all. (Proverbs 22:2)

Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

(Proverbs 31:30)

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart...(Jeremiah 1:5)

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

The very hairs of your head are numbered. (Luke 12:7)

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. (Romans 12:2-3)

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

But by the grace of God I am what I am...(1 Corinthians 15:10)

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, (2 Corinthians 1:8-11)

And just as we have born the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:49)

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

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. (2 Corinthians 4:7-9)
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all

things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. (2 Corinthians 10:12)

Let him who boasts boast in the Lord. For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends. (2 Corinthians 10:17-18)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

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

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:3-8)

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7, KJV).

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Peter 2:9, NKJV)

Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. (1 Peter 3:3-4)

In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of

judgment, because in this world we are like him. (1 John 4:17)

And we are in him who is true - even in his Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 5:20)

Study the stories of Moses (Exodus 3); Gideon (Judges 6); and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1). These men all felt unworthy of the tasks to which God had called them. God emphasized that it was not who they were that was important, but who they would become with God working in and through them.

SEXUALITY

DEFINITION: Sexuality is sexual activity, involvement, or interest. For the believer, sexuality as it was intended is to be governed by biblical standards.

FACTS ABOUT SEXUALITY:

The original purpose of sex was for reproduction. After God created the first man and woman, God blessed them and said to them, *"Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it"* (Genesis 1:28).

Sex is intended to be within the confines of marriage, one man with one woman in a lifetime commitment: *"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh"* (Genesis 2:24). According to Hebrews 13:4, the marriage bed should be kept pure. Sexual relationships outside of marriage are sinful. Proverbs 5:18-19 speaks of "rejoicing" with your mate.

Sexual desire is not sinful. It is a natural desire, but it must be directed and contained within the confines of marriage as it is defined biblically.

DEALING WITH SEXUALITY:

Confess sexual sins. If you have engaged in pre-marital sex, homosexuality, adultery, fornication, incest, molestation--any type of sexual sin--you must confess and repent of your sin. Ask God to forgive you and deliver you from unholy sexual desires.

Break any sexual relationships that are outside of the confines of marriage. Any flirtatious, adulterous, homosexual ties must be broken. Even if a relationship has not yet been consummated by intercourse, a deep emotional tie will eventually lead to sexual violations. Break all sinful emotional and physical relationships.

Eliminate things that stimulate your sexual passions including sensual films, books, magazines, movies, music, pictures, the Internet, etc.

Recognize that your body belongs to God. It is not your own to do with as you please. It is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:18-20). You should treat it as you would a church sanctuary.

Dedicate yourself to abstinence. Determine that you will not engage in any sexual relationships outside the confines of marriage.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT SEXUALITY:

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it." (Genesis 1:28)

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. (Proverbs 5:15)

May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer--may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love. (Proverbs 5:18-19)

He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery." (Mark 10:11-12)

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. (Romans 1:24)

Since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. (Romans 1:28)

Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. (Romans 6:13)

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey--whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? (Romans 6:16)

Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. (Romans 6:19)

Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. (Romans 13:13)

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6:15-20, NKJV)

The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. (1 Corinthians 7:3-4)

Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. (Ephesians 4:19)

Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. (Ephesians 5:11-12)

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. (Hebrews 13:4)

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. (James 1:21)

Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. (Jude 1:7)

(See related topics of "Adultery", "Promiscuity", "Homosexuality", and "Incest" in this database.)

SHAME

DEFINITION: Shame is a negative emotion that combines feelings of unworthiness, rejection, embarrassment, and disgrace. Biblically, shame results from a recognition of one's guilt because of sin.

FACTS ABOUT SHAME:

Shame is a result of sin. Before they sinned, Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed. One of the first emotions they experienced after they sinned was shame, as they made fig leaves in an attempt to cover their nakedness and they tried to hide from the presence of God.

There is a difference between guilt and shame. Guilt means "debt" and is essentially an emotion resulting from transgression of an accepted standard of God' Word by a definite, voluntary act. It is concerned with doing or lack of doing, sins of commission or omission--failing to do something right or doing something you know to be wrong. Common sources of guilt include acts of dishonesty, lying, stealing, selfishness, cheating, infidelity, and hurting others. Guilt says to your conscience, "You made a mistake. What you did was bad." Shame, however, means "to cover up and to envelop" and is concerned with *being* rather than *doing*. Shame says, "You are no good, you are bad, you are inadequate." The Apostle Paul illustrates the difference between guilt and shame when he says, "*For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice*" (Romans 7:19). That is guilt resulting from doing. Then Paul agonizes, "*Oh wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*" (Romans 7:2). That is shame speaking.

Shame-based thinking means your thoughts are dominated by feelings of shame. This can lead to feelings of paranoia, repression, and rationalization of your behavior. Shame brings personal condemnation and causes you to blame others in order to make yourself feel better. You may also be plagued by perfectionism to attempt to ease your feelings of shame or become defensive, arrogantly self-righteous, or aggressive with others. Some people with shame issues turn to addictive substances, while others disassociate themselves from friends and family because they do not feel worthy.

The power of shame is manifested in five areas in your life:

Inherited shame results from the basic sin nature which we all receive at birth due to the original transgression of man in the Garden of Eden.

Individual shame results from sins you personally commit.

Incessant shame refers to the continuous cycle of shame manifested from generation to generation. If you do not deal with shame successfully, then you pass it on to your children and they duplicate it by passing it on to the next generation.

Imposed shame is inflicted upon you by others who put you down and tell you that you are stupid or not good enough.

Institutional shame comes through the institutions of society. You may be shamed by society because of the color of your skin, your family background, or the city or nation in which you live.

DEALING WITH SHAME:

Recognize that you do not have to bear your shame. Jesus bore your sin and sickness at the cross so that you no longer need bear them. He also bore your shame. So why are you continuing to bear it? He went to the cross carrying your shame: *"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:3).*

Acknowledge your shame. Shame will be used by Satan to destroy you. Shame will keep you shackled to your past so that you cannot move forward to embrace your destiny. Acknowledge your shameful feelings so you can deal with them.

Act against your shame. Repent of any shame-producing, sinful behavior. Repent of any bitterness or unforgiveness you may harbor against those who caused you shame.

Address your shame. When the voice of accusation says, "Shame on you," respond by declaring, "No, Jesus bore my shame."

Silence the enemy when he returns with shameful accusations. Make this declaration: *"No...My sin and shame are on Jesus. His righteousness is on me. I reject your accusations in the name of Jesus Christ."*

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT SHAME:

I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. (Psalm 34:4-5)

I hold fast to your statutes, O Lord; do not let me be put to shame. (Psalm 119:31)

The wise inherit honor, but fools he holds up to shame. (Proverbs 3:35)

When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom. (Proverbs 11:2, NKJV)

For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. (Isaiah 50:7, KJV)

Do not be afraid; you will not suffer shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. (Isaiah 54:4)

Instead of their shame my people will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace they will rejoice in their inheritance; and so they will inherit a double portion in their land, and everlasting joy will be theirs. (Isaiah 61:7)

And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. (Joel 2:26, KJV)

As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame. (Romans 10:11)

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:3).

(For further study on the subject of Shame, see the Harvestime International Network publication entitled "*Shattering The Shackles Of Shame*" available at <http://www.harvestime.org>)

SIN

DEFINITION: Biblically, sin is any transgression of the law of God (1 John 3:4).

FACTS ABOUT SIN:

The first sin was committed by Lucifer, now known as Satan. Read about it in Isaiah 14:12-15.

Sin entered the world through the transgression committed by Adam and Eve (Genesis 3). Because of their sin, we are all born with a basic sin nature (Psalm 51:5). In addition, we all commit personal sins of omission (things we should do that we don't) and commission (sins we commit).

Man's greatest problem is sin. In Romans 3:23 we read, "*All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*" The Bible says all people are sinners and that sin separates us from God.

The process of sin. James describes the process of sin: "*...but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death*" (James 1:14-15). The end result of sin is spiritual death—separation from God: "*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Romans 6:23).

God loves you and has provided forgiveness for your sins. The Bible says, "*This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world...as an atoning sacrifice for our sins*" (1 John 4:9-10). God loves you so much that He has provided a way for your sins to be forgiven so that you do not have to reap the wages of sin—spiritual death through separation from God.

The answer to your sin problem is Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*" (John 14:6). Acts 4:12 confirms, "*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*" Jesus Christ is the answer to your sin problem. He is the only way to God and the only way to be forgiven. You must accept Jesus as your personal Savior. Romans 10:9 declares, "*If you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord: and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*"

Your past sins. When you accepted Jesus as your Savior, He forgave the sins you confessed, but He also cleansed you from all unrighteousness—even those sins you did not remember and acts you did not realize were sin. You do not need to confess these past sins ever again. They are forgiven and forgotten by God who declares, "*... for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more*" (Jeremiah 31:34).

Sins committed after you accept Christ should be dealt with daily. Part of the model prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 to be prayed daily includes asking forgiveness for sins you commit after receiving Christ. A true believer will not desire to continue in known sin (1 John 3:6-10).

Temptation to sin is common to all people. It is not temptation that is wrong, but yielding to it. (James 1:13-15). God does not tempt you. You are tempted when you are drawn away by your own lusts and yield to them (James 1:13-15).

DEALING WITH SIN:

Admit your sin. Do not attempt to cover it, try to hide from God, or blame others. Adam and Eve tried these methods and they did not work. Admit that your sin is disobedience.

Ask God to forgive you. *"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives" (1 John 1:8-10).*

Walk in the Spirit. If you walk in the Spirit, you will not fulfill the desires of your sinful flesh. Walking in the Spirit means allowing spiritual fruit to be manifested in your life instead of the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:16-25).

Put off sinful behaviors. Strip yourself of these as you would remove a dirty garment. Replace these with godly behaviors. See "Put Off and Put On" in Appendix Three of this database.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT SIN:

For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. (Psalm 1:6)

He who digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit he has made. The trouble he causes recoils on himself; his violence comes down on his own head. (Psalm 7:15-16)

All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one. (Psalm 14:3)

Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression. (Psalm 19:13)

Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"--and you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Psalm 32:2-5)

See how the evildoers lie fallen--thrown down, not able to rise! (Psalm 36:12)

The Lord laughs at the wicked, for he knows their day is coming. (Psalm 37:13)

Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. (Psalm 51:2-5)

Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies. (Psalm 58:3)

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:12)

The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast. (Proverbs 5:22)

The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the unfaithful are trapped by evil desires. (Proverbs 11:6)

Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin"? (Proverbs 20:9)

The evil man has no future hope, and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out. (Proverbs 24:20)

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)

There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins. (Ecclesiastes 7:20)

Although a wicked man commits a hundred crimes and still lives a long time, I know that it will go better with God-fearing men, who are reverent before God. (Ecclesiastes 8:12)

There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: righteous men who get what the wicked deserve, and wicked men who get what the righteous deserve. (Ecclesiastes 8:14)

One sinner destroys much good. (Ecclesiastes 9:18)

God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:14)

I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. (Isaiah 43:25)

"There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked." (Isaiah 57:21)

Your own conduct and actions have brought this upon you. This is your punishment. How bitter it is! How it pierces to the heart! (Jeremiah 4:18)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall

not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17)

If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her. (John 8:7)

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin." (John 8:34)

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men. (Romans 1:18)

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. (Romans 2:5)

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:23-24)

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned-- for before the law was given, sin was in the world. (Romans 5:12-13)

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace. (Romans 6:11-14)

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

I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. (Romans 7:18)

Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. (Romans 7:20-21)

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. (Romans 10:9-10)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature.

They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:16-26)

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. the one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. (Galatians 6:7-8)

The sins of some men are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. (1 Timothy 5:24)

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

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away 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)

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. (James 2:10-11)

Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins. (James 4:17)

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

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

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (1 John 1:8-10)

No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil

has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:6-10)

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4:9-10)

Sins listed in scripture. Some are repeated in more than one list. There are...

- Seven which come from the heart and defile: Matthew 15:18-20
- Thirteen which come from the heart and defile: Mark 7:21-23
- Twenty-three which bring the judgment of God: Romans 1:29-32
- Seven which believers cannot do: Romans 13:13,14
- Six with which believers should not associate: 1 Corinthians 5:9-11
- Ten which prevent entrance into the Kingdom of God: 1 Corinthians 6:9,10
- Seventeen more which prevent entrance into the Kingdom of God: Galatians 5:19-21
- Four which bring wrath and prevent entrance into the Kingdom of God: Ephesians 5:5-6
- Eleven from which believers must turn away: 2 Corinthians 12:20-21
- Nine in which the unsaved live and in which believers should not live: Ephesians 4:17-19
- Six which must not exist among believers: Ephesians 5:3,4
- Nine which believers should put away: Ephesians 4:25,28,29,31
- Six which believers must put off: Colossians 3:8,9
- Six which believers must mortify and which bring the wrath of God: Colossians 3:5-6
- Fourteen for which the law was given: 1 Timothy 1:9-10
- Nineteen from which believers must turn away: 2 Timothy 3:1-5
- Nine from which believers are saved: Titus 3:3-5
- Five which believers must lay aside: 1 Peter 2:1
- Seven sins of the flesh in which believers no longer live: 1 Peter 4:2-4
- Eight which condemn to the lake of fire: Revelation 21:8
- Six which prevent access to the tree of life and the holy city: Revelation 22:14

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

DEFINITION: Spiritual warfare refers to the battles waged by believers against our spiritual enemies--Satan, demons, and the spiritual forces of evil.

FACTS ABOUT SPIRITUAL WARFARE:

There are two spiritual kingdoms. The Kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of God (Luke 4:5-6). The Kingdom of Satan consists of Satan himself, spiritual beings called demons, and all people who live in sin and rebellion against God. God's Kingdom consists of the Trinity of God (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), angels, and all people who live in loving submission to Him.

Every person alive is a resident of one of these two kingdoms, the Kingdom of Satan or the Kingdom of God. There is no neutral ground (Matthew 12:30). You become a resident of God's Kingdom by being born again and becoming a believer in Jesus Christ (John 3:16).

Spiritual warfare began when Lucifer, who was originally a beautiful angel of prominence, rebelled against God (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Revelation 12:7-8).

The spiritual battle was manifested on earth when Adam and Eve yielded to Satan in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3).

All the battles that you face in life, whether spiritual, emotional, mental, financial, or relational are outward manifestations of a direct or indirect spiritual cause. Although in the natural world things often appear to be simply "circumstances" of life, the basis of these natural events originate in the spiritual world. Spiritual warfare is a spiritual battle which is manifested in the natural world.

Spiritual warfare is not against flesh and blood. The battle is against the evil forces that would hinder your walk with God, the Word of God manifested in your life, your worship of God, and your work for Him.

DEALING WITH SPIRITUAL WARFARE:

Prepare for effective spiritual battle by arming yourself with spiritual weapons. These include:

- The belt of truth by gaining knowledge and understanding (Ephesians 6:14).
- The breastplate of righteousness--spiritual protection that comes by living the way the Word mandates (Ephesians 6:14).
- Spiritual shoes--protection that comes from the gospel of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 6:15).
- The shield of faith which stops the fiery darts from the enemy (Ephesians 6:16).
- The helmet of salvation, which protects your mind, soul, and spirit (Ephesians 6:17).
- The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17).
- Prayer (Ephesians 6:18).
- The blood of Jesus (Revelation 12:11).

- Your testimony (Revelation 12:11).
- The name of Jesus (Mark 16:17).
- Praise and worship (Psalm 59:16-17).
- Fasting (the books of Esther and Jonah).

Use these biblical strategies to win spiritual battles.

Submit and resist. If you submit yourself to God and resist the devil, he will flee from you (James 4:7). To resist means to "stand firm against and oppose the enemy at every point."

Do not give place to the devil. Do not leave room for Satan to operate (Ephesians 4:27). Giving "place" to the devil is providing him a foothold from where he can operate in your life-- for examples through alcohol, drugs, pornography, immorality, witchcraft, cults, rebellion, etc.

Recover yourself from the devil. You have a responsibility to recover yourself from Satan's snare. You must cooperate with God for deliverance (2 Timothy 2:26).

Abstain from fleshly lusts. To "abstain" means "to deliberately refrain evil practices. The lusts of the flesh are listed in Galatians 5:19-21 as conduct from which you must abstain. Fleshly lusts war against your spirit (1 Peter 2:11).

Try the spirits. Be alert for the deceptions of the enemy (2 Peter 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:1).

Reject false teachers. A false teacher is one who teaches incorrect doctrines and fails to live up to the mandates of God's Word (2 John 10-11).

Lay aside worldly entanglements. To be a good soldier for Jesus, you must lay aside worldly affairs (2 Timothy 2:4).

Arm yourself with the mind of Christ. The mind of Jesus is not automatically developed in you. You must "let" or "permit" it to be developed (1 Peter 4:1; Philippians 2:5-8; Romans 12:1-2).

Pull and cast down strongholds. One of the goals of offensive warfare is to pull and cast down the strongholds of the enemy (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). To "pull down" means "to take down by effort or force." To "cast" means "to throw or hurl." You are told to cast off the works of darkness (Romans 13:12) and cast out demon powers (Matthew 10:8). You are to demolish arguments and pretensions and to take captive any thought that is contrary to the thoughts of Christ.

Bind and loose. You have the power to bind the forces of evil and loose the forces of good (Matthew 16:19). For example, you can bind the spirit of iniquity at work in the life of a lost loved one and release the spirit of adoption (a ministry of the Holy Spirit) to work in that person's life.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT SPIRITUAL WARFARE:

But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. (Psalm 59:16)

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. (Isaiah 14:12-15)

See also Ezekiel 28:12-19.

"He who is not with me is against me..." (Matthew 12:30)

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:19)

And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well. (Mark 16:17-18)

Read about the temptation of Jesus in Luke 4:1-13. Note that strategies used by Satan and how Jesus met each one with the Word of God.

He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you." (Luke 10:18-19)

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

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2, NKJV)

...Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. (2 Corinthians 2:11)

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine

power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:10-18)

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1 Timothy 6:12)

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:7)

...and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:26)

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude... (1 Peter 4:1)

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. (1 Peter 5:8-9)

He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. (1 John 3:8)

If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. (2 John 1:11)

And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon

and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. (Revelation 12:7-9)

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. (Revelation 12:11)

Read the story of Elisha in 2 Kings 6:8-22 for further insights into spiritual warfare.

(For detailed instruction on spiritual warfare, obtain the Harvestime International Network publication entitled "*Spiritual Strategies: A Manual Of Spiritual Warfare*" available at <http://www.harvestime.org>)

STRESS

DEFINITION: Stress is a physical, mental, or emotional response that causes physical, mental, or emotional tension.

FACTS ABOUT STRESS:

Stress can be internal, resulting from an illness, a medical procedure, and negative emotions like fear, anxiety, and worry. Unconfessed sin can cause spiritual stress.

Stress can be external, resulting from the environment or social situations.

Stress can result from both positive and negative circumstances. Things like a geographical relocation, a new job, a new baby--though positive experiences, may also be stressful. Negative circumstances such as a prolonged illness, the death of a loved one, a poor working or living situation may also cause stress.

Stress is related to other conditions including depression, high blood pressure, unresolved anger, etc.

Stress results from a lack of trust in God. If you trusted really Him to take care of your circumstances, you would not be stressed out about them.

DEALING WITH STRESS:

Analyze why you are stressed. Like David, question yourself: *"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?"* Then, whatever the reason for your concern, tell yourself by faith: *"Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you ..."* (Psalm 42:5-6)

Boldly declare that the Lord will help in any situation causing stress. He is your source of strength (Philippians 4:13). *"So we take comfort and are encouraged and confidently and boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not be seized with alarm-I will not fear or dread or be terrified. What can man do to me?"* (Heb. 13:6, TAB).

Cast your cares on God. The Bible says to cast your cares on the Lord (Psalm 55:22). The word "cast" implies a continuous action. You may cast your cares on God, yet stressful thoughts return. When they do, cast again!

Pray instead of thinking about stressful circumstances. The Word says: *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:6-7). Turn every stressful thought into a prayer.

Praise and worship God. It is impossible to remain stressed when you give yourself wholly to praise and worship. Put on some meditative Christian music and give it a try!

Take practical actions. If there is something you can change that will alleviate the stress, do so. For example, perhaps you could trim some of your commitments or seek a job change.

Replace stress with the Word. The Word of God is effective in dealing with stress. Following are some excerpts to get you started. In addition, go through your Bible and mark all of the promises of God and His faithfulness. Review these when you feel stressed.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT STRESS:

Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. (Psalm 37:5, NKJV)

Do not fret--it leads only to evil. (Psalm 37:8)

I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread. (Psalm 37:25, NKJV)

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you ... (Psalm 42:5-6)

Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall. (Psalm 55:22)

Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits--who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalm 103:1-5)

When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul. (Psalm 94:19)

An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up. (Proverbs 12:25)

The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion. (Proverbs 28:1)

Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:30-31)

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:28-34)

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthews 11:28-30)

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food and the body more than clothes. (Luke 12:22-23)

Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. (Luke 21:34)

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 14:27)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

(See also "Anxiety and Worry" and "Fear" in this database, as these are often causes of stress.)

SUBMISSION

DEFINITION: Submission is a willingness to yield or surrender to somebody and the act of doing so. Biblical submission is expressed in both attitude and conduct and occurs under leadership that is set in order by God.

FACTS ABOUT SUBMISSION:

Authority comes from God. Romans 13 indicates that all legitimate authority is given by God. God-given authority provides organization and direction in society, government, the church, and the home.

You are to obey authorities. Hebrews 13:17 indicates you are to submit to those over you because they must give an account to God. You are to obey and submit in a way that it will be a joy and not a burden for them.

Rebellion is the opposite of submission. Romans 13 indicates that all legitimate authority is from God, so when you rebel against authority you are actually rebelling against God.

You learn submission by submitting to God. James 4:7 indicates if you submit yourself to God, the devil will flee from you. As you submit to God, it will be easier to submit to others--your spouse, authority, your employer, etc.

Leaders in the Kingdom of God are to be servants to those who are under authority, not to "lord it over them" (Luke 22:25-26). A biblical attitude exhibited by a leader makes it easy for those under him to submit to his direction.

When the divine order of submission is instituted, relationships are set right, rebellion ceases, and harmony and unity result.

Submission is not abuse. When submission becomes destructive and abusive, it is an affront to true biblical submission. Discipleship--submission as it has also been called--has often been abused in the Church. Discipleship and biblical submission are not the same as when a leader controls every aspect of your life and excludes from the fellowship those who do not conform. Never submit to abuse in any situation. That is not a scriptural concept of submission.

Submission in the home. The wife is to be in submission to the husband, the husband is to be in submission to God (Ephesians 5:22), and the children are to obey their parents (Colossians 3:20). Husbands are told to love their wives as Jesus loved the Church. If a man really loves with the self-sacrificing love with which Christ loved the Church, his wife will desire to please him in all things just as a true believer desires to please Jesus. Christ is perfect in His love for the Church, even though the Church is not perfect in its submission to Him. The husband should demonstrate similar love towards his wife, even if she is not perfect in her submission to him. A wife who is a true believer whose husband loves her in this manner, will seek to please him and submit to his leadership, even as she does to Christ. A man should not force his wife into submission. She is to submit voluntarily because of the Christ-like love shown by her husband.

Biblical submission does not mean submission to a godless man. It is describing married life between two Spirit-filled believers who have a natural relationship similar to the spiritual one between Christ and the Church. Paul is saying that if a woman is married to a Christian man who has this type of love for them, then they should be in submission to him (Ephesians 5:22). The husband is to cherish and nourish his wife because they are one flesh and they are both members of Christ's Body. The wife is to be the most important person in the husband's life. He is to leave father, mother, and all others and be joined to his wife. He is to love his wife as he loves his own body. This makes her submission to him a joy. She can submit easily to him, just as she submits to the Lord

We are to submit to one another in the Lord. Believers, both male and female, husband and wife, are to submit to one another, desiring to please each other: *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:21).*

Submission does not justify sin. In Acts chapter 5, a woman named Sapphira agreed to her husband's plan to defraud God and the church and she was held personally accountable for her sin. You cannot excuse sin by saying you were forced to do something by someone in authority. If you are asked to do something contrary to God's Word, you must decline. As the disciples who were forbidden to preach the Word, you must obey God rather than man (Acts 4:18-20).

DEALING WITH SUBMISSION:

Pray for any improper submissions to be broken. Do not allow a leader to dictate how you live your life. It is good to accept biblical counsel, but that is different than someone dictating decisions that should be made between you and God alone. Do not accept abuse from an ungodly mate in the name of "submission". Do not allow abuse of children. Remove yourself and your children from abusive situations.

Pray a prayer of submission. Submit yourself to God first, then ask Him to help you be properly submissive to authorities in your life.

Lead with love and compassion. In your home, on the job, or in the church--if you are in a position of leadership, lead as becomes a true believer, serving with love and compassion.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT SUBMISSION:

Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves."
(Luke 22:25-26)

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:18-20)

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10)

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. (Romans 13:1-5)

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:13-14)

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church--for we are members of his body. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. (Ephesians 5:22-33)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"--which is the first commandment with a promise--that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth. Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him. (Ephesians 6:1-9)

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor,

but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. (Colossians 3:18-24)

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. (Titus 2:1-10)

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4:1-3)

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king. Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. (1 Peter 2:13-19)

Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed

Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. (1 Peter 3:1-8)

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. (1 Peter 5:5-6)

(See also "Authority" in this database.)

SUFFERING **(Adversities, Disasters and Tragedies)**

DEFINITION: Suffering is pain that is experienced physically, mentally, or emotionally. It is distress that results from physical affliction, psychological and emotional troubles, loss, adversities, and tragedies.

FACTS ABOUT SUFFERING:

Suffering entered the world because of sin. From the time of the first sin committed by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:17-18), evil entered the world and suffering has been part of its tragic manifestations.

Suffering is not always due to personal sin. While it is true that you can suffer from the consequences of personal sin, all suffering is not caused by personal sin. That is one of the key revelations of the book of Job.

The ways suffering comes into the life of a believer include the following:

-Persecution: Some suffering comes through persecution because of a person's faith in God or their ministry. Saul pursued David because of his calling as king (1 Samuel 23). Haman attempted to annihilate the Jewish race (Esther 3:5-6). Daniel and his three friends suffered for their faith (Daniel 3:6). The Apostle Paul suffered intensely during his ministry (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). History records that many of the disciples of Christ died as martyrs.

-Consequences: Some suffering comes through consequences of not listening to good advice or rejecting the Word of the Lord. An analogy of this is found in the parable of the foolish man who built his house on sand and then had it collapse in the storm (Matthew 7:26-27). A modern-day example would be building your house in a known flood zone and suffering flooding because of your poor decision.

-Others: Sometimes you suffer because of those around you who create circumstances that cause difficulties for you. The relationship between Abraham and Lot is a good example. Abraham was constantly having problems because of Lot's poor decisions (Genesis 12-14).

-Judgment: God judges personal sin. Cain suffered for the murder of his brother Abel (Genesis 4:13-14). Joab was executed for killing two innocent men (1 Kings 2:32). God judged Adoni-Bezek for his inhumane treatment of enemy kings (Judges 1:7).

-Discipline: The purpose of discipline is to correct sin and restore a believer to right relationship with God. Nathan confronting David's sin and its subsequent judgment caused him to repent of adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11-12; Psalm 51).

-Ministry: Adversity prepares you to fulfill God's purposes and sometimes results from your ministry. Joseph suffered as a slave and a prisoner in order that the entire world could be saved from a great famine (Genesis 50:20). Jesus suffered and died so that the world could be saved

from sin. The disciples were persecuted, imprisoned, and martyred for their ministries.

-Circumstances of life: Natural circumstances of life like tornados, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, etc., can cause undeserved suffering.

-Satanic attack: Job chapters 1-2 illustrate how Satanic attack can be a cause of undeserved suffering.

Three important things to remember about suffering.

-There is a spiritual reason behind the suffering of the righteous: Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6.

-Satan cannot afflict a believer without the permission of God: Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6.

-God knows how much you can bear and will not let Satan go beyond this point: 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Suffering takes many forms. It includes physical pain and the grief and sorrow caused by losses in life. Mental suffering can be caused by negative emotions like guilt, shame, remorse, anger, and unforgiveness. Suffering can also be manifested through depression and oppression caused by the enemy.

The normal responses to suffering include grief and sorrow which are intense emotional reactions to tragedy, suffering, and bereavement.

The call of Jesus to His followers was one of denial and suffering. See Matthew 10:38; 16:24; Mark 8:34; 10:21; Luke 9:23; 14:27 In each of these verses, Jesus calls His followers to deny themselves, take up their cross of suffering, and follow Him.

Suffering always has divine purpose. *"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:6-7).* You learn that testing strengthens your character (James 1:2-3) and refines positive qualities in your life (Job 23:10). The writer of Hebrews says that trials and chastening prove that you are God's child (Hebrews 12:6-8).

Here are some positive benefits of suffering.

Your faith is tested: Everything in the spiritual world is based on faith. This is why the strength of your faith must be tested through trials (1 Peter 1:7).

You are able to comfort others: When you are comforted during trials, you learn how to extend that same comfort to others. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

You learn not to trust your own self: Paul spoke of the purpose of his sufferings in Asia, explaining that through them he learned not to trust in himself (2 Corinthians 1:8-9).

Positive qualities are developed: Qualities that conform you into the image of Christ are

developed through suffering (1 Peter 5:10, Romans 8:28-29; Hebrews 2:10,18).

The works of God are manifested: When the disciples saw a man who had been blind from birth, they asked who was responsible for his condition. Was it the sin of his parents or those of the man himself? Jesus said that the man was suffering so that the works of God could be manifested in him (John 9:3).

The power of God is perfected: God's power is perfect despite your weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12:9).

That which is unstable is removed: Suffering results in all that is unstable being shaken out of your life. You cease to depend on people, programs, or material things because these all fail in your time of need (Hebrews 12:26-27). During the storms of life, everything crumbles that is not built upon God and His Word (Psalm 119:89 and Matthew 7:24-27).

Your focus is changed: When you experience suffering, you often focus your attention on cause and effect. You are concerned with what caused the difficult circumstances and the terrible effect it is having in your life. In suffering, God changes your focus from the temporal to the eternal (2 Corinthians 4:17-18; 1 Peter 4:12-13; 2 Timothy 2:12).

God prepares you for ministry: You want to be used by God, you desire to be more like Jesus, and to be a chosen vessel for His use. God answers your prayer through suffering because He chooses His ministers in the furnace of affliction (Isaiah 48:10).

You are prepared to reign with Christ: The Bible says if you suffer with Him, you will also reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12).

You receive spiritual blessings: Jesus said your reward will be great in Heaven (Matthew 5:10-12).

You learn obedience: Even Jesus, who was sinless, learned obedience through suffering (Hebrews 5:8). Even a person who is righteous, good, and moral can learn more about obedience by suffering.

You are humbled: The Bible says that the nation of Israel was humbled because of the suffering experienced in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:15-16).

You come to know God more intimately: Job, who suffered much, learned this truth and declared that because of his suffering, he really came to see God in a new way (Job 42:5-6).

The important thing is to realize is that regardless of the reason for suffering, God is sovereign over it. Nothing happens of which He is not aware. He is merciful, ready to forgive and restore, and will help you through corrective, punitive, and undeserved suffering. Every day of your life was written before you were even born. No difficulty, suffering, or tragedy comes as a surprise to God (Psalm 139:13-18).

DEALING WITH SUFFERING:

Do not focus on reasons for your suffering. This was the original sin--wanting to know. Eve wanted to become as God and know all things (Genesis 3). For some tragedies, there are no good answers. The reason for some things will be revealed, others will not. You must learn that the secret things belong to the Lord (Deuteronomy 29:29). Commit your suffering and your unanswered questions to God.

Realize that Jesus bore your suffering. The Bible says Jesus was not only familiar--acquainted with grief--but that He also bore your grief and sorrow (Isaiah 53:3-5). Jesus bore your sin so that you no longer have to bear it. If He also bore your grief and sorrow, so why are you bearing it?

Release your feelings to God. Tell the Lord how you feel. Release your sorrow, grief, and questions to Him. If you are angry about your suffering, confess it to God. Ask God to heal your emotions. Know that the feelings you are experiencing are common in times of suffering but you do not have to continue having these feelings. God is able and ready to heal them.

Call upon the Holy Spirit to comfort you. One of the purposes of the Holy Spirit is to comfort in times of suffering, grief, and sorrow. When you are overwhelmed with suffering, call upon the Holy Spirit to come and fulfill His purpose of supernatural comfort (John 14:6). As a believer, you have the Comforter resident within you. He is always available in times of need. You are never alone. The Lord is near those whose hearts are broken (Psalm 34:18).

Focus on eternal things. If you focus on eternal things, your suffering actually works in your behalf (2 Corinthians 4:16-18). Do not focus on the circumstances of your suffering. Focus on God, His Word, His promises to you, and what He is doing in your life.

Know that all things are working together for your good. God takes all things--even the bad things, the losses, and sorrows--and weaves them together for good in the fabric of your life (Romans 8:28).

Remember these six "p"'s of suffering:

- Purpose: God has divine purpose in your suffering.
- Profitable: Your suffering is profitable if you submit to God and trust Him.
- Presence: God is with you in your suffering.
- Prove: Your faith will be proven by the difficulties.
- Produce: Your suffering will produce positive spiritual qualities in your life.
- Perspective: You will emerge with a new perspective.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT SUFFERING:

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever... (Deuteronomy 29:29)

But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. (Job 23:10)

Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared. (Proverbs 3:25)

When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down, but even in death the righteous have a refuge. (Proverbs 14:32)

You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry. (Psalm 10:17)

He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me. (Psalm 18:19)

For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help. (Psalm 22:24)

Look upon my affliction and my distress and take away all my sins. (Psalm 25:18)

You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. (Psalm 30:11-12)

I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul. (Psalm 31:7)

Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. (Psalm 31:9)

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all; (Psalm 34:18-19)

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (Psalm 43:5)

For he has delivered me from all my troubles. (Psalm 54:7)

In God I trust; I will not be afraid. (Psalm 56:4)

I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed. (Psalm 57:1)

In my anguish I cried to the Lord, and he answered by setting me free. (Psalm 118:5)

My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word. (Psalm 119:28)

My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life. (Psalm 119:50)

Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. (Psalm 119:67)

It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees. (Psalm 119:71-72)

Preserve my life, O Lord, according to your word. (Psalm 119:107)

Look upon my suffering and deliver me, for I have not forgotten your law. (Psalm 119:153)

I call on the Lord in my distress, and he answers me. (Psalm 120:1)

The Lord will keep you from all harm--he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. (Psalm 121:7-8)

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me. (Psalm 138:7)

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (Psalm 147:3)

If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength! (Proverbs 24:10)

The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces. (Isaiah 25:8)

Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. (Isaiah 38:17)

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you. (Isaiah 43:2)

I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. (Isaiah 48:10)

He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:3-5)

Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. (Isaiah 58:9)

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:10)

But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. (Luke 21:12, NKJV)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. (John 14:16)

But the Counselor, 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 14:26-27)

Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me (John 15:20-21)

I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. (John 16:20)

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:20-22, KJV)

I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. (Acts 20:23)

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. (Romans 5:3-5)

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be joy revealed in us. (Romans 8:18)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-38)

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. (Romans 12:13)

We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world. (1 Corinthians 4:12-13)

For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. (2 Corinthians 1:5-7)

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. (2 Corinthians 4:7-9)

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

If the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. (2 Corinthians 5:1)

Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything. (2 Corinthians 6:4-10)

For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer

for him, (Philippians 1:29)

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

(Philippians 3:7-11)

...so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them. In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know. (1 Thessalonians 3:3-4)

Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. (2 Thessalonians 1:4-5)

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. (2 Timothy 2:3)

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12)

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (2 Timothy 4:5, NKJV)

Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him. But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved. (Hebrews 10:32-39)

Hebrews chapter 11: The hall of fame for faithful men and women of God who suffered.

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!

Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:7-11)

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James 1:2-4)

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. (James 5:10-11)

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1 Peter 1:6-7)

For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. (1 Peter 2:19-22)

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. (1 Peter 4:1)

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. (1 Peter 4:12-14)

So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. (1 Peter 4:19)

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. (1 Peter 5:10)

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he

will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4)

(See also "Grief And Sorrow" in this database.)

SUICIDE

(Note: If you are ministering in a telephone counseling center and someone calls who is threatening suicide, a life depends on your actions. First, get their name and location. Keep them on the line while another person dials to dispatch emergency response personal to their location. The person calling for emergency assistance should relay the exact location and the nature of the emergency--suicide in progress, threats of suicide, etc. Keep the caller talking with you, listening and encouraging them. Do not panic. Take control, believing that the Holy Spirit will speak through you. Tell the caller that you will remain on the line until the emergency workers arrive at the location. The primary objective is to prevent the suicide. Prayer and biblical counseling can follow. The type of counseling that asks "What do you think you should do about this problem" is not appropriate. You already know what they think. They believe the answer is death! Take authority on the basis of the Word of God and show them suicide is not the answer, but that God has an answer. Minister hope for the future.)

DEFINITION: Suicide is when a person chooses to end their own life and deliberately kills themselves. Assisted suicide is when you help someone commit suicide.

FACTS ABOUT SUICIDE:

Suicide destroys, so we know the thought of it and acting upon are not from God. John 10:10 confirms that it is the enemy who kills, steals, and destroys.

People consider suicide when their problems or sins seem greater than their coping mechanisms. That is why salvation through the blood of Jesus is so important. He forgives and bears your sin, grief, and pain so that you no longer have to cope with these feelings alone

Suicide attempts are usually a result of emotional issues. A great loss or tragedy can trigger suicidal thoughts--death of a loved one, loss of a business, finances, or a significant relationship, and chronic health problems are examples. Depression and unstable mental conditions also result in suicidal thoughts or attempts. Anger at others can cause thoughts of suicide to "show them" and make those who have wronged them feel guilty.

How does someone get to the point of suicide? Everyone goes through periods in their lives when they feel down. In time, the feelings usually depart and life goes on. But sometimes, difficult situations lead to feelings of depression, guilt, shame, and unhappiness that do not go away. Life becomes a great struggle filled with gloom, despair, emptiness, and hopelessness. Eventually, a person feels there is nothing to live for and seeks a way out of his pain.

Assisted suicide is sometimes requested by people who want to die because of a devastating illness. They ask someone to help them or a doctor to provide lethal medications. Some governments have made laws against this, while others endorse it as a way to "die with dignity". This practice is also called "euthanasia". But it is God who gives life (Job 33:4) and He who has numbered our days (Job 14:5). Hebrews 9:27 indicates that the time of one's death is appointed. When you decide to end your own life for any reason, you are arrogantly saying you know better

than God. There is nothing in the Bible that says we have to keep someone alive for as long as possible, however. If someone is terminally ill and in great pain, they should be made as comfortable as possible and comforted by the Word of God and prayer. The same God that sustained you in life, will sustain you in death. (Note: Having an order of "do not resuscitate--DNR" is not suicide or assisted suicide, nor is disconnecting life support when someone has been declared brain dead. In cases of terminal illness, mental disorders, and advanced age, such orders are merely expressing a desire for doctors not to intervene in the natural process of dying or to be kept alive artificially. God is greater than any DNR order or any disconnect of life support systems. He can still intervene and supernaturally restore life.

Suicide is the ultimate act of selfishness. The person committing suicide is thinking only of himself and what he perceives to be an end to his problems. He does not think about the mental and emotional pain and possible financial hardships he will cause in the lives of friends and relatives who are left behind. Suicide is a waste of the gift of life that God intended be used for His glory. It is a frightening finality that results from unresolved hopelessness, despair, and tragedy.

Attempted suicide is a cry for help. Suicide is an act taken by one who actually wants to die, but futile attempts at it are cries for help. Take them seriously.

Suicide is not a problem of a specific class of people. Educated and uneducated, rich and poor, young and old--all are affected by it. The tendency towards suicide cannot be inherited and does not run in families. It can, however, be a learned behavior, i.e., a person considers it because their parent dealt with their problems by ending it all.

Symptoms of suicide can include hinting about it, making a threat, actual attempts, and not rebounding properly after a significant loss or tragedy. Isolation, abandoning previous interests, and giving away cherished possessions are also signs. Increase in drug and alcohol use, depression, and hopelessness are other symptoms that a person is considering suicide. Sometimes, however, a person who has been extremely depressed seems to be happier than they have been for some time. Often, this is mistaken as a sign that the person is getting better and no longer suicidal. In truth, their seeming happiness is resulting from having made a decision to commit suicide and knowing there will be an end to their problems.

Suicide is murder, and murder is sin. It is spiritually and morally wrong for a person to rebelliously decide they have the right to end their own life by murdering themselves. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and you must respect that (1 Corinthians 6:19). Assisted suicide--where you help someone commit this act--is also sin. You are aiding in the death of a human being, and according to the Bible murder is sin. In many nations, the law views this as a crime and there will be legal ramifications.

Suicide is not an unpardonable sin. Just as murder can be forgiven, suicide is not the unpardonable sin. God is merciful and He knows our weaknesses. If a believer had just told a lie and then dropped dead, would he be eternally lost? No. Thus, God's grace can forgive

suicide by a professing believer--someone who loses hope and in a moment of anguish makes a

terrible decision. There is nothing in the Bible that specifically addresses whether someone who commits suicide is eternally lost, but we know that salvation is not by works--it is by grace. And nothing can separate you from the love of God.

Believers are not immune from suicide. We live in a fallen world, and Christians suffer great losses and tragedies just as unbelievers do. Sometimes a believer may be so emotionally fragile that they cannot deal with their problems and they consider suicide as a way out. We cannot understand the depth of someone else's suffering or the tragic reasons that could drive someone to commit this act. Only God knows what is in a person's heart.

People sometimes refer to the Old Testament character, Samson, and claim that he committed suicide, but that is not true. Samson sacrificed his life to free his nation from a powerful and evil enemy. It would be similar to jumping in front of a speeding car to save the life of your child. That is sacrifice, not suicide (Judges 16). This is why Samson is listed as a hero in the Bible--s record of faithful men and women (Hebrews 11:32). Suicides in the Bible were committed by sinful men acting in desperation and disgrace. They included Abimelech (Judges 9:54); Saul and his armor bearer (1 Samuel 31:3-6); Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17:23); Zimri (1 Kings 16:18); and Judas (Matthew 27:5).

DEALING WITH SUICIDE:

If you do not know God, become a believer. Although believers are sometime tempted with suicidal thoughts, most often a suicide spirit manifests itself in unbelievers. Becoming a believer in Jesus Christ will make you a new creature in Christ and give you hope for the future. As a child of God, you will have God working in your behalf in difficult times. If you have never made a decision to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you can do that right now and take the first step toward a new life. Simply pray this prayer and mean it in your heart: *"Lord Jesus, I ask you to come into my life. I want to turn from living my life under my own control. Come now and live your life in me. Jesus, forgive me for my sins. I receive you as my Lord and my Savior. I will live for you and serve you all the days of my life. Amen"*.

Determine what is causing thoughts of suicide. Is it a recent loss? Is it a health issue? Is it depression in general? Deal with the root causes in prayer. People often turn to suicide because they are seeking relief from pain. Jesus Christ bore your pain--as well as your sins--on the cross, so why are you bearing your own pain? Ask God to heal your pain. Do not minimize the issues that are causing your thoughts of suicide. Acknowledge and deal with them in the name of Jesus.

Share your feelings with your spiritual leader. Christian leaders can provide guidance, prayer, and encouragement through this difficult time.

Rebuke the spirit of suicide from operating. Suicide is a Satanic spirit that would take your life! Don't let it! Rebuke every thought of it in the name of Jesus.

Know that no matter how dark things seem at the time, there is hope in the future. Things

will get better. You will come through this dark time of your life. God did not promise that you won't have problems, but He gives you the ability to face challenges through His supernatural power.

Formulate a plan for the future. With the help of a biblical counselor or Christian friend, make plans for the future. Your plan should include Bible study, prayer, and fellowship with other believers. It should also include steps to deal with issues that have contributed to the thoughts of suicide. A plan will give you hope for the future.

Read the following passages and make them your declarations of faith: Psalm 23; Psalm 28:7; Isaiah 43:2; Romans 8:28; and Philippians 4:13.

Start a gratitude journal. Each day, write down something for which you are grateful. This will keep you focused on the positive things in your life instead of the negative.

If you are a relative or friend of someone who has committed suicide, take solace in the Word of God, prayer, and comfort of Christian friends. Do not withdraw from others. Release your anger and disappointment at the person for this act, and believe that God was merciful to him/her in their desperate time of need.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT SUICIDE:

You shall not murder (Exodus 20:13)

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years... (Deuteronomy 30:15)

I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. (Psalm 27:13-14)

Read Psalm 73 where the Psalmist expressed his despair, but ends by expressing his trust in the Lord.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me. The Lord will fulfill [his purpose] for me; your love, O Lord, endures forever--do not abandon the works of your hands. (Psalm 138:7-8)

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."

(Lamentations 3:21-24)

For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!
(Ezekiel 18:32)

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. (Luke 18:1)

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

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. (Philippians 4:6-8)

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. (Hebrews 10:35-36)

TEMPTATION

DEFINITION: Biblically, temptation is a physical and/or mental desire to sin--a deep craving for something that is contrary to the Word of God.

FACTS ABOUT TEMPTATION:

God does not tempt you. You are tempted when you are drawn away by your own carnal desires. *"When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away 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).* The process of temptation is desire, conception, birth, sin, and death.

The battle with temptation begins in your mind. It starts with desire which conceives evil and gives birth to sin.

Temptation arises from three major sources. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life: *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15-17).*

Everyone experiences temptation. No one is exempt. Even Jesus, when He was in the flesh, experienced temptation, but He did not sin (Hebrews 4:15).

Temptation is not sin. Being tempted is not sin, but yielding and acting upon it is sin.

One purpose of temptation is to glorify God. *"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1 Peter 1:7).*

There is always a way of escape. You do not have to yield to temptation. In every temptation, God provides a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).

DEALING WITH TEMPTATION:

If you have yielded to temptation, repent. Temptation is sin only when it is acted upon. If you have sinned by acting upon temptation, you must repent (1 John 1:8-9).

Avoid places of temptation. Do not go places where you are tempted to sin. Be careful about what you hear and see, as the ear-gate and eye-gate are how temptation often gains access to your life. Do not associate with people who tend to lead you in to temptation.

Pray the daily prayer which appeals to God to "lead us not into temptation" (Matthew 6:13).

Reprogram your mind. Temptation starts with desire, then sin is conceived and birthed. Stop tempting thoughts the minute they enter your mind before sin is conceived and birthed. Rebuke the thoughts and tell them to go in the name of Jesus!

Read the Bible and pray. Prayer and Bible study are essential to living a life of victory over temptation. Jesus said to be prayerful, lest you enter into temptation (Matthew 26:41). David declared that he hid God's Word in his heart to keep him from sin (Psalm 119:11).

Meet temptation with the Word of God. Study the temptation of Jesus recorded in Matthew 4:1-11. He met every temptation with the Word of God. You can do likewise.

Use the escape hatch. The Bible says that in every temptation there is a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). Look for the escape hatch and use it! Readjust your thoughts. Walk away from the errant group or the sinful pleasure. Remove yourself from temptation. Look for the way out, and take it! Escaping temptation may be immediate or a process, but there is always a way out.

WHAT GOD' WORD SAYS ABOUT TEMPTATION:

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. (Psalm 119:11)

Like a muddied spring or a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked. (Proverbs 25:26)

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. (Matthew 6:13)

Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak. (Matthew 26:41)

And lead us not into temptation. (Luke 11:4)

When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." (Luke 22:40, NKJV)

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves

to the one whom you obey--whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. (Romans 6:6-18)

For the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you through Christ Jesus from the power of sin that leads to death. (Romans 8:2, TLB)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)

If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. (1 Corinthians 10:12-13)

Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character. (1 Corinthians 15:33)

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. (Ephesians 6:11-18)

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:2-3)

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)

Yet the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen [you] and set you on a firm foundation and guard you from the evil [one]. (2 Thessalonians 3:3, AMP)

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (Hebrews 2:18)

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16)

Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (2 Timothy 2:22)

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away 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)

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1 Peter 1:7)

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." (1 Peter 1:13-16)

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. (1 Peter 5:8-10)

Now if [all these things are true, then be sure] the Lord knows how to rescue the godly out of temptations and trials, and how to keep the ungodly under chastisement until the day of judgment and doom, (2 Peter 2:9, AMP)

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

TIME

DEFINITION: Time is a limited period during which actions, processes, or conditions exist or take place. It is a measure of the duration of events and the intervals between them. Time encompasses the past, present, and future--and for the believer this includes eternity.

FACTS ABOUT TIME:

Time is a gift from God. You are a steward of this gift from God and accountable for how you use it each day. Time is a precious and limited commodity.

The biblical day was from evening to morning. People began the day in weakness (tired in the evening) confessing their reliance upon God. Conversely, we begin our day in the morning relying on our energetic selves.

Your activities reveal your priorities. You only have so much time. What you do with your time reveals your priorities. You usually make time for what you really want to do.

A balanced day includes communing with the Heavenly Father in prayer, worship, and the Word; working on your job, at school, or in volunteer work; time spent building relationships with friends and family; and finally, some time spent relaxing.

DEALING WITH TIME:

Commit each day to the Lord. Begin with prayer and the Word and by asking God, "What are your priorities for me today? What do you want me to do with my time today?" If you commit your day to the Lord, a plan will emerge and your tasks for the day will be established (Proverbs 16:3).

Make a plan. Under the guidance of the Lord, make a plan for your day and jot down the details. Who do you need to contact? What do you need to do today? What can you delegate to others to do? What tasks can be postponed? What is the main priority for this day? If you "aim at nothing, you hit it every time". With no plan for a day, you probably won't accomplish much.

Submit your plans to God's sovereignty. His will is sovereign over your plans. Your day may not turn out exactly as you planned (James 4:13-15). Be open to redirection.

Deal with interruptions wisely. Make "faith statements" regarding your plans for the day, but be aware that your day can be interrupted by unexpected events or people. Learn to deal with these wisely. Sometimes interruptions are God's divine appointments where His plan overrules the plans you have made (Proverbs 16:9). Accept these graciously and fulfill the obligations involved. However, do not allow petty interruptions to keep you from accomplishing what is worthwhile--for example people that want to aimlessly chat with you during your work time.

View each day in light of eternity. *"So often we think about life in terms of what's happening today, this week, or next month. We need to try to look at things as God does, with an eye for*

eternity. Is what you are doing now making a lasting impact? Will it matter in another year, another decade, another century? Begin dedicating yourself to things that will still be important long after you are gone." (John Maxwell)

Do not procrastinate. Do not put off doing important things that contribute to God's purpose for your life. *"I find myself thinking, 'When life settles down I will...' But I should have learned by now that life never settles down for long. Whatever I want to accomplish, I must do with life unsettled." (Jean Fleming)*

Balance your day. Commune with the Heavenly Father in prayer, worship, and the Word. Work on your job--including school or volunteer work. Spend time building relationships with friends and family, and finally, spend some time relaxing.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT TIME:

And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this? (Esther 4:14)

But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, "You are my God. My times are in your hands." (Psalm 31:14-15a)

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you. (Psalm 32:8)

If the Lord delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand. (Psalm 37:23)

You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath. (Psalm 39:5-6)

Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. (Psalm 90:12)

Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul. (Psalm 143:8)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble. (Proverbs 4:12)

A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest--and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man. (Proverbs 6:10-11)

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed. (Proverbs 16:3)

In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps. (Proverbs 16:9)

A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing. (Proverbs 20:4)

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven. (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." (Isaiah 30:21)

I know, O Lord, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps. (Jeremiah 10:23)

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. (John 9:4)

Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. (Ephesians 5:15-17)

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." (James 4:13-15)

Study the story of the talents in Matthew 25. Time is like one of these talents, a resource with which God has entrusted you. What will you do with it?

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

DEFINITION: The biblical definition of tithing is setting aside for the work of the Lord a tenth of all one earns or receives. Offerings are special gifts above the tithe that are given to the work of the Lord.

FACTS ABOUT TITHES AND OFFERINGS:

The first record of tithing was when Abraham paid tithe to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:20).

Tithing was not just done under Old Testament law. Abraham's tithing was done more than 400 years before the law was given. New Testament believers also tithed and gave offerings from their income (1 Corinthians 16:2. See also Luke 18:12-13).

Tithes and offerings are important to God. If a person fails to tithe, it is considered robbing God: *"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' In tithes and offerings" (Malachi 3:8).*

You can borrow from the tithe, but if you do you must include 20% interest when you repay it (Leviticus 27:31).

God blesses those who tithe. Those who do not tithe are under a curse: *"You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it" (Malachi 3:9-10).*

DEALING WITH TITHS AND OFFERINGS:

Ask God to forgive you if you have not been tithing. The prophet admonished the people to consider their ways, repent, and renew their covenant of tithing with the Lord (Haggai 1:5-11).

Set aside 10% of all you earn to give to the work of the Lord. Do this first before you pay any bills or spend money on anything else. In some cultures, as in Old Testament times, people tithe off of the produce of their land when there is no monetary exchange operative.

Set aside funds above your tithe to give as offerings to special works: Missions, the poor, specialized ministries, etc.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT TITHES AND OFFERINGS:

A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. If a man redeems any of his tithe, he must add a fifth of the value to it. (Leviticus 27:30-31)

Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. (Proverbs 3:9-10)

Consider your ways (and set your mind on what has come to you). Now therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways (and set your mind on what has come to you). You have sown much, but you have reaped little; you eat, but you do not have enough; you drink, but you do not have your fill, you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages has earned them to put them in a bag with holes in it... You looked for much (harvest), and it came to little; and even when you brought that home, I blew it away. Why? says the Lord of hosts. Because of My house which lies waste, while you yourselves run each man to his own house (eager to build and adorn it). Therefore the heavens above you (for your sake) withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its produce. And I have called for a drought upon the land and the hill country, upon the grain, the fresh fruit juice, the oil, upon what the ground brings forth, upon men and cattle, and upon all the (wearisome) toil of men's hands. (Haggai 1:5-6, 9-11, AMP)

"The silver is mine and the gold is mine," declares the Lord Almighty. (Haggai 2:8)

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." (Malachi 3:8-10)

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

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. (Luke 6:38)

...The Lord Jesus himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income...(1 Corinthians 16:2)

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

(See also "Finances" in this database. For detailed teaching regarding finances obtain the Harvestime International Network publication entitled "*Divine Provision*" available at <http://www.harvestime.org>)

TRIALS, TROUBLES, ADVERSITIES

DEFINITION: A trial is an examination by testing. Biblically, it is a test of faith in which you experience trouble or adversity. Trouble is sometimes referred to as "tribulation" in the Bible. Adversity is similar to trouble, meaning extremely unfavorable experiences.

FACTS ABOUT TRIALS, TROUBLES, AND ADVERSITIES:

A trial is not a temptation. A temptation is something that entices you to sin (see the topic of "Temptation" in this database). A trial is an adversity you are experiencing that tests your faith.

Trials, troubles, and adversities are experienced by all believers. In fact, the apostles taught believers that they would only enter the Kingdom of God through adversity (Acts 14:22). Peter said not to consider it strange or unusual when you encounter trouble (1 Peter 4:12).

God uses both positive and negative experiences for your good. Joseph told his brothers: *"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives"* (Genesis 50:20). The Apostle Paul declared: *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose"* (Romans 8:28)

DEALING WITH TRIALS, TROUBLES, AND ADVERSITIES:

Expect to experience adversity. Peter said not to be surprised by it (1 Peter 4:12-16). The apostles taught the early church that it was to be experienced as part of living in the Kingdom of God (Acts 14:22).

Pray about your trials, troubles and adversities. The Bible says that God has promised to hear before you call and even while you are yet speaking (Isaiah 65:24). Confess your total dependence on Him. Instead of asking "What am I going to do in this adversity?" ask God, "What are You going to do?"

Immerse yourself in the Word of God. The Bible brings comfort and direction during trials, troubles, and adversities.

Use your spiritual weapons. Trials, troubles, and adverse circumstances must be faced with your spiritual weapons. Study Ephesians 6:10-18. See also "Spiritual Warfare" in this database.

Remember that good things comes from God. If something comes to rob, steal, or destroy in your life, do not blame God. It is from the enemy. Jesus said: *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full"* (John 10:10). James said: *"Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows"* (James 1:16-17).

Remember that there is divine purpose in adversity. Your faith is being refined (1 Peter 1:6-

7) and spiritual qualities are being developed in your life: *"Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3-4).*

Focus on eternal benefits. The Bible indicates that trials actually work for you when you are focused on the eternal benefits of the trials instead of the temporary problems: *"Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).*

Rejoice in times of adversity. The Bible commands you to rejoice and give thanks to God in times of adversity. You may not feel like doing this, but do it as an act of your will (See 1 Thessalonians 5:18 and 1 Peter 1:6-7; 4:12-17). You do not give thanks for the adversity, but in the midst of and in spite of it.

Remember these six "p"s of adversity.

- Purpose: God has divine purpose in your trial.
- Profitable: Your trial is profitable if you submit to God and trust Him.
- Presence: God will be with you in your trials.
- Prove: Your faith will be proven by the difficulties.
- Produce: Your trial will produce positive spiritual qualities in your life.
- Perspective: You will emerge with a new perspective.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT TRIALS, TROUBLES, AND ADVERSITIES:

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. (Genesis 50:20)

But in their distress they turned to the Lord, the God of Israel, and sought him, and he was found by them. (2 Chronicles 15:4)

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. (Psalm 9:9)

Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help. (Psalm 22:11)

The troubles of my heart have multiplied; free me from my anguish. (Psalm 25:17)

For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock. (Psalm 27:5)

I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul. You have not handed me over to the enemy but have set my feet in a spacious place. (Psalm 31:8)

You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. (Psalm 32:7)

This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. (Psalm 34:6)

The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all. (Psalm 34:17-19)

May all who gloat over my distress be put to shame and confusion. (Psalm 35:26)

The salvation of the righteous comes from the Lord; he is their stronghold in time of trouble. The Lord helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him. (Psalm 37:39-40)

For troubles without number surround me; my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see. They are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails within me. (Psalm 40:12)

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)

...call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me. (Psalm 50:15)

But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. (Psalms 59:16)

Do not hide your face from your servant; answer me quickly, for I am in trouble. (Psalm 69:17)

In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me. (Psalm 86:7)

He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. (Psalms 91:15)

Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly. (Psalms 102:2)

Give us aid against the enemy, for the help of man is worthless. With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies. (Psalms 108:12-13)

Trouble and distress have come upon me, but your commands are my delight. (Psalm 119:143)

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against

the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me. The Lord will fulfill [his purpose] for me; your love, O Lord, endures forever--do not abandon the works of your hands. (Psalms 138:7-8)

I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble. (Psalm 142:2)

For your name's sake, O Lord, preserve my life; in your righteousness, bring me out of trouble. (Psalms 143:11)

If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength! (Proverbs 24:10)

For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you. (Isaiah 41:13)

Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones. (Isaiah 49:13)

... no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. (Isaiah 54:17)

Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. (Isaiah 65:24)

The Lord is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble; And He knows those who trust in Him. (Nahum 1:7)

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

Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)

In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. (Acts 14:22)

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. (Romans 5:3-4).

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than

conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. (Romans 12:12)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

... that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. (1 Thessalonians 3:3, NKJV)

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. (James 1:16-17).

Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. (James 5:13)

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1 Peter 1:6-7)

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. (1 Peter 4:12-17)

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. (1 Peter 5:7-10)

Study the story of Job--especially chapters 1-2 and chapter 42--to understand more about the purpose of trials.

TRINITY OF GOD

DEFINITION: The Bible reveals that God is one, with three distinct natures, each with different functions. This concept is known as the Trinity of God--meaning three distinct persons, yet a single being who is one.

FACTS ABOUT THE TRINITY OF GOD:

God has a triune nature. This means He has three distinct personalities--God the Father, the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The three are one God, with different functions (Deuteronomy 6:4).

Scriptures that verify the triune nature of God. John the Baptist speaks of it at the time of the baptism of Christ (Matthew 3:16-17). Prior to returning to God and Heaven, Jesus spoke of sending the Holy Spirit (John 15:26). The Apostle Peter spoke of the triune nature of God (1 Peter 4:14), as did the Apostle Paul (Romans 8:2-3; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 2:18). The book of Acts also verifies the triune nature of God (Acts 2:33).

A natural example that best illustrates the Trinity of God is an egg which is composed of the shell, the white, and the yolk. Each have different functions: The shell can be decorated. The white whipped into meringue topping, the yolk can be hard-boiled--but it is still one egg.

The Trinity of God is eternal. This means God has no beginning or end (Psalm 90:1-2). The eternal nature of God is best illustrated by a circle. A perfect circle has no visible starting point or ending point, yet it exists.

The Trinity of God is a spirit. This means God is without flesh and blood and therefore invisible to the natural eyes of man (John 4:24).

The Trinity of God is the sovereign, almighty power over all the universe (Ephesians 1 and Romans 9).

The Trinity of God is omnipresent, meaning God is present everywhere (2 Chronicles 16:9; Proverbs 15:3; Psalm 139:7-8; Isaiah 66:1).

The Trinity of God is omniscient, meaning He knows all things (Psalm 139:4; 1 John 3:20; Hebrews 4:13).

The Trinity of God is omnipotent, meaning He is all powerful (Genesis 17:1; Matthew 19:26; Revelation 19:6; Psalm 62:11).

The Trinity of God does not change. He does not change His basic nature, person, or purpose (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8).

The Trinity of God is holy. He is sinless and never sinned (Leviticus 19:2).

The Trinity of God is just, meaning He is fair and impartial in judgment (Deuteronomy 32:4).

The Trinity of God is faithful. He keeps His promises and is absolutely trustworthy (2 Timothy 2:13).

The Trinity of God is benevolent. He is good, kind, and desires your welfare (Psalms 145:9).

The Trinity of God is merciful. He shows mercy to sinful mankind (Exodus 34:6-7).

The Trinity of God is gracious. He shows undeserved kindness to sinful man (Psalms 145:8).

The Trinity of God is love. He extends His love to you and through you (1 John 4:8).

The Trinity of God is wise. God shows understanding and keen discernment. He created the world by His wisdom (Proverbs 3:19).

The Trinity of God is infinite. He is not subject to natural and human limitations or the limitations of space or time (1 Kings 8:27; Exodus 15:18).

DEALING WITH THE TRINITY OF GOD:

Accept and acknowledge the work of the Trinity in your life. God the Father wants you to accept Jesus Christ, His Son, as your Savior. When you do this, your sins are forgiven and you are given eternal life and the gift of the Holy Spirit of God.

Study more about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They all have additional names in scripture, and numerous functions. Study more about these in the Harvestime International Network publications "*Spiritual Strategies: A Manual Of Spiritual Warfare*" and "*The Ministry Of The Holy Spirit*" available at <http://www.harvestime.org>

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT THE TRINITY OF GOD:

Then God said, "Let *us* make man in our image..." (Genesis 1:26)

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. (Deuteronomy 6:4)

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:16-17)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (John 3:16-18)

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one." (John 10:25-30)

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." (John 14:16-20)

"When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me." (John 15:26)

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. (Acts 2:32-33)

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1-4)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. (Ephesians 2:14-18)

We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. (1 John 4:13-16)

TRUST ISSUES

DEFINITION: Trust is believing in the integrity of someone, that they are who they say they are and will do what they said they will do. It is believing with confident expectation. Biblically, trust is a firm reliance, assurance, and belief on God and His Word. When someone has "trust issues", it means they lack trust in a person, a relationship, or God.

FACTS ABOUT TRUST:

Trust can be misplaced. When dealing with others, your trust can be misplaced and you can be disappointed. This can result in what is termed "trust issues", where you have difficulty trusting someone because of disappointments in the past.

Trust in God is never misplaced. The Psalmist said: *"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God"* (Psalm 20:7).

Trust is actually an expression of your faith in God. By trusting God, you are showing that you have assurance that He is who He says He is and that His Word is true. Trust also provides assurance of your salvation and eternal destiny.

DEALING WITH TRUST:

Ask God to heal your trust issues. If you have difficulty trusting God or others because of past experiences, ask the Lord to heal these emotions.

Ask forgiveness if you have been untrustworthy. Ask God to forgive you and ask the person you failed to forgive you.

Do not rely on man. This is not to say you should not trust people, but your main trust should be in the Lord. Do not place your trust in untrustworthy people (Proverbs 25:19).

Place your trust in God. Rely on the Lord because He will never fail you (Romans 10:11).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT TRUST:

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. (Deuteronomy 31:8)

And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You. (Psalm 9:10, NKJV)

Help, Lord for the godly are no more; the faithful have vanished from among men. (Psalms 12:1)

Some trust in chariots and some in horses., but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. (Psalm 20:7)

For the king trusts in the Lord; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken. (Psalm 21:7)

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; in you I trust, O my God. O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed; Let not my enemies triumph over me. (Psalm 25:1-2)

In You, O Lord, I put my trust; Let me never be ashamed; Deliver me in Your righteousness. (Psalm 31:1,NKJV)

I trust in you, O Lord; I say, "You are my God." (Psalm 31:14)

Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him. (Psalm 32:10)

In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. (Psalm 33:21)

Trust in the Lord and do good. (Psalm 37:3)

Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust. (Psalm 40:4)

I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love forever and ever. (Psalm 52:8)

But as for me, I trust in you. (Psalm 55:23)

When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me? (Psalm 56:3-4)

Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. (Psalm 62:8)

You are my God; save your servant who trusts in you. (Psalm 86:2)

I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust." (Psalm 91:2)

It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. (Psalm 118:8-9)

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. (Psalm 125:1)

Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. (Psalm 143:8)

Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. (Psalm 146:3, NKJV)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and, he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Like a bad tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in times of trouble. (Proverbs 25:19)

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe. (Proverbs 29:25)

Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal. (Isaiah 26:4)

Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God. (Isaiah 50:10)

This is what the Lord says: "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord." (Jeremiah 17:5)

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. (Jeremiah 17:7)

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

Anyone who trusts in him (*God*) will never be put to shame. (Romans 10:11)

I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day. (2 Timothy 1:12)

If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself. (2 Timothy 2:13)

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. (John 14:1)

UNBELIEF

DEFINITION: The biblical meaning of unbelief is refusing to believe in God and His Word. Unbelief is a lack of faith.

FACTS ABOUT UNBELIEF:

The Bible says you are a fool if you do not believe in God. *"The fool says in his heart, "There is no God"" (Psalm 14:1).*

Some people refuse to be convinced. Jesus said that if people would not listen to the Moses and the prophets, then they would not believe even if someone rose from the dead to confirm the reality of God and His Word (Luke 16:31). Even supernatural miracles will not convince someone who refuses to be convinced (John 4:48).

If you do not believe in God, you are condemned. Jesus said, *"Whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son" (John 3:18).*

Unbelief hinders you from receiving God's promises. You may believe in God, but if you are filled with unbelief regarding the promises in His Word you will miss many great spiritual blessings. God promised Israel their land, but their unbelief kept them from claiming it for forty years! They could not enter in because of their unbelief (Hebrews 3:19) .

Unbelief hinders the work of God. Jesus did not do miracles in Nazareth because of their unbelief (Matthew 13:58).

If you deny Christ, He will deny you. *"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33).*

DEALING WITH UNBELIEF:

Examine reasons for unbelief. What caused you to reject God and His Word? Perhaps it was disappointment because of unanswered prayer or a great tragedy you experienced. Perhaps you received false teaching. Go to the root cause of your unbelief.

Recognize the vital importance of believing in God and His Word. Your eternal destiny is at stake: *"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him" (John 3:36).* Revelation 21:8 says those who refuse to believe will be separated from God for eternity.

Confess unbelief as sin. Whatever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). Confess your unbelief to God and ask forgiveness.

Ask God to help you believe. As the father who brought his ailing child to Jesus, cry out by faith: *"Lord, I believe. Help me overcome my unbelief!"* (Mark 9:24).

Study the Word, pray, and fellowship with believers. These three basics will strengthen your core beliefs in God and His Word. Faith comes by the Word of God, and fellowship with other believers strengthens it (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 3:12-13).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT UNBELIEF:

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." (Psalm 14:1)

Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust because they have forsaken the Lord, the spring of living water. (Jeremiah 17:13)

Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven. (Matthew 10:32-33)

Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. (Matthew 13:58)

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you." (Matthew 17:19-21, NKJV)

"Lord, I believe. Help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).

Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. (Mark 15:14, NKJV)

If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead. (Luke 16:31)

If you are the Christ," they said, "tell us." Jesus answered, If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. (Luke 22:67-68)

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

Whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (John 3:18)

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him. (John 3:36)

Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders, Jesus told him, you will never believe. (John 4:48)

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. (John 5:39-40)

The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe. (John 6:63)

For even his own brothers did not believe in him. (John 7:5)

I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins. (John 8:24)

Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? (John 8:46)

Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. (John 12:37)

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household." (Acts 16:31)

Yet he (*Abraham*) did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:20-21)

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. (Romans 10:9-10)

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. (Hebrews 3:12-13)

So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. (Hebrews 3:19)

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another

as he commanded us. (1 John 3:23)

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)

(See also the topics of "Doubt" and "Faith" in this database.)

UNFAITHFULNESS

DEFINITION: Unfaithfulness means to be untrue to a duty, obligation, or promise. It means being untrustworthy or acting as a traitor. The Bible speaks of several types of unfaithfulness: Unfaithfulness to God and His work, to friends and family, and to a spouse.

FACTS ABOUT UNFAITHFULNESS:

Unfaithfulness to God. When you accept Jesus as Savior, you are promising to make Him the Lord of your life. When you violate your promise and do things your own way or turn your back on God or His Word, you are being unfaithful. Without faith, it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6). The parable of the talents in Matthew 5 confirms the importance of faithfulness.

An unfaithful spouse. Unfaithfulness to a mate--adultery--is biblical grounds for divorce (Matthew 19:9), but you are not required to divorce an unfaithful mate. The alternative is to seek to restore the relationship if both parties are willing. The erring party must be forgiven, both by God and their spouse. The unfaithful person must be absolutely discreet and honest about any dealings with the opposite sex in the future in order to rebuild trust. (See also the topics of "Divorce" and "Adultery" in this database.)

An unfaithful friend. An unfaithful friend can be a source of great disappointment. Perhaps they reject you or expose your confidences. The Bible says *"Like a bad tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in times of trouble"* (Proverbs 25:29).

DEALING WITH UNFAITHFULNESS:

Acknowledge unfaithfulness as sin. Whatever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). Acts of unfaithfulness, unbelief, iniquity, etc.--anything that is not of faith is sin and must be acknowledged as such.

Confess your unfaithfulness to God. Confess and ask forgiveness: *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives"* (1 John 1:9-10).

Confess unfaithfulness to your spouse and seek forgiveness. Ask forgiveness from your mate, seek reconciliation, and break the adulterous relationship. If reconciliation with your spouse is the goal, then the incident must be forgiven and never again brought up. When Satan tries to bring up the past, these thoughts must be rejected.

Confess unfaithfulness to friends and family. Ask those affected by your unfaithfulness to forgive you.

Forgive an unfaithful friend. Forgive your friend, then go to them according to the pattern described in Matthew 18:15-17. If he rejects you, then let him remain an acquaintance instead of a close friend. If he accepts you, pray together for restoration of the friendship. If a friend is abusive or leads you into sin, addictions, or violence, do not attempt to reconcile. (See also the topic of "Friends" in this database.)

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT UNFAITHFULNESS:

A talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.
(Proverbs 11:13)

Like a bad tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in times of trouble. (Proverbs 25:29)

Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. (Proverbs 27:6)

"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:27-28)

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. (Luke 16:10, KJV)

...everything that does not come from faith is sin. (Romans 14:23)

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

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
(1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2:2, KJV)

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) (Hebrews 10:23, KJV)

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (1 John 1:9-10)

Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)

Read the parable of the faithful servant in Matthew chapter 25.

(See also the topic of "Adultery" in this database.)

UNPARDONABLE SIN

DEFINITION: The phrase "unpardonable sin" is not actually used in the Bible, but the term is based on Matthew 12:30-31 where Jesus mentions a sin that cannot be forgiven, a transgression that is deemed "unpardonable."

FACTS ABOUT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN:

The unpardonable sin is a scriptural concept. Although the actual phrase is not used, it is drawn from an event recorded in Matthew 12:22-31. When Jesus cast a demon out of a blind and mute man, the Pharisees claimed He had cast it out by the power of Bellzebug, the prince of demons. From this reference comes the concept of the unpardonable sin. The Pharisees were attributing the work of God to Satan and Jesus said this was an unpardonable sin.

The unpardonable sin is attributing the work of God to Satan. This results in a reprobate mind that does not desire or seek repentance: *"Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done" (Romans 1:28).*

Satan often uses this to torment those seeking forgiveness from sin. They think their case is hopeless because they have committed the unpardonable sin. When a person truly has committed this sin, he will not have any interest in spiritual things, nor will he have any desire to repent because he believes that the work of God is actually that of Satan.

DEALING WITH THE UNPARDONABLE SIN:

Distinguish between other sins and the unpardonable sin. People who have murdered or abused a child, etc., may believe they have committed the unpardonable sin. Their guilt and shame may make them think their transgression is unpardonable. Do not minimize the seriousness of sin--whatever it is--but know that even such vile things as these are not unpardonable.

Recognize that because you are concerned, this indicates that you have not committed the unpardonable sin. It is God that draws men to repentance (John 6:44). You would not be concerned about repenting and being forgiven, nor would you desire absolution for sin if you had committed the unpardonable sin.

Realize that God is willing to forgive all other sins. He forgives all your sins (Psalm 103:3). Aside from the "unpardonable sin", the only other sin that cannot be pardoned is sin which is not confessed: *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives."* (1 John 1:9-10)

Pray a prayer of repentance. Confess your sin to God, ask forgiveness, and He will forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

Bind the torment of Satan. If Satan returns with thoughts that you have committed the unpardonable sin, bind these thoughts in the name of Jesus. Command them to go!

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN:

Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons." Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house. He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come." (Matthew 12:22-32)

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him... (John 6:44)

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. (Romans 1:28).

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (1 John 1:9-10)

(See also the topics of "Assurance" and "Doubt" in this database.)

VALUES

DEFINITION: Values are principles or standards that affect one's conduct and character. For the Christian, these values should be based upon God's Word. The most important Christian value for a believer is to value God and His Word more than anything, anybody, or any idea. Christian values are based on spiritual things versus material things and on the principles of the Kingdom of God rather than those of the world.

FACTS ABOUT VALUES:

There are many sets of values in the world. Societies and people see the world through their own sets of values, many of which are relative to culture and environment.

Values are a major source of conflict in the world. The ongoing conflicts in the Middle East between Jews, Palestinians, Muslims, and Christians are examples. Value systems are the root causes of conflicts, chaos, confusion, and wars.

People who don't believe in the true God often end up establishing their own values. Their motives might be good and some of their values might be positive, but they are not rooted in the truths of the Word of God. Thus, they are works of self-righteousness that are like filthy rags in God's sight (Isaiah 64:6).

Values are not relative for a true believer. Christian values are standards of conduct established in God's Word, behaviors and attitudes that should characterize a true believer in Jesus Christ. For the believer, values are not established by the culture or country in which they live or by popular opinion. The word "Christian" means one who is following the teachings of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:21). His values become your values.

It is your responsibility to learn Christian values. As a believer, you should not be wondering what the Christian standard of conduct is, rather you should be learning it from the source: The Bible.

It is the parents' responsibility to teach their children biblical values. Parents are commanded to teach their children continuously: In the house, on the way, when they rise up, and when they go to bed (Deuteronomy 11:19).

DEALING WITH VALUES:

Seek forgiveness. If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, do so. If you have been living a worldly lifestyle due to your value system or that imposed by your culture, ask God to forgive you.

Learn Christian values by immersing yourself in God's Word. The Word is the definitive source for establishing Christian values in your life.

Ask God to help you incorporate these values into your conduct and character.

Pass on Christian values to your children, family, and friends. Always remember, however, that your conduct speaks louder than your words.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT VALUES:

The book of Proverbs is filled with precise statements regarding values. Here are some other key verses Christian regarding values:

Serve God: No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (Matthew 6:24)

Love God and others: Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:37-40)

Treat others as you want to be treated: Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

Do not judge others: Judge not, that ye be not judged. (Matthew 7:1-5)

Forgive others: And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. (Mark 11:25)

Be generous: ...remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35)

Be content: [Let your] conversation [be] without covetousness; [and be] content with such things as ye have... (Hebrews 13:5)

Live what you learn in the Word: But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. (James 1:22)

Study also:

The Ten Commandments: Exodus 20.

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit: Galatians 5:22-23.

VENGEANCE **(Retribution And Revenge)**

DEFINITION: Vengeance--retribution or revenge--is the infliction of injury, harm, humiliation or punishment in return for an injury or offence.

FACTS ABOUT VENGEANCE:

God forbids revenge. *"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:18).*

Vengeance is God's responsibility. It is a function that God alone is to execute (Romans 12:19). When you take matters into your own hands and seek retribution, you are trying to assume God's authority.

Revenge does not bring closure. It does not help you forget the wrong you suffered and it does not help you heal emotionally or spiritually. True healing from wrongs suffered cannot be attained when you are violating God's Word by seeking or executing revenge.

You are to love your enemies. God's strategy for dealing with someone who wrongs you is to show them love and compassion (Luke 6:27) and seek to resolve offences (Matthew 18:15-16).

DEALING WITH VENGEANCE:

Ask God for forgiveness. If you have had vengeful thoughts, sought, or taken revenge, ask God to forgive you because you have violated His Word.

Ask God to give you love for the offender. This is not something you can generate on your own. It comes through God's power and the Holy Spirit being manifested in your life.

If you have taken revenge, seek forgiveness. Ask the one upon whom you took revenge to forgive you. Follow the guidelines of Matthew 18:15-16.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT VENGEANCE:

Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord. (Leviticus 19:18)

Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the Lord, and he will deliver you. (Proverbs 20:22)

Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice. (Proverbs 24:17)

If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing

this, you will heap burning coals on his head and the Lord will reward you. (Proverbs 25:21-22)

You have heard that it was said, "Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth." But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. (Matthew 5:38-39)

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. (Luke 6:27)

Do to others as you would have them do to you. (Luke 6:31)

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. (Romans 12:19)

Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. (1 Peter 3:9)

When they hurled their insults at him (*Jesus*), he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. (1 Peter 2:23)

WEAKNESS

DEFINITION: Weakness is a condition of being fatigued, tired, and inadequate physically, mentally, spiritually, or emotionally to the extent that you cannot function effectively.

FACTS ABOUT WEAKNESS:

There are two main types of weakness. One is weakness (as defined above) that hinders you from functioning effectively. The other type of weakness is desiring something so much that you are unable to resist it. The latter meaning is dealt with as "Temptation" in this database.

Weakness is multi-faceted and interrelated. You can experience physical, mental, spiritual, or emotional weakness. One type of weakness can affect other areas of your life. For example, emotional weakness can also affect your physical body by causing stress.

What causes weakness. Spiritual weakness is caused by not spending time with God and in His Word and/or refusing to do God's revealed will. Emotional weakness can result from not dealing properly with difficult circumstances and wrong emotional responses. Physical weakness results from sickness, lack of exercise, or lack of proper rest. Mental weakness results from not controlling your thought life. (Mental weakness, as defined here, does not mean mental illness. See "Mental Illness" in this database for coverage of this topic.) Weakness can also result from receiving the Lord's Supper improperly (1 Corinthians 11:28-30).

DEALING WITH WEAKNESS:

Analyze your weakness. It is important to discover the root cause of your weakness so you can deal with it and not repeat behaviors that are causing it. Are you experiencing physical weakness resulting from an illness or not eating, resting, or exercising? Is it emotional weakness due to not handling negative circumstances properly? Is it spiritual weakness resulting from lack of time with God, in prayer, and in the Word? Are you losing the spiritual battle for you mind? Are you deliberately disobeying God and doing something that is causing spiritual, mental, emotional, or physical weakness?

Admit your weakness to God. The Apostle Paul admitted his weakness to God, and in so doing God gave him strength (2 Corinthians 12:8-10). Sometimes God supernaturally eliminates your weakness, but at other times He gives you strength in the midst of it.

Accept and confess God's provision for strength in your weakness. The same spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells within you. Draw upon that strength. Claim promises like Philippians 4:13: *"I can do everything through him who gives me strength."*

Correct root causes of your weakness. If your weakness is physical because of improper rest, exercise, or diet, correct these. If you have been losing the battle for your mind, study the topic of the "Mind and Thoughts" in this database. If you are emotionally weak, learn how to handle

your emotions properly. Correct any sinful behaviors that may be causing weakness. For sure, spend time with God and His Word to strengthen yourself spiritually.

Spend time in God's presence. *"But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31, NKJV).*

Recognize that when you are weak, you are strong spiritually. Weaknesses, handicaps, and inadequacies can be positive in that they make you recognize your dependence on God. This relieves you of trying to do God's work in your own strength, and motivates you to function in the power of the Holy Spirit. It replaces pride with humbleness and provides a marvelous opportunity for the Lord to demonstrate what He can do through you. Weakness actually attracts God's strength (2 Corinthians 12:8-10).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT WEAKNESS:

...Your strength will equal your days. (Deuteronomy 33:25)

Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always. (1 Chronicles 16:11)

But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded. (2 Chronicles 15:7)

...for the joy of the Lord is your strength. (Nehemiah 8:10)

The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. (Psalms 18:2, NKJV)

He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. (Psalm 18:16-17)

You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great. (Psalm 18:35)

You armed me with strength for battle; you made my adversaries bow at my feet. (Psalms 18:39)

The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalms 27:1, NKJV)

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song. (Psalms 28:7)

The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace. (Psalms 29:1)

Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord. (Psalm 31:24)

But the salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; He is their strength in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him. (Psalms 37:39-40, NKJV)

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)

My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. (Psalm 62:1)

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Psalm 73:26)

Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always. (Psalm 105:4)

The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. (Psalm 118:14)

The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. (Psalm 145:14)

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. (Isaiah 12:2)

For thus said the Lord God, the Holy one of Israel: In returning [to Me] and resting [in Me] you shall be saved; in quietness and in [trusting] confidence shall be your strength. But you would not, (Isaiah 30:15, AMP)

He gives strength to the weary, and increases the power of the weak. (Isaiah 40:29)

But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31, NKJV)

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. (1 Corinthians 1:25)

God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. (1 Corinthians 1:27)

A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. (1 Corinthians 11:28-30)

The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 15:42-44)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9)

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. (Ephesians 6:10, NKJV)

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)

To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. (Colossians 1:29)

And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. (Hebrews 11:32-34)

WISDOM

DEFINITION: Godly wisdom is the ability to understand what others cannot understand. It is knowledge of what is right, proper, and reasonable according to God's Word. It is using good sense and judgment. Lack of Godly wisdom results in bad decisions and living a sinful lifestyle.

FACTS ABOUT WISDOM:

There are two types of wisdom. The wisdom of God that comes from above and the wisdom of this world. James explains: *"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness."* (James 3:13-18)

Wisdom can be developed in three ways. Experience, observation, and revelation. Through your own experiences and by observing the experiences of others you can learn what to do and what not to do! The best way to learn, however, is through divine revelation from God and His written Word.

God is the one who gives wisdom. From the beginning of Old Testament record, God gave wisdom to His people to accomplish His purposes (Exodus 36:1-1; Deuteronomy 34:9; 1 Kings 4:19-30; Daniel 1:20; Acts 7:9-10.)

DEALING WITH WISDOM:

Repent of any unwise decisions you have made. This will give you a fresh start at living your life with the wisdom given by God instead of your own misguided wisdom or unsound guidance given by others.

Ask God for wisdom. Solomon asked for wisdom and received it (2 Chronicles 1:10-12). James advised: *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does"* (James 1:4-8). Proverbs 2:1-6 chronicles the intensity with which you should seek God's wisdom.

Learn from observation. You can learn from observing the experiences of others. In referring to the Old Testament record, the Apostle Paul said: *"These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come" (1 Corinthians 10:11)*. He also advised: *"Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you" (Philippians 3:17)*. It is better to learn from observing others than experiencing negative circumstances yourself.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT WISDOM:

It is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding. (Job 32:8)

Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. (Psalms 90:12)

Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the Lord. (Psalm 107:43)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise. (Psalms 111:10)

Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I believe in your commands. (Psalm 119:66)

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. (Proverbs 2:1-6)

Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways, who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways. (Proverbs 2:12-15)

Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. (Proverbs 3:13-15)

Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. (Proverbs 4:7, NKJV)

For whoever finds me [Wisdom] finds life and receives favor from the Lord. But whoever fails to find me harms himself; all who hate me love death. (Proverbs 8:35-36)

The way of the fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice. (Proverbs 12:15)

Stay away from a foolish man, for you will not find knowledge on his lips. (Proverbs 14:7)

How much better to get wisdom than gold, to choose understanding rather than silver! (Proverbs 16:16)

A fool's mouth is his undoing, and his lips are a snare to his soul. (Proverbs 18:7)

He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; he who cherishes understanding prospers. (Proverbs 19:8)

Wisdom is sweet to your soul; if you find it, there is a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off. (Proverbs 24:14)

Wisdom is a shelter as money is a shelter, but the advantage of knowledge is this: that wisdom preserves the life of its possessor. (Ecclesiastes 7:12)

Wisdom makes one wise man more powerful than ten rulers in a city. (Ecclesiastes 7:19)

The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and trapped. Since they have rejected the word of the Lord, what kind of wisdom do they have? (Jeremiah 8:9)

This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? (1 Corinthians 1:20)

... but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. (1 Corinthians 1:24-29)

This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:13-16)

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise

in their craftiness". (1 Corinthians 3:19)

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. (1 Corinthians 10:11)

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. (Ephesians 1:17)

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. (Colossians 1:9)

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. (James 1:4-8)

The wisdom of God that comes from above and the wisdom of this world: Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. (James 3:13-18)

The book of Proverbs says more about wisdom than any other book in the Bible. That is the purpose of the book declared in Proverbs chapter 1. Read through Proverbs and mark all the references to "wise" and "wisdom."

WORLDLINESS

DEFINITION: Biblically, worldliness is defined as being devoted to or engrossed in things of the world that are opposed to spiritual concerns. It is also referred to in the Bible as carnality or being a carnal Christian.

FACTS ABOUT WORLDLINESS:

The worldly believer is characterized by spiritual indifference, instability, and lack of discipline. A worldly believer is sinful and rebellious against God (James 4:4) and is a lover of worldly pleasures more than a lover of God (2 Timothy 3:5).

You cannot love the world and love God. *"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).*

A spiritually-minded person is the opposite of one with a worldly mind-set. A spiritually-minded person is focused on eternal things instead of things of the world (Colossians 3:2). He seeks first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33). His life is characterized by the manifestation of the fruits of the Holy Spirit and spiritual discernment. He knows that to be spiritually-minded is life and peace (Romans 8:6).

The things of the world will all pass away. *"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever" (1 John 2:15-17).*

DEALING WITH WORLDLINESS:

Confess the sin of worldliness and ask God to forgive you. Worldliness is sin because it is characterized by spiritual indifference, instability, ungodly conduct, and lack of discipline. The things of the world become an idol to you, and idolatry is sin.

Make a decision to serve God, and Him alone. Like Joshua, declare that you and your household will serve the Lord and live by godly standards (Joshua 24:15). This means you will not do things just because "everyone else is doing them." Your standards will be biblical, not those accepted or dictated by the world.

Immerse yourself in prayer and the Word of God. The more you learn about God through prayer and His Word, the less worldly you will be and/or have the desire to be.

Establish a relationship with other believers who are seeking to live scripturally instead of worldly. Do not hang out with people who live by worldly values.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT WORLDLINESS:

...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:15)

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:25-33)

What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? (Mark 8:36)

What is highly valuable among men is detestable in God's sight. (Luke 16:15)

The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. (John 12:25)

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. (John 15:18-20)

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you...(Romans 8:6-9, NKJV)

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)

But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of

the world to shame the strong. (1 Corinthians 1:27)

And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passes away.
(1 Corinthians 7:31, NKJV)

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. (2 Corinthians 5:16)

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (Galatians 6:14-15)

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.
(Colossians 2:8)

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
(Colossians 3:1-2)

For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. (1 Timothy 6:7-8)

... for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica.
(2 Timothy 4:10)

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. (Titus 2:11-12)

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (James 1:27)

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. (James 4:4)

You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. (James 5:5)

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. (1 Peter 2:11)

Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:4)

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father

is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

(1 John 2:15-17)

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)

For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. (1 John 5:4-5)

X, Y, Z

NO LISTINGS

APPENDIX ONE

ESTABLISHING A TELEPHONE COUNSELING MINISTRY

- Set aside a private room for telephone counseling.
- Establish one or more dedicated phone lines for receiving calls.
- Phones should have hands-free headsets so counselors can write and/or use a computer terminal.
- If you are using this counseling database, set up computers with the database and a shared printer.
- Appoint a telephone counseling ministry coordinator who will recruit, train, and schedule counselors.
- Recruiting counselors.
 - Recruits must be born-again, as this is biblical counseling.
 - Recruits should be able to read and write in order to use the database effectively.
 - Recruits should be seasoned believers who are well-versed in the Word of God.
 - Recruits should be faithful men and women who follow-through on their commitments.
 - Recruits should express a passion for this type of ministry.
- Establish prayer support. Not everyone can or should be a telephone counselor, but you can involve everyone in praying for the ministry.
- Training counselors:
 - Use the introductory chapters of this manual.
 - Train recruits in how to use the database.
 - Advise that if a caller is using obscene, vulgar, or abusive language, they should terminate the call.
 - Warn recruits to never give medical advice, i.e., advising a caller to stop taking medication.
 - Warn recruits that they should never give legal advice.
- Establish a call schedule. Set regular hours for the telephone counseling ministry. Weekday evenings are generally the most active time for receiving calls, so fill these time slots first. Weekends are usually the least active.
- Advertise the telephone counseling ministry in the church bulletin, local newspapers, flyers, churches, local media, and small business-sized cards.

FLOW CHART FOR PROCESSING COUNSELING CALLS

Answer the call by saying:

This is the "*name of counseling line.*"

My name is _____ (*use your first name only*)

With whom am I speaking?

Wait for response.

How may I help you?

For A Routine Call

-Use the guidelines in this manual to discuss and respond appropriately to the caller's problems or questions.

-Pray with the caller.

-Ask for the caller's email or mailing address so you can send them the appropriate notes regarding the problem or question you have discussed.

-Immediately follow-up the call by sending an email or print-out of the topics discussed, along with any personal comments you desire to add.

**For an Emergency Call
(violence or suicide in progress)**

-Ask for the caller's address and telephone number. Tell them you need this information in case you get disconnected.

-Have another counselor call emergency services to dispatch assistance while you stay on the phone with the caller.

-Try to keep the caller talking until help arrives.

-Do not terminate the call until the emergency responders have arrived.

APPENDIX TWO

ESTABLISHING A LAY-COUNSELING MINISTRY

Lay counselors are believers who are not necessarily certified as professional counselors, but who have a desire to help others find biblical guidance for their problems. Many churches have opted to train lay-counselors so that the responsibility for the counseling ministry does not rest solely upon the senior pastor. Here are some steps to establish a lay-counseling ministry.

-Set aside a private room for counseling.

-If you are using this counseling database, set up computer terminal(s) with the database and attach a printer.

-Appoint a lay-counseling ministry coordinator who will recruit, train, and schedule counselors.

-Recruiting counselors.

- Recruits must be born-again, as this is biblical counseling.

- Recruits should be able to read and write in order to use the database effectively.

- Recruits should be seasoned believers who are well-versed in the Word of God.

- Recruits should be faithful men and women who follow-through on their commitments.

- Recruits should express a passion for this type of ministry.

-Establish prayer support. Not everyone can or should be a counselor, but you can involve everyone in praying for the ministry.

-Training counselors:

- Use the introductory chapters of this manual.

- Train recruits in how to use the database.

- Advise that if a counselee uses obscene, vulgar, or abusive language, they should terminate the counseling session.

- Warn recruits to never give medical advice, i.e., advising a person to stop taking medication.

- Warn recruits that they should never give legal advice.

-Establish a counseling schedule, days and hours the center will be open and staffed.

-Advertise the counseling ministry in the church bulletin, local newspapers, flyers, churches, local media, and through small business-sized cards.

APPENDIX THREE

PUT OFF AND PUT ON

Several passages in the Bible command believers to put off certain behaviors and put on others, to "clothe themselves", and to "let" or allow certain qualities to be manifested in their lives. Acting upon these passages will enable you to overcome practically every challenge you will face in your counseling as well as in your own life.

Therefore **do not let sin reign** in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. **Do not offer the parts of your body to sin**, as instruments of wickedness, but rather **offer yourselves to God**, as those who have been brought from death to life; and **offer the parts of your body** to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace. (Romans 6:12-14)

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: **"Love your neighbor as yourself."** Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:8-10)

The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So **let us put** aside the deeds of darkness and **put on** the armor of light. **Let us behave decently**, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, **clothe yourselves** with the Lord Jesus Christ, and **do not think about** how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. (Romans 13:12-14)

Therefore **let us stop passing judgment on one another**. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. (Romans 14:13)

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. (Romans 14:19)

Therefore, as it is written: **"Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."** (1 Corinthians 1:31)

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I **put childish ways behind me**. (1 Corinthians 13:11)

Do everything in love. (1 Corinthians 16:14)

Since we have these promises, dear friends, **let us purify ourselves from everything that**

contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God. (2 Corinthians 7:1)

For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, **stand firm. Let nothing move you.** Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:53-58)

Put off the works of the flesh: The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

Put on the fruit of the Spirit: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. (Galatians 5:22-26)

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9)

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, **to put off your old self**, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and **to put on the new self**, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must **put off** falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. In your anger do not sin: **Do not let** the sun go down while you are still angry, and **do not give the devil a foothold.** He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. **Do not let** any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **Get rid of** all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:22-32)

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them. (Ephesians 5:6-7)

Whatever happens, **conduct yourselves in a manner worthy** of the gospel of Christ.

(Philippians 1:27)

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

You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must **rid yourselves** of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. **Do not lie to each other**, since you have **taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self**, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, **clothe yourselves** with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **Bear with each other** and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. **Forgive as the Lord forgave you.** And over all these virtues **put on love**, which binds them all together in perfect unity. **Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts**, since as members of one body you were called to peace. **And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly** as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And **whatever you do**, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:7-17)

So then, **let us not be like others**, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, **let us be self-controlled**, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. (1 Thessalonians 5:6-8)

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.** (Hebrews 4:14)

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)

Therefore **let us leave** the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, (Hebrews 6:1)

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. **Let us not give up meeting together**, as some are in the habit of doing, but **let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.** (Hebrews 10:23-25)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, **let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with**

perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:1-3)

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have... (Hebrews 13: 5)

Who is wise and understanding among you? **Let him show it by his good life**, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. (James 3:13)

...All of you, **clothe yourselves** with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. (1 Peter 5:5-6)

Dear children, **let us not love with words or tongue** but with actions and in truth. (1 John 3:18)

Dear friends, **let us love one another**, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God (1 John 4:7)

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **Put on the full armor of God** so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. **Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.** Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, **take up** the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. **Take** the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And **pray** in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, **be alert** and always keep on praying for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:10-18)

APPENDIX FOUR

Selecting A Biblical Counselor

- Pray that God will guide you to the right counselor.
- Select a biblical counselor from your home church if one is available.
- If your church does not have a biblical counselor, ask your pastor for a referral to a biblical counseling ministry in your community.
- Ask a fellow-believer for a recommendation to a biblical counselor who has helped them.
- Here are some key questions to ask a prospective counselor:
 - Are you a believer? When did you accept Christ as your Savior?
 - How does your faith affect your counseling?
 - Upon what do you base your counseling?
 - How do you incorporate prayer into your counseling?
 - How long have you been engaged in a counseling ministry?
 - Do you charge for counseling and if so, what is the fee?
- Remember that just because someone is a Christian does not mean he/she is a biblical counselor. Some Christian counselors base their counsel on secular psychology. Biblical counselors base their counsel on God's Word, not secular psychology.
- Be sure your counselor is a born-again believer.
- Be sure your counselor incorporates prayer and the Word of God into counseling.
- Counseling is an interactive process, meaning that open and honest dialogue must occur between a counselor and a counselee. If you cannot establish such dialogue, you might need to find a different counselor.
- Do not remain with a counselor who discredits God, discounts His Word, or criticizes the church and its leadership.
- Do not remain with a counselor whose lifestyle does not line up with the Word of God.
- Do not remain with a counselor who is manipulative or controlling.

APPENDIX FIVE

New Believer Guidelines

Congratulations on your decision! Your decision to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior will bring positive changes in your life. This brief study will help you understand your new commitment and show you how to grow spiritually.

LESSON ONE: SIN

Man's greatest problem is sin: In Romans 3:23 we read, *"All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."* The Bible says all people are sinners and sin separates them from God.

The end results of sin: *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 6:23). The end result of sin is spiritual death—separation from God.

God loves you and has provided forgiveness for your sins: The Bible says, *"This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world ... as an atoning sacrifice for our sins"* (1 John 4:9-10). God loves you so much that He has provided a way for your sins to be forgiven so that you do not have to reap the wages of sin—spiritual death through separation from God.

The answer to your sin problem: Jesus said, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"* (John 14:6). Acts 4:12 confirms, *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."* Jesus Christ is the answer to your sin problem. He is the only way to God and the only way to be forgiven.

Accepting Jesus as your personal Savior: Romans 10:9 declares, *"If you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord: and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* If you prayed the prayer accepting Christ as Savior, this is what you did. You acknowledged your sin, asked forgiveness, and accepted Jesus as Savior.

Your past sins: When you accepted Jesus as your Savior, He forgave the sins you confessed, but He also cleansed you from all unrighteousness—even those sins you did not remember and acts you did not realize were sin. You do not need to confess these past sins repeatedly. They are forgiven and God has forgotten them. God says, *"... for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more"* (Jeremiah 31:34).

Sins committed after you accept Christ: Part of the daily prayer pattern in Matthew 6:9-13 includes asking forgiveness for sins you commit after receiving Christ.

LESSON TWO: LIVING A NEW LIFE

You have experienced a spiritual birth. The Bible teaches that man is body, soul, and spirit. When you accept Christ as Savior, the change is a spiritual one. You experience a spiritual rebirth (John 3:5-8). You do not experience a physical change when you receive Christ. You are not taller, shorter, heavier, or leaner. Your spirit is born again.

After your new spiritual birth, your soul—which is your mind, will, and emotions—must be supernaturally changed as you live out this new life. For years, your soul has ruled your spirit and your body. Whatever your soul desired or dictated, you did—whether it be drugs, alcohol, pornography, immorality, etc. You did not exercise control over emotions such as anger, unforgiveness, and bitterness. You went where you wanted to go and did what you wanted to do. You got to where you are today by doing what you did. If you want things to change, you must do something different.

You must let your spirit rule. For years, your unredeemed, sinful, soulish nature has controlled your body and your spirit. Now you must learn to let your redeemed spirit control your body and your soulish nature (mind, will, emotions).

When your old soulish nature rises up and you sin, it does not mean you weren't saved. You do not need to accept Jesus as Savior again. You simply need to ask God to forgive you and give you strength to overcome future temptations. God has provided a way of escape in every temptation. Take it! *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it* (1 Cor. 10:13).

Repetition of sinful behavior leads to more of the same, until certain actions are so entrenched in our lives that we cannot stop. We become enslaved to habitual sin and spiritual strongholds are erected. This is why you do not want to deliberately sin. Read the struggle the Apostle Paul had in Romans 7:15-21 and the glorious solution in Romans 8.

Recognize the difference between conviction and condemnation. *Condemnation* is general. You think you are a bad person, you can never change, etc. These thoughts come from the enemy to discourage you in your new life. *Conviction* is specific and is from the Holy Spirit to reprove you for wrong so you can correct it. For example, you feel convicted because you lied to someone. This is the Holy Spirit working in you to help you live out your new life of faith.

LESSON THREE: HOW TO GROW IN YOUR NEW FAITH

Study the Word of God. You cannot grow without food. Just as natural food supplies the energy for your physical growth, the Holy Bible is the food which supplies the energy for your spiritual growth. Your spiritual growth will be in direct proportion to your increasing knowledge of God's Word. Personal Bible study must become a part of your daily routine. Start by reading the book of John.

Pray. Use the pattern of the Lord's prayer to guide you in daily prayer: Matthew 6:9-13.

Attend a local Bible-believing church so your new faith will be strengthened.

Make friends with others who are changing their lives through Christ. Become a peace-maker instead of a trouble maker, a problem-solver instead of a problem.

FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR NEW SPIRITUAL LIFE...

Download the courses "*Foundations of Faith*" and "*Kingdom Living*" from the Harvestime web site. After you complete these courses, review the additional free resources available at:

<http://www.harvestime.org>