

The background features a stylized illustration of a brown butterfly with white spots on its wings, positioned in the upper left. To the right and below the butterfly are several flowers with yellow centers and light blue petals, set against a backdrop of large, light blue leaves. The entire scene is rendered in a soft, painterly style with a light blue color palette.

Selected Thoughts

❁ SPECIAL EDITION ❁

RON ADAMS

*This work is dedicated to my loving wife,
Marie,
my constant companion since July 1954,
Who encouraged me to put these thoughts into print.*

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PREFACE

It's difficult to determine how much of what I write is from past experiences, something I heard, or something I read. "Original" is a nebulous word that must be applied to any of my writings.

*That which has been is that which will be,
And that which has been done is that which will be done.
So there is nothing new under the sun.*

Ecclesiastes 1:9

Throughout the pages are quotes added to a thought. Some are original, some are from undetermined sources. Because of the uncertainty of the source of each quote I have decided not to indicate each one. My apologies are to those whose quotes I may have used without noting the author.

REALIZATION

*"I had an original thought.
Well, at the time I thought it was original."*

Ron Adams

pause
take time

ponder
to consider

process
to gain understanding



Be Not Anxious

Anxious: A state of uneasiness and apprehension.

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 comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

SYNDROME

If it is a sin to worry, as some are wont to say,
I find that to be a worrisome thing.
And if I am sinning by being worrisome,
It only increases my worrying;
And that really worries me!
Round and round I go, where does it stop?
Could it be the Scripture is misunderstood?

NOT - BUT

Not anxious, but pray!

“Be not anxious” is an admonition to replace anxiety with prayer. Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down (Proverbs 12:25), but prayer produces peace of mind, knowing that God will take care of you.

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

1 Peter 5:6-7

Rather than get in a “stew” about something and let it get you down, it's better to take it to the Lord in prayer.

Yes, it's easier said than done.
Yet, it's better when it's done.



Artificial Flowers and Outward Beauty

The art of making artificial flowers has progressed to the point it is difficult to distinguish them from real ones. They look beautiful but are not real. Such flowers make me think of outward beauty. Outward beauty attracts—no doubt about it—but without inward beauty, such beauty is only “skin deep.” There is more to being beautiful than being attractive. I cannot improve upon the statements found in the Holy Scripture concerning this matter.

Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.

1 Timothy 2:9-10

Your adornment must not be merely external--braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

1 Peter 3:3-4

As a ring of gold in a swine's snout so is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion.

Proverbs 11:22

By the way, beautiful people are not always outwardly attractive.

What really matters is how you look to God. He looks at the inner person. The “you” inside.



The Best Things in Life Are Not Things

And He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

Luke 12:15

Things are merely items to be possessed and used. All of which will be left behind when life is over. *For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.*

1 Timothy 6:7

What's really important in life? Relationships!

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

who share our interests, aims, and woes.

Oil and perfume make the heart glad, So a man's counsel is sweet to his friend.

Proverbs 27:9

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Proverbs 17:17

BRETHREN

who share a common faith, calling, and hope.

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.

Romans 12:10

Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

2 Corinthians 13:11

THE LORD JESUS

who we serve in this life in order to be with Him hereafter.

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

Colossians 3:23-24

Remember: All relationships require maintenance on our part. Effort must be expended to sustain them: be friendly, love the brethren, serve the Lord.



Be Thoughtful and Kind

It lifts one's spirit when others are thoughtful and kind to you. It's pleasant to be the object of such affection. However, kindness extended to me in no way validates my character. It's when I extend kindness to others that validates my life. Kindness reflects the condition of the heart in the giver, not the receiver.

**The kindness of God toward mankind reflects
His character, not mine.**

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

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**I need to be thoughtful and kind toward all.**

*So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*

Galatians 6:10

*To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.*

1 Peter 3:8-9

**BE THOUGHTFUL AND BE KIND**  
**A motto for daily living.**

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A kind word can pick up someone  
who is weighed down by troubles.

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### **Forgetting the Past, Reaching Forward**

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*  
Philippians 3:13-14

#### **LESSONS**

##### **not having laid hold of it yet**

Life goes on...the race is not over...the goal has not been reached.

##### **one thing I do**

The present is now; the only time we can do anything is today.

##### **forgetting the past**

Whatever was done in the past cannot be changed: be it good or bad. To wallow in self-pity over misdeeds of the past, or to engage in boastful pride of things done, will have an adverse effect on how you live today.

##### **press on toward the goal**

Learn from your past actions: have those worthy of praise stimulate you to do more of the same; have those deserving condemnation prod you to abstain from repeating them.

##### **upward call of God in Christ Jesus**

Living for Jesus may not be easy, but the prize is out-of-this-world.

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Visiting the past is alright, just  
don't stay too long.

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### Jumping to Conclusions

One of my favorite snacks is candy-coated almonds. My wife makes some of the best. One year she made some to give as gifts, and I was told not to eat any of them. Later, she told me that she would leave a few of the almonds on the kitchen counter for me when I arrived home in the evening.

Savoring the thought of such a treat, I hastened to the kitchen that evening. The light was turned off, but in the dim light I could see a dish on the counter. I quickly put a handful in my mouth. Anticipating a delicious delicacy, I was taken back by the awful taste in my mouth. What happened? They tasted awful. Yuk!

I turned on the light to see what I was eating. There in the bright light I saw that what I thought was candy-coated almonds, was actually, of all things, dog food! While cleaning the floor, my wife had put the dog's food dish on the counter next to the candy.

There is a moral to this story, not about being careful what we put in our mouths, but being careful about jumping to conclusions. Often we hear negative comments about others. Sometimes the information is incomplete or inaccurate.

#### Avoiding Jumping to 'Confusion'

Here's where we need to be careful. Much harm can be done when we begin to jump to conclusions. We must not conclude we know what happened and why someone acted the way they did until we have all the facts. We need to "turn on the lights" to make sure we know what happened. It's not a good idea to go about "in the dim light." We may have to eat our own words—which can taste worse than dog food.

*He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him.*  
Proverbs 18:13

**There is no easy way to remove one's foot from the mouth.  
Those who jump to conclusions often make hard landings.**



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### Reputation and Character

Reputation can be sullied or destroyed by innuendoes, half-truths or lies. Character, however, cannot. What others think of you has no bearing on your character. Reputation is the general estimation in which a person is held by the public. Character is the combination of qualities or features you possess. Character is important: it is what you are inside—the real you—that which God sees.

*And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*

Hebrews 4:13

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The Apostle Paul wrote:

*“But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.”*Corinthians 4:3-5

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Reputation is precious, but  
character is priceless.

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### Gratitude

Luke 17:11-19

Ten leprous men asked Jesus for help, and He used his miraculous power to heal them. Only one turned back to thank Him. Nine were thankful to be healed, but did not thank Jesus. Jesus didn't demand that they thanked Him, but it was justly due. Their actions demonstrated their ungratefulness. They had great appreciation for being healed, but none for their Healer.

**What shows a lack of gratitude?** When response is: "It really wasn't that much." Or, "You only did what any Christian should do!" Or, "You owed it to me." Or, "I deserved it." Or (the most flagrant of all), Silence!

**What are some ways of showing gratitude?** First and foremost, express it, don't just think it. (Others can't read your mind.) A sincere, kind word of appreciation. A card containing words of heart-felt gratitude (make it hand-written). A telephone call saying "Thank you! It meant a lot to me." Expressions of gratitude benefits both the one helped and the helper.

**What are some ways of showing gratitude to the Lord?** There are many, here are a few: Cherish the Word of God. Read it often. Meditate on it frequently. Acknowledge Christ's sacrifice in weekly communion with other Christians. Show appreciation for His church by being an active member of a local congregation. Show gratitude for your salvation by sharing the Good News with others. Living for Jesus each and every day: Doing His will.

*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.*

Colossians 3:15



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### Hold to God's Hand

While shopping with our young children, I never held their little hand. Instead, I held out two fingers and told them they were to hold onto me. The only way the hold was to be broken was for them to let go. As I look back on that arrangement it reminds me of holding onto God's hand (figuratively). He has extended His hand to us and it is up to us to take hold and not let go. Whenever the hold is broken, it never is God who lets go, it is always us.

- We are not to let go when we don't want to go where He leads.
- We are not to let go when the glitter of the world beckons.
- We are not to let go when trials and temptations come.
- He is always faithful and never lets go because He loves us and wants what's best for us.

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."*

John 3:16

*The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*

2 Peter 3:9

*No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*

1 Corinthians 10:13



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### **‘I Have Feelings, Too!’**

His name was Frank. He was what one would call “weird.” His appearance was, to be kind, less than attractive. He had a menial labor-intensive job at the place where I worked. Even though he did his job very well, he became the object of many pranks. Most of the time he took it in stride, but one day after enduring a number of humiliating antics, he confided in me, “I wish they wouldn’t do such things. You know, I have feelings, too.”

*Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.*

Luke 6:31

*So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved,  
put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility,  
gentleness and patience.*

Colossians 3:12

*Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other,  
just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*

Ephesians 4:32

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**The way we treat “odd” characters  
speaks volumes about our own.**

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## My Name Is Not ‘Jack’

A small boy lived across the street from me. His father’s name was Jack. He had a grandfather named Jack. And he had an uncle named Jack. So whenever he saw me he would say “Hi Jack.” In his childlike innocence he presumed all men were named Jack. While we may smile with amusement at his conclusion, it is no laughing matter when as adults we classify all ( FILL IN THE BLANK )\* are the same. To lump into one category all the people who share some similarities is not fair or right.

### ‘All Nazarenes’

Nathanael, who later became an Apostle, believed the people from Nazareth to all be the same—not very good.

*Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Nathanael said to him, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”*

John 1:44-46

### ‘Come and See!’

Philip’s reply speaks a profound truth. See for yourself! Investigate! Don’t blindly accept common perceptions and prejudices! This is a lesson that needs to be heeded. Especially by me and by you. We would do well to remember,

**Not all men are named “Jack.”**

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*All from (country); all from (state); all from (neighborhood); all from (ancestors); all from (social status).



Body Language

We can communicate in two ways, verbal and non-verbal. We can speak volumes without uttering a word. Examples of such non-verbal communication are found in the Book of Proverbs.

Who winks with his eyes, who signals with his feet, who points with his fingers; who with perversity in his heart continually devises evil, who spreads strife.

6:13-14

*There is a kind—oh how lofty are his eyes!
And his eyelids are raised in arrogance.*

30:13

*A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, but when the heart is sad,
the spirit is broken.*

15:13

Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she smiles at the future.

31:25

“A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest” – your poverty will come in like a vagabond and your need like an armed man.

6:10-11

*He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will also
cry himself and not be answered.*

21:13

*He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof
will dwell among the wise.*

15:31

**Lesson: Our actions say plenty—loud and clear.
*Be careful what you say!***



Antique Chairs and Old Bibles

Someone once said the reason many antique chairs are uncomfortable is because all the comfortable chairs wore out long ago. Well, that may or may not be true, but old Bibles that have survived the years in good condition certainly didn't get much use. Bibles that are used wear out. Even Bibles of excellent craftsmanship deteriorate when used frequently. What better sight than to see someone with a Bible showing signs of heavy use. Better to have a Bible with the pages falling out than to have one with the pages still stuck together. An unused Bible may last a lifetime, but what good is a book that is seldom read?

Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

John 20:30-31

For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Romans 15:4

Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so.

Acts 17:11

The best antique is an old friend.



Authors

The verb “author,” which had been out of use for a long period, has been rejuvenated in recent years with the sense “to assume responsibility for the content of a published text.”

AUTHORS ALL

Each person is an author of a unique book called “My Life.” The contents of which each person bears full responsibility. It may be a thin book or a thick book. If one lives to the age of 75, it will have 328,520 pages (days) – one page for each day! It is being written one page at a time. The number of pages is not important – what is written on them is what counts. Once a page is written it cannot be changed. Editing is not possible. Tears cannot remove or change a single word.

Are you pleased with what you have written so far? What are you writing today? How will it end? We all enjoy books that have a happy ending. Let’s make sure the book we author has a happy ending by following the teachings of Jesus Christ and seeking His forgiveness for the sins that stain some of the pages.

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws upon their heart, and upon their mind I will write them,” He then says, “and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

Hebrews 10:16-17

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

Revelation 20:12

“. . . and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1:8-9



‘Drive Friendly’

Highway signs along the roads in Texas read: “Drive Friendly.”
(Friendly defined: favorably disposed; not antagonistic; amicable.)

One may obey the rules of the road out of obligation. (The law requires consideration of other drivers.) However, this sign encourages consideration based on relationship, not obligation. There is a lesson here in our dealing with other people, not only on the roads, but in everyday life.

One may consider others out of obligation (compelled: “have to ...”). However, the Scriptures teach that our consideration of others should be based on relationship. In living with others, and before God, it takes more than right actions. It takes the right attitude: “love” not “law.”

*And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor,
and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not
have love, it profits me nothing.*

1 Corinthians 13:3

James sums it up well:

*If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law,
according to the Scripture, “You shall love your
neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.*

James 2:8

“Live friendly!”

It is said courtesy is contagious. So
why not start an epidemic.



A Closer Look

The better acquainted we become with others, the more we are able to see their imperfections. This is true in all close associations, especially in the local congregation. Herein lies the test of one's character. It takes little effort to focus on the faults and irritations of others and to comment on them.

However, it takes conscious effort to see and comment on the qualities we admire. The result of expressing the qualities we admire in others can produce dramatic results in them and in us.

We need to look for the good in others (the imperfections are obvious), just as we want them to look for the good in us! Is this not what brotherly love is all about?

“. . . walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love.”

Ephesians 4:1-2

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.

1 Peter 1:22

Thought Worth Considering **Would I like myself as a friend?**

Friends are people who love us in
spite of our imperfections.



Facing Difficult Circumstances

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

James 1:2-4

One's faith is put to the test when trials come.
May our faith not waiver by

GIVING IN

Acquiesce or compromise.

GIVING UP

Quit trying.

GIVING OVER

Join the opposition.

We need to have sufficient faith to

GIVE IT OUR ALL

to persevere no matter what.

Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, "The will of the Lord be done!"

Acts 21:13-14

It's not the greatness of troubles but
the smallness of faith that causes one
to complain.



Calculations

**Sometimes we are so busy adding up our troubles
we forget to count our blessings.**

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed
us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.*

Ephesians 1:3

A grief shared is only half a grief, a joy shared is double joy.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

Romans 12:15

Counting some things as loss in order to gain.

But whatever things were gain to me, those things

I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Philippians 3:7

One addition must not be made.

*Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in
Him. Do not add to His words lest He reprove you, and you
be proved a liar.*

Proverbs 30:5-6

Counting the cost beforehand can
save you a lot of expense later.



Tomorrow, Yes, Tomorrow

“I will do it tomorrow.”

Plans for tomorrow are often used as an excuse for inaction today.

Mañana is surely going to be the busiest day of the week, considering all what is planned for it.

PROCRASTINATION IN SERVING THE LORD

Priorities Not Clearly Defined

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 6:33-34

Distracted by Worldly Desires

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

1 John 2:16-17

Thinking One Will Surely Be Able to Do It Tomorrow

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

James 4:13-14

No labor can be performed
yesterday or tomorrow. It can only
be done today.



Journey

The act of traveling from one place to another.

TRUISMS

A journey begins with the first step.

A journey ends when the last step is taken.

Also true: What happens on the way determines whether or not the journey is completed.

The Journey Is Not Completed When One gives up and turns back

But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?

Galatians 4:9

gives in to alluring side roads

But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

1 Timothy 6:9

gives over to own desires

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

2 Timothy 4:3-4

What it takes to complete the journey.

I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13-14



A Faithful Companion

Sometimes I am discouraged;
The road seems long and drear.
The overwhelming waters
Come very, very near.

But far above the tempest
I hear the Savior say,
“Be strong, O Christian pilgrim;
I am the truth, the way.”

Though every friend may leave me,
My cross be hard to bear,
I have a friend in Jesus,
On whom I cast my care—

A faithful, dear companion,
Whose love is so divine,
And I am his forever
And he forever mine.

— Author unknown

Draw Near to God

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

James 4:8

Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 7:25

Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16

Be a Follower of Jesus

“And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.”

Matthew 10:38-39



Wisdom from the Book

Proverbs 6:16-19

*There are six things which the Lord hates,
Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:*

haughty eyes,

[sees oneself as better than others]

a lying tongue,

[tells the truth only when it's convenient]

hands that shed innocent blood,

[hurts those who haven't done anything wrong]

a heart that devises wicked plans,

[thinks of ways to do evil]

feet that run rapidly to evil,

[eager to be involved in doing wrong]

a false witness who utters lies,

[lying to help a friend or to hurt another]

one who spreads strife among brothers.

[fostering turmoil among members, friends or family members]

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***These actions are not only hated by God,  
but are harmful to others, and are devastating  
to the one who does them.***

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Hating evil is not a "hate-crime."  
It's a reflection of our mighty God.

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### A Blind Leap of Faith?

Some non-believers speak of a Christian's faith as a blind leap of faith. Not So! Faith in God and His Son gives one the ability to see the unseen.

*"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,  
the evidence of things not seen."*

Hebrews 11:1 (KJV)

This is not a definition of faith, rather it is a description of faith. Faith provides a foundation for hope and gives substance to things unseen, treating them as if they were already objects of sight.

It is said of Moses that he went about *"as seeing Him who is unseen."*  
Hebrews 11:27

Paul wrote, *"we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."*

2 Corinthians 4:18

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HOPE AND TRUST

There is nothing mysterious about treating something unseen as if it were something already in sight. When one boards an airplane to travel to a small island in the vast Pacific Ocean for the first time, he does so "by faith." He has put his trust (faith) in the information and evidence provided that there is such a place. He trusts that the pilot knows how to fly the airplane to the island. He trusts the plane is capable of making the journey. And he hopes to arrive safely.

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**Those who go about blindly are not Christians.  
Christians walk in the light. The ones who walk in  
darkness are those who are going about blindly.**

*". . . the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving,  
that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ,  
who is the image of God."*

2 Corinthians 4:4



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### Good Examples

*Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.*  
Philippians 3:17

#### REFLECTION

Whenever I read this passage my mind quickly focuses on some members I have known in the past and who have passed on. A dear sister in Christ who in spite of severe health problems busied herself doing things for others. A special brother who was the epitome of kindness. A certain mother who was determined her children would know the Lord. A father who took his role seriously as the spiritual leader of his family. And many others I can vividly recall.

I omitted the names for a reason. It's not the person who is important. It's the attributes exhibited in daily life. The godly living, the great faith, the strong determination, the love of God—that's what important. We would do well to follow their examples and draw strength from them.

#### PERSONAL REFLECTION

Take a few moments and recall some individuals you have known who were (or are) good examples. On second thought, take more than a few moments. Are not these qualities something to be found in you as well?

#### REFLECTED IN OTHERS

It's a sobering fact that others see your behavior, just as you observe others. Someone may be following your example. Not may, but probably!

**Follow good examples.  
Be a good example.**



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### Past, Present, Future

***The past is to be a  
springboard  
to spur you on —  
not an anchor  
that holds you back.***

*Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 3:12-14

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Someone once said, "The past is a nice place to visit,
but don't stay too long."

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You can't undo anything yesterday.  
You can't do anything tomorrow.  
Whatever you do, you will do it while it is today.

***Learn from the past,  
live in the present, and  
prepare for the future.***

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It is much better to prepare for  
the future than worry about it.

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### Perish the Thought

Whenever one of these thoughts enters our mind,  
it needs to be disposed of promptly.

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“How could God . . . ?”

Perish the thought that we can think on a level with God.

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah 55:8-9

“It sounds reasonable to me that . . .”

Perish the thought that reason can be the basis for determining what is acceptable to God. Reason is subjective, interpretive, and limited by personal knowledge and bias.

Then God said to Jonah, “Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?” And he said, “I have good reason to be angry, even to death.”

Jonah 4:9

“I know what it says, but . . .”

Perish the thought that what is written can be rebutted. If we know what the Bible says, that’s all that matters; attempting to rebut truth is vain.

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

John 4:24

“Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.”

John 17:17

“If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

John 8:31-32



‘Warts And All’

Idiom: (Slang) All defects and imperfections notwithstanding.

Wart: (a) An imperfection, especially in unattractiveness. (b) A flaw.

IMPORTANT FACTORS

The four important factors to describe and classify diamonds:
CLARITY, COLOR, CUT, and CARAT WEIGHT.

Imperfections Not Withstanding

The one common trait of natural diamonds is that they all have imperfections. Some more, some less. Most flaws are not noticeable until viewed under high magnification. But the diamonds are still beautiful. (A synthetic diamond has no imperfections, but it's not a true stone.)

IMPORTANT FACTORS

The important factors to describe and classify Christians:
FAITH, HOPE, LOVE.

Faith as a Foundation

Hope as an Anchor

Love as a Motivator

Imperfections Not Withstanding

The one common trait of all Christians is that when looked at closely they all have imperfections. Some more, some less. Most flaws are not noticeable until viewed under close scrutiny.

‘Warts and All’

Local congregations are composed of imperfect Christians. None can make a claim of being perfect. Yes, we all have “warts.” Some more, some less.

*But now faith, hope, love, abide these three;
but the greatest of these is love.*

1 Corinthians 13:13



Knowledge and Discernment

Knowledge:

The state or fact of knowing.

Discernment:

Exhibiting keen insight and good judgment.

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.

Philippians 1:9-10



real knowledge

We need to know the true contents of the New Testament (the Good News).

all discernment

We need to exhibit acute insight and exercise good judgment in determining how it is to be applied.

so that you may approve the things that are excellent

We need to combine the knowledge gained with good judgment in approving how we live.

in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.

Our goal is to be sincere and blameless.



WORDS TO THE WISE

The mind of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

Proverbs 18:15

Apply your heart to discipline and your ears to words of knowledge.

Proverbs 23:12

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 1:7



Sincere

It is commonly held that the word sincere comes from two Latin words: *sine* 'without' and *cera* 'wax'. One explanation is that craftsmen, who during the Republic of Rome, would generally have been slaves or foreigners, and these marble workers would cover imperfections in the stone with wax.

Our commitment to being a disciple of Jesus must be sincere. It must not be feigned or pretended. It must be genuine. It must be without hypocrisy. It must be pure and unadulterated.

SINCERE LIVING

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.

Philippians 1:10

SINCERE LOVE

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

1 Peter 1:22-23

SINCERE HEART

Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Hebrews 10:2

ONE CAVEAT

Sincerity in religion is a must, but it alone is not enough to establish what one believes is correct. One may be sincerely wrong as much as one may be sincerely right. Saul of Tarsus sincerely believed those of "the way" were a factious group and persecuted them. *"I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor ...I acted ignorantly in unbelief."*

1 Timothy 1:13



God Is So Loving

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

John 3:16

His grace is so sufficient . . .

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us.” Ephesians 1:7-8

His salvation is so great . . .

“obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.”

1 Peter 1:9

His word is so powerful . . .

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” Romans 1:16

His desire for you is so earnest . . .

“who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” 1 Timothy 2:4

His concern is so personal . . .

“Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? And yet not one of them is forgotten before God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows.”

Luke 12:6-7

His cleansing is so complete . . .

“But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

1 John 1:7

His invitation is so warm . . .

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, 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 shall find rest for your souls”

Matthew 11:28-29

His relationship is so awesome . . .

For 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.

Galatians 3:26-27



Sharing

Often we think of sharing in terms of giving something that we have to another person. However, we can share in other ways.

A burden shared is only half a burden.

A joy shared is double joy.

NOTE THE FOLLOWING BIBLE REFERENCES

Shared Joy

But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. And you too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

Philippians 2:17-18

Shared Burdens

Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2

Shared Emotions

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

Romans 12:15

Shared Sufferings

And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

1 Corinthians 12:26-27



'ONE ANOTHER'

Such sharing is only possible when there is a close association. There are forty-two verses in the New Testament that contain the words

"one another" that indicate association among disciples is a vital part of being a disciple of Christ.



React

(1) To act in response to a stimulus or prompting: (2) To act reciprocally or in return.

How we act is important. And how we react is just as important. Not everything in life is fair. Insults and offenses can be upsetting. Mistreatment can be devastating. How do we react? More important is the question, "How should we react?"

A THOUGHTFUL MEASURED REACTION

*The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer
but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.*

Proverbs 15:28

*He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty
and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.*

Proverbs 1:32

*Do not answer a fool according to his folly,
or you will also be like him.*

Proverbs 26:4

*Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt
so that you will know how you should respond to each person.*

Colossians 4:6

POOR EXCUSES FOR BAD REACTIONS

They made me do it.

No! You chose how to react.

I couldn't help myself.

No! You yielded control to your emotions.

He did it first!

So? Does that make it right?



*To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly,
kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or
insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called
for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.*

1 Peter 3:8-9



‘BE THOUGHTFUL AND KIND’

The Story Behind My Motto

I was looking for a saying or motto that would help me while interacting with another person. Especially someone with whom I had a disagreement or dispute. There has been times when I lost my “cool” and later regretted my actions. I needed something that would help me maintain the right attitude. Without the right attitude such interactions can quickly deteriorate and cause a greater problem.

I decided on “Be Thoughtful and Kind” because it is succinct and easy to remember. Four words that says it all.

Keeping it in mind prepares me for any discussion or dispute: in person, over the telephone, in an email, or by written correspondence.

The only regret I have in choosing this motto is that I wish I had chosen it earlier in life because it would have saved me from the times when I wasn’t thoughtful and kind. The harm cannot be undone, but thankfully we have a loving and forgiving God.

Thoughtful: Having or showing heed for the well-being or happiness of others and a propensity for anticipating their needs or wishes.

Kind: Friendly, generous, or warmhearted nature; showing sympathy or understanding; considerate, forbearing, tolerant.

—American Heritage Dictionary

What Might Be Your Motto?

To have some watchword, a maxim adopted as a guide to one's conduct can be very beneficial in daily living. Something unique to you. Something brief and easy to recall. Something to help you as you interact with others, especially those who need it most.

YOUR MOTTO

(A brief statement that summarizes
your beliefs.)



Friendships

Bear with me in a little reflection on friendships. As I experienced one of those birthdays that ends in “0,” I find myself reflecting on some of the mysteries in life. One mystery in particular is “friendship.” Sometimes after meeting what seems to be a congenial person, one with which I would like to establish a close relationship, I put forth the effort to establish a friendship. But over time nothing develops. We know each other but never become more than acquaintances. This has caused me to ask the question, “Why?”

Looking back on such endeavors, I have come to realize that true friendships just happen. They are not planned, nor are they the result of my efforts. True and lasting friendships seem to be based on a mutual admiration of inward qualities, that are not easily discernable early on. Over time they grow and thrive despite hardships, separation, and other circumstances. Outward appearance is not part of the equation. We look past the “cover” and see the “content.” We admire the person inside, not the body that houses the soul.

I am thankful for the friendships that have developed over the years and continue to develop. I am thankful there are those who saw something in me that they considered worthy of friendship. Blessed is the person who has true friends, even if they are only a handful.

Friendships just happen. That’s the only way I can explain it! Thank God for friendships that last for years, decades, even a lifetime.

However, there is a friendship that was planned, not by me but by someone who saw something in me that He considered worth dying for. It is this friendship I treasure most—the one that has developed between the Lord and I. I see in Him a love that surpasses knowledge. I love Him because He first loved me. “My Lord and I”—that’s the greatest friendship one may have. I thank God daily for it.

This is a friendship that anyone may have—it’s up to you.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do what I command you.”

John 15:13-14

INDEX

TITLE	Page
- A -	
A Blind Leap of Faith?	23
A Closer Look	16
A Faithful Companion	21
Antique Chairs and Old Bibles	13
Artificial Flowers and Outward Beauty	2
Authors	14
- B -	
Be Not Anxious	1
Be Thoughtful and Kind	4
Be Thoughtful and Kind: The Story Behind My Motto	33
Body Language	12
- C -	
Calculations	18
- D -	
'Drive Friendly'	15
- F -	
Facing Difficult Circumstances	17
Forgetting the Past, Reaching Forward	5
Friendships	26
- G -	
God Is So	30
Good Examples	24
Gratitude	8
- H -	
Hold to God's Hand	9
- I -	
'I Have Feelings, Too!'	10
- J -	
Journey	20
Jumping to Conclusions	6

INDEX

TITLE	Page
- K -	
Knowledge and Discernment	28
- M -	
My Name Is Not 'Jack'	11
- P -	
Past, Present, Future	25
Perish the Thought	26
- R -	
React	32
Reputation and Character	7
- S -	
Sharing	31
Sincere.....	29
- T -	
The Best Things in Life Are Not Things	3
Tomorrow, Yes, Tomorrow	19
- W -	
'Warts and All'	27
Wisdom from the Book.....	22

LOVE
ONE
ANOTHER