

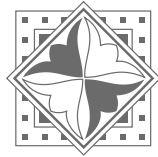


Selected Thoughts

✧ RON ADAMS ✧

Selected Thoughts

Inspirational Messages



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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(REVISED)

PREFACE

QUOTATIONS

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, and some from 14,000 QUIPS & QUOTES BY E. C. MCKENZIE. 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

Author and Editor



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Staying Healthy

There are many fads and gimmicks that promise an easy way to be trim and fit, but it's becoming increasingly apparent that the proper intake of food coupled with proper exercise is the way to remain physically fit. I see a parallel here: Having good spiritual health requires the proper intake of spiritual food coupled with the exercise of one's faith.

What is seen with the eyes and heard with the ears must nourish the soul. The intake of "junk food," while catering to the lusts of the flesh, renders one spiritually unhealthy.

Proper exercise strengthens one's faith, thereby rendering it fit to deal with the daily affairs of life. Inactivity causes one to become a spiritual "couch potato," unfit to do the Master's bidding.

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9

* * *

Rx for Spiritual Health

Daily fill your soul with good thoughts and be busy doing good.

But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

Ephesians 5:3-4

Exercising restraint is very healthy
for the body and the soul.



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Passive or Active?

While going through some difficult times, I put a sign on my office wall that read: *It's up to You to Make the Day a Success*. It reminded me that one must take charge of his or her thoughts and actions.

* * *

Take Charge of Your Thoughts

Push your problems into the background as much as possible and let your mind dwell on noble things.

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

Philippians 4:8

* * *

Take Charge of Your Life

Think of others. Do some kind deed. Say a kind word. Pray for those you know who are less fortunate. Lift the spirit of someone downtrodden. Share the Good News. Spend time in prayer.

Count your blessings.

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9

* * *

Be Active!

Hoping things will be better, wishing things to improve, looking to others to make your day, causes one to be passive. Be active!

Make your day!

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

Galatians 6:10



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Consider This

It cost so little, I wonder why
we give it so little thought;
A smile, a kind word, a glance, a touch;
what magic by them is wrought.

—Anonymous

* * *

'Make Someone's Day'

To know that someone cares—
warms the heart.

To hear words of comfort—
lifts one's spirit.

To see a bright smiling face—
aids a cheerful countenance.

To feel a pat on the back or a warm embrace—
strengthens one's resolve.

“. . . members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.”

1 Corinthians 12:25-26

The one helped and the one giving
help are both blessed..



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Three Most Important Words

The three most important words in real estate are “location, location, location.” Where the property is located is critical. A beautiful dwelling in a crime-infested area has little appeal or value, while a modest house in a quiet and secure neighborhood is very appealing and has great value.

Likewise, the three most important words in Christianity are “application, application, application.” Knowledge of God’s Word is imperative, but without application it is of little value. Unless one applies the morals and principles taught in the Scriptures, one is a Christian in name only. Knowledge is not an end in itself, but a means to an end.

In Luke 19:30-37, the account of the “Good Samaritan” illustrates this very principle. Jesus’ parting words to the listeners who understood His message were “... go and do ...”

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.

Philippians 4:9

Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock.

Matthew 7:24-25

Knowing what to do is of little value
unless acted upon.



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My 'To Do' List for Today

I need to ...

love my neighbor, the unlovely, even my enemies;
The fruit of the Spirit is love

radiate the joy that comes from knowing my Lord;
joy

be at peace with myself, with others, and with the Lord;
peace

be patient while undergoing trials or tribulations;
patience

let goodness be my adornment;
goodness

be kind and gentle in my conduct towards others;
kindness

be faithful in my dealings with others, my word being my bond;
faithfulness

maintain self-control, in order to prevent harming myself and others.
self-control

Galatians 5:22-23

* * *

**To do these things is a challenge, but with the Lord's help
I'll give it my best shot!**



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My Resolutions

**to consider the possibility that I may be wrong–
to be willing to admit I am wrong–
to be humble if I am right, and not gloat.**

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

1 John 1:9

*Before destruction the heart of man is haughty,
but humility goes before honor.*

Proverbs 18:12

* * *

**to not be a sore loser–
nor be an arrogant winner.**

*“Have I rejoiced at the extinction of my enemy, or exulted when evil befell
him? No, I have not allowed my mouth to sin by asking
for his life in a curse.”*

Job 31:29-30

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.

Proverbs 16:18

* * *

to consider others’ interests as well as my own.

*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind
regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely
look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of
others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 2:3-5

Make a firm decision. Then follow
through to make it happen.



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Feelings

An affective state of consciousness, such as that resulting from emotions, sentiments, or desires.*

Do What Is Right and Feel Good

It's impossible to feel good about oneself without doing what is good.

Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

Romans 14:22

* * *

Do What Is Wrong and Feel Bad

It's rare to find someone who's conscience is not troubled by a sense of right and wrong.

Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him [Jesus], saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." ... And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

Matthew 27:3-5

* * *

Do Nothing at All and Feel Worthless!

Laziness is a quality that prevents a person from feeling good.

The way of the lazy is as a hedge of thorns ...

Proverbs 15:19

Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

James 4:17

* American Heritage Dictionary

Whatever a person decides to do
there will be consequences.



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My-itis (egocentric syndrome)

A very infectious disease that affects a number of people. Symptoms include the constant use of the words, “I, my, me, mine.” No matter what subject is being discussed, the infected person’s comments will be laced with these words. The cause is a lack of love and concern for others.

* * *

The Cure

The prescription to treat this disease:

℞ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourself.

℞ Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

℞ Have this attitude in yourself which was also in Christ Jesus.

Cf. Philippians 2:3-5

* * *

Follow-up Testing

If one has been cured of this dreadful disease, his or her comments will be laced with “you, your, yours, us, we, ours.” (Periodical testing is recommended as the condition may reoccur.)

The person all wrapped up with
himself is overdressed.



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My Prayer

I pray that I may be:

humble

so as to accept praise without becoming arrogant;

confident

so I may welcome criticism;

compassionate

so that I am able to accept human frailties in others;

discerning

in order that I may see my own shortcomings;

modest

enabling me to appreciate the greatness in others;

wise

so as to realize that greatness is achieved through service;

brave

that I might stand up to opposition;

loving

so I will serve the Lord acceptably.

Amen, and Amen!

(May this be the prayer of everyone.)



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Am I the Only One?

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, that you may be able to endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13

* * *

Three Things We Learn

My temptations are not unique.

I am not to think – “I’ve been singled out. Woe is me.”

* * *

I am able to resist.

I am not to consider myself powerless – “I couldn’t avoid it.”

* * *

I have a way out.

I am not to regard myself as helpless – “I can’t help it.”

Yield not to temptation. Rather, use it as an opportunity to strengthen your faith.

We all are unique individuals who share common temptations.



Vague Morality

To some what is right or wrong is said to:

depend on the situation –

(One can easily rationalize something being right.)

depend on one’s feelings –

(Popular adage: “If it feels so right, how could it be wrong?”)

depend on the meaning of the word.

(Parsing of words has become a novel way to negate something being wrong.)

* * *

If nothing is absolute, then it is impossible to determine the right or wrong of any action. Such worldly wisdom is nothing more than a cloak to cover what is inherently lacking commonsense and scripturally wrong. Only in matters of morals is such foolishness exhibited. In matters of the exact sciences (e.g., mathematics) $12 \times 12 = 144$. There is only one correct answer: 139 or 146 may be close but they are wrong.

* * *

The Bible is not vague when it comes to morals!

“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Galatians 5:19-21



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

* * *

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.”

1 Corinthians 4:3-5

Actors are people who act the part.
And so are hypocrites.



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Regret Versus Fulfill

A popular saying that is uttered after the fact is

Woulda, Coulda, Shouda

I would have, but didn't.

I could have, but didn't.

I should have, but didn't.

The past cannot be relived, but what lies ahead
can be lived successfully!

~~~~~

Words of fulfillment that need to become a popular saying

#### **I will, I can, I shall**

I will do it!

I can do it!

I shall do it!

~~~~~

Don't let dwelling on what you didn't do keep you
from doing what you can do now!

*"...forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward
to what lies ahead..."*

Philippians 3:13

Unless one learns from his mistakes,
he will repeat it over and over.



The Elijah Prescription

After Elijah defeat the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, an enraged Jezebel sent a messenger to him saying, “So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.” Afraid, Elijah fled to the wilderness.

To make a long story short, after resting, an angel provided him with food and sent him on a journey to the mountain of God where the Lord spoke to him saying, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” He replied, “I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.”

Then God gave him an assignment with the assurance that he was not alone: There were 7,000 others who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Thus God turned a fearful prophet into a fearless one. When it seems hopeless to deal with what you are up against, here is a prescription from the Lord:

Rx

- 1. Rest to refresh the mind.**
- 2. Food to revitalize the body.**
- 3. Work to rekindle your faith in your ability.**

Be refreshed. Be revitalized. Be proactive.

A prescription that can effect a cure
must be taken according to
directions.



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Prayers

It's not the body's posture, but the heart's condition, that counts when one prays.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Philippians 4:6

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.

Colossians 4:2



Don't pray for an easier life, pray for strength to handle the current one.

"Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Matthew 26:41



Forbidding prayers in public schools won't hurt the country half as much as forgetting prayers in the home.

"But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you."

Matthew 6:6

Pray without ceasing.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

*We expect God to hear our prayers.
God expects us to hear His word.*



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Killjoys

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!
Philippians 4:4

However, such rejoicing is squelched by the following:

Playing church: dabbling but not committed.

Not considering that “membership” constitutes “discipleship.”

~~~~~

### **Resisting the molding of character by the Spirit.**

Stubbornly holding on to the “old self.”

~~~~~

Resisting conformity of actions.

Know, but not doing.

Faith not working with works to perfect faith.

~~~~~

### **Perfunctory assembling, singing, praying.**

Participating reluctantly, out of sense of duty, obligation, or guilt.

~~~~~

Self-centeredness. Own needs and wants crowding out all else.

“Golden rule” misconstrued as “You do unto me.”

Not heeding “do good unto all men...”

~~~~~

### **Negligence: should have, could have, would have.**

Always “going to.”

~~~~~

Complaining: when made to endure the insignificant.

“Why me?” “It’s too hard.”



Just the Facts

Arguing against facts will not change them.

Denying facts will not make them false.

Rejecting facts won't make them disappear.

In the Gospel of John, chapter 9, is an account of a blind man being healed by Jesus. In response to the rulers' question concerning his new sight, he answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went away and washed, and I received sight." He stated "just the facts."

The rulers refused to believe he had been blind. They denied that Jesus was the one who healed him. They would not countenance the notion that Jesus had the power of God.

~~~~~

While we may look down upon the rulers for being wilfully blind, may we not be so foolish as to do the same when hearing the commands and admonitions of the Lord. Those who have "come to the light" must keep their eyes wide open.

**How blind is one who will not see.**

**How blessed is the one who sees.**

*"But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear."*

Matthew 13:16

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Prejudice: hostile judgment or  
opinion formed beforehand without  
having all the facts.

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### Difficulties in Forgiving

The Lord's forgiveness is contingent upon us forgiving those who ask for our forgiveness, "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." Matthew 6:12. Is it not good for one to refuse those who seeks forgiveness. Forgiving those who hurt us often is difficult, but those who have been forgiven by the Lord are to be forgiven by us. As difficult as that may be at times, there is a more difficult act of forgiving: forgiving oneself.

"I'll never forgive myself" is sometimes spoken after committing a grievous sin. However, if one has repented and sought forgiveness from God and from those affected by it, one must be willing to forgive oneself. Caring a burden of guilt after being forgiven may be to some a means of penance (self-mortification). But why carry a heavy load that the Lord has removed? Don't feel worthy? Neither did Paul. Nor does any Christian. We are all debtors who have been forgiven, some more, some less--but all are forgiven. The "chief of sinners" found mercy, and moved on to what lay ahead, not letting his past sins become an anchor to hold him back, and so must we.

*It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.*

1 Timothy 5:16

While we can't erase the memory of our transgressions, we can rejoice in the fact that the guilt has been taken away. Rejoice and move on to what you can do for the Lord...unencumbered with a load of guilt.

**If a debt is paid in full...what is left to pay?**



# SELECTED THOUGHTS



## Degrees of Obedience

### **DO IT BECAUSE I HAVE TO**

Perform because it is required.

#### **MANDATORY**

The heart set against doing it.

~~~~~

DO IT BECAUSE I OUGHT TO

Perform because it is expected.

OBLIGATION

The heart is not in doing it.

~~~~~

### **DO IT BECAUSE I WANT TO**

Perform because it is desired.

#### **PRIVILEGE**

The heart is fully involved.

**(Only this form of obedience is acceptable to the Savior.)**

~~~~~

But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.

Romans 6:17

Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7

"not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."

Ephesians 6:6



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Four Character Tests

How One Handles Wealth

To live in wanton luxury or to be rich in good works?

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

1 Timothy 6:17
~~~~~

### How One Handles Poverty

#### Learn contentment or fly out at others?

*A poor man who oppresses the lowly is like a driving rain which leaves no food.*

Proverbs 28:3  
~~~~~

How One Deals with Success

Give God the glory or be boastful and proud?

The king [Nebuchadnezzar] reflected and said, "Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?"

Daniel 4:30
~~~~~

### How One Deals with Failure

#### Accept responsibly or blame others?

*King Saul said, "I did obey the voice of the Lord ... But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord."*

1 Samuel 15:20-21  
~~~~~

There are always two people who know your true character: you and God.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

"let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds"

Hebrews 10:24



Someone Tearing You Down?

Cain's anger burned against Able over his superior sacrifice. Aaron and Miriam were jealous of Moses' superior position. Paul was challenged, lied about, and discredited because of His superior position as an Apostle.

Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

Philippians 1:15-17

Savor This

Those who are perceived as superior in some respect, or a threat, or a competitor are singled out for "tearing down." Those who are viewed as inferior pose no threat.

When others attempt to seek to discredit you in the eyes of others, savor this thought: In their eyes you are above them: superior in ability or intellect or presence. They are trying to build themselves up by tearing you down.

Those who are selfishly ambitious are arrogant and have little regard for the truth. Their personal goals are more important. The following Scripture bears this out:

But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

James 3:14-16



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, which 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



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Reality Check

“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16

* * *

If we were to video tape ourselves for a day, would the viewing of that tape be consistent with how we perceive ourselves? Watching the tape allows us to see ourselves as others and God see us. In the final analysis it matters not what we may think of ourselves or what others may think of us; what really matters is how we appear to God. The reality is that God sees us the way we actually are, in thought and action. May we so live that a video of ourselves would portray a life pleasing to God.

“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.”

1 Corinthians 4:3-4

It's important to have good eyesight,
keen enough to see oneself clearly.



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Hand-in-Hand

Arrogance and ignorance often go hand-in-hand.

The more a person has of one, the more he has of the other.

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

Proverbs 30:13

*For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest
you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has
happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

Romans 11:25

* * *

Rights and responsibilities are twins.

When birth is given to one, birth is given to the other.

*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become
children of God, even to those who believe in His name.*

John 1:12

*“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the
Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”*

John 3:36

* * *

Love and action go together.

When one professes love, one of necessity is to demonstrate it.

*Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue,
but in deed and truth.*

1 John 3:18

*What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no
works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing
and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be
warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is
necessary for their body, what use is that?*

James 2:14-16



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‘You Reap What You Sow’

This common expression is usually used in reference to one suffering for doing wrong. However, it also applies to those who do what is right.

It can be found in Galatians 6:7, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap” where it is amplified in verse 8: “For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”

It is true, when one “sows to his own flesh” (does the deeds of the flesh: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these) he’ll reap corruption.

It is also true when one “sows to the Spirit” (fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) he’ll reap eternal life.

HOW DOES ONE ‘SOW TO THE SPIRIT’?

“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

SOWING TO THE SPIRIT: DOING GOOD

*Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time
we will reap if we do not grow weary.*

Galatians 6:9

But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.

2 Thessalonians 3:13

*And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for
with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

Hebrews 13:16

It is said of Jesus, “...He went about doing good ...”

Acts 10:38

ADMONITION

*Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its
passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit,
let us also walk by the Spirit.*

Galatians 5:24-25



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Two Related Actions

REPENTANCE

Remorse – moral anguish

Regret – sorrow (godly)

Reform – make necessary corrections

Restore – make restitution when possible

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

2 Corinthians 7:10

FORGIVENESS

Forgive – Absolve the offender

Forget – Disregard the offense

Forgo – Dispatch any thoughts of revenge

Forbear – Be patient and longsuffering

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

Ephesians 4:32

For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Matthew 6:14-15



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Free Gift*

I'm sure you have seen these words in an advertisement. 'Free' has a way of grabbing our attention. At first glance it appears to be offering something free. However, when checking what the asterisk references you find that "conditions and restrictions apply." It is free, if you are willing to meet the conditions and live with the restrictions. Ignoring the conditions/restrictions causes one to have false expectations. Caveat emptor (buyer beware) is sound advice.

FREE GIFT OF GOD*

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23

*Conditions and restrictions apply.

"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

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

John 3:36

Believe in Jesus as the Son of God and obey His commands are the conditions that need to be met.

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."

Mark 16:15-16

Ignoring the conditions and restrictions causes one to have false hope. Be aware of what God expects from those who seeks His free gift.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



The Greatest

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

1 Corinthians 13:13

FAITH

One must believe in God to be saved.

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Hebrews 11:6

HOPE

One's hope is based on faith in God.

For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Romans 8:24-25

LOVE

One must love in order to know God.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 John 4:7-8

Without love of God and love for one another, one's faith is vain, and hope will not be realized.

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

HAVE FAITH – HAVE HOPE – HAVE LOVE!



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Punctuation

The use of standard marks and signs in writing and printing in order to clarify the meaning.

While thinking about punctuation, it came to me that punctuation marks may be used to highlight Bible precepts.

. (period)

stop, don't continue

Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning.

1 Corinthians 15:34

, (comma)

pause and consider

“Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds!”

Luke 12:24

! (exclamation mark)

emphasize what is important

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.

Philippians 2:3

? (question mark)

examine by questioning

But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good, abstain from every form of evil.

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

“ (quote)

speak as the Bible speaks

If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.

1 Peter 4:11

*** (asterisk)**

be aware of conditions and exceptions

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

1 Corinthians 13:3



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Blessings

One definition of blessings: Something promoting or contributing to happiness, well-being, or prosperity.

We may often say, “I have many blessings” or “I am truly blessed.” And we may pray, “thank you, Father, for my many blessings.” Yet do we truly focus on just what they are? Specifically?

We may often sing the words of a well-known hymn (Count Your Blessings) “count your blessings, name them one by one.” When speaking in generalities, the details often are not clearly defined. It is good from time to time to call to mind the specific blessings we enjoy, both temporal and spiritual.

Counting Your Blessings

May I suggest an exercise to aid you in counting your blessings? Take a piece of paper and begin to write them down. It may take a while, as more and more come to mind. Keep the paper handy so you can add to the list. Seeing them in writing makes more of an impact than just casually mentioning them. Save the paper. Hang it on the refrigerator door or some other prominent place. Re-read the list frequently. And as the song continues, “it will surprise what the Lord has done.”

Be thankful for what the Lord has done.

TEMPORAL BLESSINGS

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

Matthew 6:33

[“All these things” are what Matthew assured us “our heavenly Father knows that we have need of.”]

SPIRITUAL 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



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Choices

Few people make a deliberate choice between good and evil; the choice is usually between what one wants to do and what one ought to do.

... you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that." But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.

James 5:15-17

* * *

It's hard for the Lord to direct a man if he hasn't made up his mind which way he wants to go.

Who is the man who fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way he should choose.

Psalms 25:12

* * *

Choice, not chance, has the most impact on one's future.

"And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Joshua 24:15

Not making a choice is a choice - It is
a choice to do nothing.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Be-Attitudes

BE THANKFUL

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

Colossians 3:15

BE KIND

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

Ephesians 4:32

BE GENEROUS

“Instruct those who are rich in this present world ... to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share.”

1 Timothy 6:17-18

BE FAITHFUL

“... Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

Revelation 2:10

BE HOLY

“But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior.”

1 Peter 1:15

BE BORN AGAIN

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Peter 1:3

“Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”

John 3:7

BE READY

“You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.”

Luke 12:40



The Best Food–The Worst Meal

I was among several employees who were invited by the owner to dine with him at one of the city's finest restaurants. The ambience and the food was unsurpassed, yet I was miserable. By the time the food arrived, many were becoming boisterous because of the free alcoholic drinks they had consumed. I began to wish I had declined the invitation. I could envision my family sitting around the table at home–eating hamburgers. I longed to be with my wife and children. I shared employment with the others, but not much else. Oh, to be at a table where the love of God and each other is found.

Better is a dish of vegetables where love is than a fattened ox served with hatred.

Proverbs 15:17

* * *

Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and turmoil with it.

Proverbs 15:16

* * *

And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common ... breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart.

Acts 2:44-46

Don't accept an invitation to eat a selfish person's food, no matter how good it is.



Which Way?

A traveler was planning to take a trip. He had two choices. (1) A freeway that had many lanes for ease of travel. It was a very popular way to travel. One can put it on cruise control and enjoy the ride. (2) A narrow route with only one lane in each direction. It's an old road that many had given up using. With all the twists and bends one must stay alert while traversing it.

Number 1 is the obvious choice. Or is it? One fact that has not been considered is: Where does the road take the traveler? It would be foolish to decide without considering the answer. Isn't the destination important?

* * *

Isn't it also foolish to choose a way of living without first considering where it will take you? A fun-filled, self-seeking life may be the most alluring but where will you be when you reach the end?

“Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.”

Matthew 7:13-14

* * *

Christ came to teach us not only what we are to know and believe, but what we are to do; not only toward God, but toward others. We are to do to our neighbor what we would like for them to do to us. We want others to be fair, honest, upright and caring in their dealings with us. This is the way we are to be. As He said in verse twelve, *“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you.”* This way of living may be less alluring but the end of it is life everlasting for the believer.



Afraid of the Light

We can understand why some children are afraid of the dark. They are fearful because they can't see what is there. But why would some adults be afraid of the light? It's because they don't want to see what's there!

"But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light..."

Ephesians 5:13

* * *

Fear of Exposure

"And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."

John 3:19-20

* * *

Light Versus Darkness

Why all the furor over God, the Bible, and Morality?

Why are Christians being criticized for their belief?

Why the demand to "turn off the light?"

Because darkness conceals, light reveals. Jesus is the light of the world. And his followers are lights in the world.

Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."

John 8:12

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden."

Matthew 5:14

* * *

Christians are to let their light shine to reveal their good works, so that others may glorify their Father who is in heaven; and to expose the evil deeds of darkness.

May our light shine ever so bright!



Heavy Stuff

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.”

Matthew 23:23

* * *

It is said that these men preferred the rituals of the ceremonial law, and the traditions of the elders, above the duties of the moral law. They neglected:

Justice

acting according to justice, fairness and equity.

Mercy

having compassion and showing kindness.

Faithfulness

keeping one’s word and promise, fidelity.

* * *

Justice, mercy and faithfulness are “heavier” (Greek word, *barus*—metaphorically: burdensome, severe, weighty) in that they require practical application and demonstration of one’s faith. Religious duties are important and not to be neglected, but by themselves they are nothing more than a hollow shell.

“What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.”

James 2:14-17



The ‘Feelings’ Virus

A virulent virus that affects one’s judgment, causing individuals to arbitrarily judge what is right based on how they feel.

“Civic officials are not bound to follow law, if they feel ...” “Churches are not bound by the teachings in the New Testament if they feel ...” “Christians are not bound by the teachings of the Gospel of Christ if they feel ...” It’s apparent that the “feelings” virus is causing moral and spiritual problems today just as it has in the past.

* * *

Examples of Individuals Infected With the ‘Feelings’ Virus

Naaman felt that the prophet’s directions for healing were ridiculous. *But Naaman was furious and went away and said, “Behold, I thought, ‘He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and cure the leper.’”*

2 Kings 5:11

* * *

Gehazi felt it a shame that the gifts, which Naaman brought, were turned down by the prophet.

But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, thought, “Behold, my master has spared this Naaman the Aramean, by not receiving from his hands what he brought. As the Lord lives, I will run after him and take something from him.”

2 Kings 5:20

* * *

Saul of Tarsus felt he had to persecute Christians.

“So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.”

Acts 26:9

* * *

When our beliefs are based on our feelings, it is evident that we have become infected with the “feelings” virus.



‘Heart-felt Religion’

The term “heart-felt religion” refers to a faith that involves one’s emotions and feelings. While it is true that one must “love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul” (Matthew 22:37) it is imperative to note that “with all your mind” is the remainder of that verse. The mind must know the will of God. Without such knowledge, one doesn’t know how to worship God acceptably.

* * *

Heart-felt religion involves receiving and observing all of the teachings of Jesus and His Apostles.

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

Matthew 28:19-20

* * *

Heart-felt religion includes being committed to obey the teachings received.

But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.

Romans 6:17

* * *

Heart-felt religion is all about doing the will of God.

Not by way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

Ephesians 6:17

* * *

Summed Up:

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2



Three Common But Worthless Activities

Fretful Over Yesterday's Failures

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.

Philippians 3:13

If I should say, "My foot has slipped," Thy lovingkindness, O Lord, will hold me up. When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Thy consolations delight my soul.

Psalms 94:18-19

* * *

Worry Over Today's Problems.

Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad.

Proverbs 12:25

Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.

1 Peter 5:7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Philippians 4:6

* * *

Anxious Over Tomorrow's Uncertainty.

"Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Matthew 6:34



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Faith Perfected

The book of James is filled with admonitions to Christians to have a working faith. Near the end of the book three ways are mentioned whereby faith can be exercised.

A Gratifying Exercise: Prayer and Praise.

*Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful?
Let him sing praises.*

James 5:13

* * *

A Rewarding Exercise: Helping an Erring Child of God.

My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins.

James 5:19-20

* * *

A Humbling Exercise: Acknowledging One's Own Sin.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.

James 5:16

* * *

Faith Perfected

You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.

James 2:22



SELECTED THOUGHTS



The Right Questions

In order to determine how a Christian should live,
one must ask the right questions.

Wrong Question: What's wrong with it?

Rather than attempt to determine what, if any, harm may ensue,
one should ask –

What's right with it?

* * *

Wrong Question: What Scripture prohibits?

The Bible is not an encyclopedia of everything forbidden;
rather one should ask –

What Scripture authorizes?

* * *

Wrong Question: What do you think?

Our thoughts are not to be the basis for beliefs;
rather one should ask–

What does God say?

**Only by asking the right questions will one
receive the right answers!**

Asking the wrong question will never
produce the right answer.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Osmosis

One definition of this word is: A gradual, often unconscious process of assimilation or absorption. Associating with ungodly people can cause one to gradually become involved, almost imperceptibly, and eventually be like them.

Admonitions

Do not associate with a man given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man, Lest you learn his ways, And find a snare for yourself.

Proverbs 22:24-25

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

Proverbs 26:4

* * *

Notice the gradual progression in Psalm 1:1

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

* * *

WALK with
STAND with
SIT with

LISTEN – counsel of the wicked

FOLLOW – path of sinners

JOIN – seat of scoffers

Be aware! Associations will affect
you, for better or for worse.



It's the Gift That Counts?

Appreciation

To recognize the significance, or magnitude of
To be thankful or show gratitude for
To value greatly

And as He entered a certain village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him; and they raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" And when He saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And it came about that as they were going, they were cleansed. Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine – where are they?"

Luke 17:12-17

Jesus healed ten lepers who had pleaded for mercy, but only one thanked him. Nine failed to express their gratitude. How could they be so callous?

* * *

May We Be Like the One, Not the Nine!

Something done out of the goodness of one's heart (not having to, but willing to) needs to be appreciated. Not just thinking it, but expressing it – people are not mind readers. Your benefactor has no way of knowing the value you place on a benefit or gift received unless you express it. Praise is not sought (Jesus didn't heal the lepers to be praised), gratitude is. A sincere "Thank you" to God and others goes a long way in maintaining a healthy relationship.

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

Colossians 2:6-7



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Flee

To run away, as from trouble or danger.

When destructive storms threaten, people are told to evacuate (flee from the ravages of the storm). Good advice. Come to think about it, there is good advice to be found in the Bible when destructive situations arise.

* * *

When immorality (sexual sins) loom on the horizon: Flee!

Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.

1 Corinthians 6:18

* * *

When unrestrained passion tempts one to sin: Flee!

Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

2 Timothy 2:22

* * *

When the desire to be rich tempts one to compromise principle and ethics: Flee!

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. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang. But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

1 Timothy 6:9-11

* * *

Ignoring such admonitions puts one at risk of experiencing serious consequences. **Heed the warnings to flee.**



Obstacles and Objectives

Obstacles are the things encountered on the way to the goal. Focus on the obstacles and one loses sight of the objective. Focusing on the goal helps one deal with the obstacles.

The Israelites heard the spies' report of the obstacles and gave up pursuing the objective of entering the promised land.

*"We are not able to go up against the people,
for they are too strong for us."*

Numbers 13:31

Their response:

*"Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that
we had died in this wilderness!"*

Numbers 14:2



Paul the apostle upon hearing of the obstacles facing him in Jerusalem, pursued his goal and dealt with the obstacles.

*"The Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this
belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."*

Acts 21:11

His response:

*"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."*

Acts 21:13



When we encounter obstacles in living for Jesus, we must not focus on the obstacles but keep our eye on our objective. May we echo the words of Caleb and the Apostle Paul:

*"If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring
us into this land and give it to us."*

Numbers 14:8

*I press on toward the goal for the prize of the
upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 3:14



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Compassion

Defined: sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it.

In the well-known parable commonly called "The Good Samaritan," Jesus answers the lawyer's question, "And who is my neighbor?" A priest, Levite, and a Samaritan all found a man, beaten and robbed, lying wounded beside the road. The priest and the Levite both had strong religious convictions, but showed no compassion. The Samaritan, whose religious convictions are not mentioned, had compassion and helped the man. Jesus' concluding words to the lawyer were, "Go and do the same."

This parable illustrates the message of the judgment scene in Matthew 25:34-40:

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'"

**Both are necessary: religious convictions and compassion.
Be compassionate! "Go and do the same."**

Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

Philippians 2:1-2



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Maintaining Good Health

We are told that in order to maintain good health one needs to:
 exercise regularly (physical and mental)
 eat wholesome food (avoid junk food)
 keep a positive outlook.

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This is also true in maintaining good spiritual health.

#### **EXERCISE YOUR FAITH (good thoughts and good deeds)**

*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*

Philippians 4:8-9

#### **FEED ON WHOLESOME WORDS (His word and other sources of healthy soul food)**

*“He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”*

Matthew 11:15

*And He was saying to them, “Take care what you listen to.”*

Mark 4:24

*But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness.*

2 Timothy 2:16

#### **KEEP A CHEERFUL COUNTENANCE**

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!*

Philippians 4:4



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Blessings

*"... not even when one has an abundance does his life  
consist of his possessions."*

Luke 12:15

**What counts in life is not things, but relationships:**

Family and friends with whom we share life experiences.

Fellow-Christians with whom we share a common faith.

Our Lord Jesus Christ with whom we share a spiritual bond.

**Be thankful for what really counts!**

*And 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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Be thankful for what you have. And  
be thankful for what you don't have.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Salt

You can separate the sodium and chloride that constitute salt,  
but when you finish you no longer have salt.

**When you separate faith from behavior in daily living,  
you no longer have Christianity.**

~~~~~

*"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless,
how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore,
except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men."*

Matthew 5:13

*Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death,
in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the
Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

Romans 6:4

*... we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be
filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and
understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of
the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every
good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.*

Colossians 1:9-10

Say and Do combined are beneficial.
Separated they are worse than
worthless.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



It's Up to Me

Some years ago while going through one of those trying times that is part of living, I posted the following thought on my office wall: "It's up to you to have a good day." It reminded me that it's not up to others to make my day. A good day does not depend on people, events, or things. It's my attitude that determines whether I have a good day or a bad day.

With the right attitude I can ...

Be joyful when enduring trials.

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

James 1:2-3

Be joyful when suffering for what is right.

But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed.

1 Peter 3:14

Be joyful with another who has reason to rejoice.

Rejoice with those who rejoice.

Romans 12:15

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#### **Have a good day!**

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!*

Philippians 4:4

It's the right state of mind or disposition that holds the key.



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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 could 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.

#### Take Hold by Faith

*"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

#### Hold On Patiently

*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

#### Hold On Firmly

*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



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### It's Not Enough

**It's not enough to carry a Bible, I must read it.**

**It's not enough to read it, I must heed it.**

*"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock."*

Matthew 7:24

**It's not enough to know Jesus, I must know His will.**

**It's not enough to know His will, I must do His will.**

*And He [Jesus] was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."*

Luke 9:23

**It's not enough for God to love me, I must love Him.**

**It's not enough to love Him, I must love others.**

*If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.*

1 John 4:20

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"Not enough" may be hard to hear.  
But it's a warning that needs to be  
heeded.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Tuning In Rather Than Broadcasting

*This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear,  
slow to speak and slow to anger.*

James 1:19

#### **Things You Can't Gain While Talking**

knowledge  
understanding  
wisdom

#### **Things You Can't Receive While Talking**

instruction  
counsel  
discipline

*How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains  
understanding. For her profit is better than the profit of silver  
and her gain better than fine gold.*

Proverbs 3:13-14

*Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away  
from the words of my mouth.*

Proverbs 4:5

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Listen to yourself. Replay your words  
in your mind. That's what others heard.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Excuses

We are not excused from doing what God wants us to do just because we don't like it or think it to be unfair.

**The one who wants to do something looks for a way.  
The one who doesn't want to do something looks  
for an excuse.**

**When you don't want to do something,  
one excuse is as good as another.**

**Being busy with other things than His is no excuse.**

*"A certain man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.' And another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.' And another one said, 'I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come. . . 'For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.'"*

Luke 14:16-20,24

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The most often byproduct of an  
excuse: Regret and remorse.

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# SELECTED THOUGHTS



## A Message of Faith, Hope, and Love

In the world there is a universal need for faith, hope, and love.

### FAITH

something to believe in, rely upon, trust—Gives purpose to life.

### HOPE

something to look forward to—Gives direction to life.

### LOVE

active good will (receiving and giving)—Gives meaning to life.



Satisfaction of these needs has been sought in many ways, but only one way avails. The Lord God who created us knows our needs, and has freely supplied our needs.

### JOHN 3:16

#### LOVE

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son

#### FAITH

whosoever believes in Him

#### HOPE

should not perish, but have eternal life.



**May all come to know the Father through His Son, Jesus, the resurrected Christ.**

*“Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”*

Acts 2:36

**May all lovingly trust in Jesus and obey the gospel of Christ.**

*“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”*

John 14:15

**May all have hope in Him.**

*For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.*

1 Timothy 4:10



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



### **‘What If?’**

Those two words can be a motivating force or a strong deterrent. It’s strange that we have a tendency to “what-if” in a negative way, focusing on what may be encountered that will prevent us from succeeding. Why not “what if” in a positive way, visualizing our overcoming any obstacle and succeeding?

#### **NEGATIVE (DEFEATING)**

**What if I’m not able to live as a Christian?**

**What if I’m unable to resist temptations?**

**What if I fail?**

\* \* \*

#### **POSITIVE (ENABLING)**

**What if I am able to live as a Christian?**

The Lord will help.

*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

**What if I am able to endure temptations?**

A way of escape will be provided.

*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

**What if I succeed?**

A crown of life will be received.

*Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

James 1:12

### **‘What If’ positively!**



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### The Lesson of the Rose Bush

In the garden was a beautiful hybrid rose bush. It's blossoms were something to behold. Not wanting to spoil its beauty, the caretaker left the plant to itself. He didn't prune its branches and cut off the dead blooms, nor did he give it the proper nutrients. It was only a matter of time that the plant became an unruly tangle of branches with poorly formed blossoms. It brought shame to its caretaker.

In a home was a beautiful child, full of talent—a parents' dream. However, the parents left the child to himself not wanting to impose their ideas and morals. They withheld correction and discipline for fear of bruising his tender spirit. It was only a matter of time that the child became unruly and a misfit. He brought shame to his parents.

#### Wisdom from the Book

*The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.*

Proverbs 29:15

*He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly.*

Proverbs 13:24

*A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her who bore him.*

Proverbs 17:25

*Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him.*

Proverbs 22:15

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A parent's love must be strong enough  
to supply the needed discipline.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Too Big to Overcome?

Ten of the twelve men sent by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan wilted at the sight of giants. They reported “... *we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.*” However, Joshua and Caleb said, “*If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey.*”

Numbers 13:33, 14:8

When most of the Israelites saw Goliath they were filled with fear. However, David, seeing Goliath, didn't fear. He said to King Saul, “*Let no man's heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.*”

1 Samuel 17:32

#### Why the Different Attitudes?

Joshua and Caleb were the only spies who didn't fear the giants. David was the only one willing to meet the giant. Why just these three men? What separated them from the rest of the people? Joshua, Caleb, and David trusted in God to do the seemingly impossible.

#### LESSON LEARNED

When obstacles appear too big to overcome, we must not let our understanding limit what God said He would do and can do for us.

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.*

Proverbs 3:5

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Don't use a magnifying glass when looking at the obstacles you face.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Calling It like It Is

Euphemisms are used to soften harsh realities. “Passed away” is softer than “died.” “Miscue” is softer than “wrongdoing.” In a society that does not like to think in terms of good and evil, they are often employed to alleviate feelings of guilt. Here are a few heard almost every day.

#### **An affair**

is more appealing to the ears than committing adultery.

#### **Sexually active**

makes fornication seem like normal teen activity.

#### **A woman’s choice**

makes taking of a human life simply a matter of preference.

#### **Gay**

has an upbeat connotation that makes homosexuality (a deviant lifestyle) seem normal.

#### **Living together**

is easier on the ears than living in sin.

#### **Doing your own thing**

makes anarchy sound downright appealing.

*Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight!*

Isaiah 5:20-21



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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 in the kitchen, 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.

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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.

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.**



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Things in Common

While each Christian is a unique individual,
there are some common traits shared by all.

COMMON FAITH

**Christians have the same faith (belief) in Jesus Christ
as the Son of God.**

*To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from
God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.*

Titus 1:4

COMMON CONFESSION

**Christians make the same confession that Jesus is Lord and
Savior. Jesus who was crucified, resurrected, and is now in
heaven exercising all power and authority.**

*By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was
revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels,
Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world,
Taken up in glory.*

1 Timothy 3:16

COMMON TEMPTATIONS

**Christians have to endure the same temptations. No one is
exempt. However, each one has a way of escape and
can endure.**

*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

COMMON SALVATION

**Christians share in the salvation from the guilt of sin which
enables them to have hope of eternal life.**

*Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common
salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that
you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed
down to the saints.*

Jude 1:3



Faithful

There is one notion I have difficulty embracing: Equating faithfulness to being regular in attendance. Yes, it is important to be faithful in attendance, but by itself it is not an accurate measure of faithfulness.

The characters mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11 were considered faithful on the basis of the way they conducted their lives. They remained faithful while facing strong opposition and overwhelming odds. (Even a casual reading of the text reveals the difficulties they faced in remaining faithful.)

What's the point?

The point is this: One's faithfulness is to be based on how one lives, not just on assembling for a few hours several times a week. This is not to say assembling is not important. As eating is important to live (it is the activity that gives strength to be active), so assembling is the activity that helps us be faithful in our daily lives. One must live faithfully—that's the true measure of faithfulness.

Sadly, I have known some who were there "whenever the church doors were open" and considered themselves among the most faithful, but lived like the world during the week.

And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

Luke 9:23

"... Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

Revelation 2:10

Faithful: Adhering firmly and devoted
to the Word of God in living daily.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



In the Short Run

By lying one can avoid punishment that it due.
By stealing one can acquire without working.
By being dishonest one can gain the advantage.

But the gain is only temporary. In the long run one has to live with his conscience bearing witness and accusing (not a pleasant experience). Also, one lives in fear of being found out. Later, if not sooner, the consequences will have to be dealt with. Maybe not in this life, but certainly at the judgment.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

2 Corinthians 5:10

When one is honest, truthful, and hard-working his conscience voices approval.

There is no fear of being found out.
There is no fear of being punished.
There is no fear of the judgment.

**Telling the truth may be hard to bear,
but telling lies is harder!**

**The short run may be tempting,
but it's the long run that matters most!**

Being truthful may cost you something,
but lying can bankrupt you.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Which Is More to Be Desired?

PRECIOUS STONES OR INVALUABLE UNDERSTANDING

*For wisdom is better than jewels; and all desirable things
cannot compare with her.*

Proverbs 8:11

THIS WORLD'S GOODS OR A GOOD NAME

*A good name is to be more desired than great wealth,
favor is better than silver and gold.*

Proverbs 22:1

POWER OVER OTHERS OR CONTROL OF SELF

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

Proverbs 16:32

GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD OR SAVE YOUR SOUL

*“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world,
and forfeit his soul?”*

Mark 8:36

The right choice makes a world of
difference.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



'Friendly Fire'

It happened in the basement of the military training barracks. I and a few other soldiers were sorting brass after the company had been on the firing range. Unnoticed by the group, one soldier took some live rounds found among the spent ones and loaded them into a weapon and pulled the trigger. Needless to say we were scared and shocked, but luckily no one was hit by the bullets. This episode brought to mind how tragic it is when someone is injured or killed by a comrade's carelessness (friendly fire).

We are in engaged in spiritual warfare against evil and the evil one. We need to wield the sword of the spirit which is the Word, but we must be careful how we wield the sword. It must not be used in such a way as to injure our comrades in the faith. Jesus said,

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea."

Mark 9:42

Avoiding Friendly-Fire Casualties

"For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another."

Galatians 5:13-15

Love One Another!

A sure way to avoid friendly-fire casualties in the church.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Love

It's easier to love humanity as a whole than to love those whom we encounter on a daily basis.

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

1 John 4:20

Love is the glue that holds relationships together; jealousy causes them to become unstuck.

Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5

Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, but who can stand before jealousy?

Proverbs 27:4

It's much easier to demonstrate love than it is to define it.

Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

1 John 3:18

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to 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

Love is the best basis for action,
because it seeks to help, not harm.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Jubilee

A time or season of rejoicing.

The roots of “Jubilee” can be traced to Leviticus chapter 25. Because of poverty, bad management, or circumstances one may have been forced to sell. But no sale of property or enslavement was permanent. The law was based on the premise that the land belongs to the Lord and people are only tenants; and people belong to God, and can only be temporary slaves. The Year of Jubilee brought about a fresh start every 50 years.

A New Year

A new year is symbolic of new beginnings. With a new year, there is a sense of a new beginning, a chance to start fresh. There is the rash of resolutions, however, most are soon broken.

**Despite my resolutions, made with bold authority,
My good intentions yield to habits with seniority.**

[Selected]

Resolutions are of none effect unless there is a resolute heart. New beginnings require change ... don't be afraid of change ... it is the only way “new beginnings” come about. May each new year be one of rejoicing for you.

Having a fresh start is good, but
without a change of heart old ways will
prevail.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Three Worthless Things

A Kind Thought Not Expressed

Others are not mind-readers. The only way they will know that you have a kind thought is for you to say it. How sad it is that we let kind thoughts go unspoken.

*For who among men knows the thoughts of a man
except the spirit of the man, which is in him?*

1 Corinthians 2:11a

A Kind Touch Not Given

A hug, a pat on the back, a firm handshake—what wonders they produce. Our actions speak volumes. Such expressions of friendship, praise, and acceptance should never be withheld.

And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him, grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they should see his face no more. And they were accompanying him to the ship.

Acts 20:37-38

A Kind Deed Not Done

Passing up an opportunity to do a kind deed is detrimental to the one who would benefit from it and the one who could have done it. Never let an opportunity to do good pass by. Chances are there will not be a second opportunity.

Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

1 Timothy 6:18-19

**It costs so little, I wonder why
We give it so little thought;
A smile, kind words, a glance, a touch—
What magic by them is wrought.**

—Anonymous



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Righteousness

(being upright before God)

*“Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do,
and does not do it, to him it is sin.”*

James 4:17

Those who say:

“I didn’t do anything wrong,” “I never hurt anyone,” or “I never bothered anyone,” fall short of “doing right” and “helping.”

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#### **Righteousness is not just the absence of sin— it’s the presence of right-doing.**

The absence of wrong-doing leaves a void that is to be filled with righteous deeds. Faith without works is dead!

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Jesus said to those on His left:

“Depart from Me ...

for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat;

I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink;

I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in;

naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick,

and in prison, and you did not visit Me ...

*to the extent that you did not do it to one of
the least of these, you did not do it to Me.”*

Matthew 25:43-45

Don't measure your righteousness by
comparing it others. Measure it by the
true standard: the Word of God.



Projection Thinking

What is the probable outcome?
What will be the end result?
Where will it lead?

It is prudent to ask the aforementioned questions whenever considering a course of action. Failing to do so, one may find himself or herself in an undesirable situation.

Prevention is better than remedial.

**It's easier to avoid a problem,
than to untangle oneself from it.**

It's foolish not to consider a matter before engaging in it.

“For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace.”

Luke 14:29-31

Christians must not be myopic (near-sighted), looking only at the moment. When some sneer at considering “Where will it lead?”, it is usually because they don’t like the answer.

Counting the cost—projection thinking—is a must!

“It’s better to ‘sleep on it’ beforehand than to lie awake afterwards.”



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Pride

God never intended for us to “pat ourselves on the back” – otherwise he would have connected our arms differently.

Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.

Proverbs 27:2

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An uplifted nose keeps one from seeing where he’s going.

*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.*

Proverbs 16:18

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Pride is a fine asset to have, as long as it helps you keep you chin up, instead of your nose.

“ ... I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment ...”

Romans 12:3

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### **Favorite Hymn of the Proud of Heart:**

#### **“How Great I Am”**

(Subtitle: Singing My Praises)

Look up to me you people.

Admire my many great qualities;

Praise my wonderful works that abound.

Elevate me to a place of honor,

For in me no fault or flaw can be found.

#### **Chorus:**

How great I am, how great I am, how great I am!

#### **Footnote:**

[There is no suitable melody for these lyrics.]



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### On Closer Observation

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, failures, 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 "bad" is 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

**Friends are people who love us in spite of our faults.**

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We all have "warts." God loves us anyway. So should we love one another.

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### Are You Listening?

His words were slow,  
His words were few,  
And never formed to glisten.  
But he was a joy  
to all his friends  
You should have heard him listen.  
—Anonymous

**“Tuning in” is often more important than “broadcasting.”**

#### **From the Bible**

*But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger ...*  
James 1:19

*Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise  
the rest of your days.*  
Proverbs 19:20

**If one wants to know Jesus, one must listen to Him.**

*“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”*  
Matthew 17:5

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There is a time to speak and a time to  
listen. Just be sure you know what  
time it is.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Lame Excuses

*And the man said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*

Genesis 3:12-13

**Man:**

She gave it to me and I ate.

**Woman:**

Serpent deceived me and I ate.

**God:**

You are responsible for your own actions.

### Lame Excuses Today

He/she made me do it.

I couldn't help it.

I was told it was okay.

I wasn't the only one.

It sounded good to me.

Others have done worse things.

It's not a big deal.

That's just the way I am.

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

2 Corinthians 5:10



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### How It Happens!

Malachi wrote (2:17):

*You have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet you say, "How have we wearied Him?" In that you say, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them . . ."*

**It doesn't happen with one giant step;  
it is accomplished by taking five small steps.**

**Step 1:**

Desire to do wrong.

**Step 2:**

Begin to wish that it was not wrong.

**Step 3:**

Begin to doubt that it is wrong.

**Step 4:**

Begin to imagine that it is wrong only in certain circumstances.

**Step 5:**

Then "find out" that this is not one of the certain circumstances.

**Thus the door is open to do wrong,  
under the delusion that it is right.**

Isaiah also spoke of such self-deception (5:20-23):

*Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And clever in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine, And valiant men in mixing strong drink; Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!*



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Exercises in Futility

**Jumping to conclusions.**

“But I thought . . .”

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Sidestepping responsibilities.

“Somebody (else) needs to . . .”

~~~~~

**Dodging issues.**

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

~~~~~

Passing the buck.

“He made me do it . . .”

~~~~~

**Rejecting accountability.**

“Am I my brother’s keeper?”

~~~~~

Pressing your luck.

“I hope no one finds out.”

~~~~~

**Trying to make God disappear!**

*“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”*

Psalms 14:1

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The wrong kind of exercise will tear  
you down, not build you up.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### ‘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 (that is, 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.*

1Corinthians 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!”**



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Do the Right Thing

#### **KNOWLEDGE**

knowing what to do

#### **WISDOM**

knowing how to do it

#### **SKILL**

being able to do it

#### **VIRTUE**

doing it

Knowing what to do is of little value,  
unless one knows how to do it.

Knowing how to do it is of little value,  
unless one is able to do it.

Being able to do it is of little value,  
unless one does it.

*“If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.”*

John 13:17

*“Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do,  
and does not do it, to him it is sin.”*

James 4:17

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How happy is he who does what he  
knows should be done.

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### Comparing

If you compare yourself with someone who is smarter, more talented, or more physically attractive, you look inferior. If you compare yourself with someone who is less intelligent, less talented and less attractive, you feel superior.

If you compare yourself with yourself, you feel good. Yet you are the same person in all of the comparisons. If you want to have a true measure of yourself, measure yourself by the true standard: the Word of God.

*Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. 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.*

1 Corinthians 4:1-4

*For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.*

2 Corinthians 10:12

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Honest self evaluation needs to be  
done on a regular basis.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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**“Have a good day” is often expressed as one departs.**

### **Here’s How to Have a Better Day**

Sometimes it is the things that we don’t do that make a better day:

- not procrastinating
- not becoming impatient
- not being possessive
- not being anxious to impress others
- not cherishing an inflated opinion of yourself
- not taking advantage of others
- not keeping a record of hurts done to you
- not worrying about tomorrow.

***By not doing these things, you will have a better day!***

*Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

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Prevention is better than remedial.

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### ‘As Is, Where Is’

“As is, where is,” is a term used at auctions. It means that when you bid on an item and make the winning bid, it’s yours “as it now is, where it is now.” Life is a lot like that.

We must take it as it is now, where we are now. We are not given the option of refusing to accept it until it is changed to our liking.

It is apparent that the Apostle Paul understood this concept when he wrote in Philippians 4:11:

*“Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having an abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”*

There are many things which happen about which we have nothing to say. We had no voice in deciding when we were born, the family into which we were born, or the social, cultural and economic status of that family. There are many things which we have little control over: how others treat us, what kind of diseases we will contract, our length of life, etc.

Since we exert so little control over such external things, we must learn to accept life “as is, where is.” This is what produces contentment. Not that we wouldn’t like it to be different. Not that we shouldn’t try to improve our lot in life. It is accepting our present circumstances for now.

**When we accept ourselves “as we are, where we are,” we are able to face today, and gain strength to change things for tomorrow.**



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### 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

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Daily read the Bible and meditate on  
what was read.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Group Effort

#### The Right Person for the Job

##### Who is called upon the most to do the work?

When something needs to be done,  
**somebody** ought to do it.

When a simple task needs to be performed,  
**anybody** can do it.

When nothing is being accomplished,  
**everybody** needs to do it.

When things are done wrong,  
**nobody** did it!

~~~~~

**Remember: “somebody,” “anybody,” “everybody,”
and “nobody” can refer to me as well as others.**

“We” includes “me.”

*But let each one examine his own work,
and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone,
and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load.*

Galatians 6:4-5

You can't take credit for what "we did"
unless you took part.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



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 the journey is completed.

A 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



SELECTED THOUGHTS



‘I Deserve It’

Quite often we hear that one “deserves” this or that. Commercials are laced with the thought: “You deserve it.” “Get the [fill in the blank] you deserve”; “You deserve a break today,” etc.

Deserve means: to be worthy of, merit, earn. Being alive is not a sufficient achievement to be deserving.

When deprived of what is assumed to be deserved one feels he or she has been denied what is rightfully theirs: “It’s not right!”

Who Deserves God’s Blessings?

No one! Blessings received are not the result of our goodness, but His. It’s God’s goodness that prompts Him to grant blessings. He has chosen to do it on the basis of one loving His Son and being a faithful disciple of the Lord.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9

A Word of Caution

Be careful of what you demand. Demands for what is “deserved” may be granted, much to your dismay.

Don’t demand justice, ask for mercy.

We don't deserve what God provides -
it is a gift. Be thankful!



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Dis-ing

A slang term derived from the word disrespect.

DIS-ING JESUS

Disrespecting His divinity

by saying He was just a good man.

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#### **Disrespecting His word**

by saying it needs to change with the times.

~~~~~

Disrespecting His teachings on morality

by saying they must allow room for diversity in lifestyles.

~~~~~

#### **Disrespecting His teachings on divorce**

by saying one has the right to be happy.

~~~~~

Disrespecting His authority

by saying church teachings and traditions trump the Bible.

~~~~~

#### **Disrespecting His design for the structure of His church**

by structuring it with earthly heads and headquarters.

~~~~~

Disrespecting His command for His followers to assemble

by saying it isn't important.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth...teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18,20

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Colossians 3:17



SELECTED THOUGHTS



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



SELECTED THOUGHTS



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.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Body Language

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

EYES, FEET, FINGER, LIPS

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

He who winks his eyes does so to devise perverse things; he who compresses his lips brings evil to pass.

16:30

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

30:13

FACE

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

HANDS

“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

EARS

Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise reprovee to a listening ear.

25:12

He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination.

28:9

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

Be careful what you say non-verbally as well as verbally.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Choose

(The word 'choose' implies the use of judgment in taking one of several courses of action.)

We make choices every day. And the choices we make affect not only today, but the future as well. And our choices impact those around us: family, neighbors, co-workers, and especially brethren. Right choices benefit all concerned, bad choices hurt all concerned.

**Choose carefully,
choose wisely,
choose prayerfully.**

*Who is the man who fears the Lord? He will instruct
him in the way he should choose.*

Psalms 25:12

“And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Joshua 24:15

**All choices have consequences,
some good some bad.**



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Choose to . . .

CHOOSE TO LOVE
rather than hate.

CHOOSE TO SMILE
rather than frown.

CHOOSE TO BUILD
rather than destroy.

CHOOSE TO PERSEVERE
rather than quit.

CHOOSE TO PRAISE
rather than gossip.

CHOOSE TO HEAL
rather than wound.

CHOOSE TO GIVE
rather than grasp.

CHOOSE TO ACT
rather than delay.

CHOOSE TO FORGIVE
rather than curse.

CHOOSE TO PRAY
rather than despair.

-from Pulpit Helps



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Christian

Only three passages in the New Testament contain the word Christian.

... the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.
Acts 11:26

Agrippa replied to Paul, "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian."
Acts 26:28

But if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.
1 Peter 4:16



INVOLVEMENT

Wearing the name Christian involves being a disciple (learner and follower) of Christ.

Becoming a Christian involves being convinced that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world.

Being a Christian involves glorifying God even while suffering.

In all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.
Titus 2:7-8



THOUGHTS

One of the obvious facts about being a Christian:
you either function or fizzle.

The best way to convince others about the value of following Christ is to show them.

Satan is willing for anyone to profess Christian principles—as long as they're not practiced.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Communication

The life blood of a relationship.

Most of us have experienced a problem with connections on the phone. Sometimes it may be that we can hear the other person but they can't hear us, or maybe we can't hear them. Unless there is a speaker and a listener there is no communication.

Communication is important in relationships such as marriage, family, with brethren, and with God. Each person needs to be a good listener as well as good communicator. Both are necessary. (Experience seems to indicate that being a good listener is the harder of the two.)

Communication is important in our relationship with God. We speak to God through prayer. He speaks to us through His Word. These avenues of communication need to be kept open and used frequently.

SPEAKING TO HIM

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

1 John 5:14-15

Pray without ceasing.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

LISTENING TO HIM

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Matthew 11:15

"This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!"

Mark 9:7

Be a good listener as well as a good speaker. God has promised to hear our prayers and we need to be willing to hear Him. We expect Him to answer our prayers; He expects us to heed His words. We need to be doers, not just listeners.

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock."

Matthew 7:24

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

James 1:22

Be a good communicator with others, with brethren, and with God!

Remember communication is the life blood of a relationship.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Continuing

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine."

John 8:31
* * *

In physics the continuing movement of an object is said to be affected by (among other things) resistance, obstacles, and diversion. These same three things affect one "continuing in His word."

RESISTANCE

Fight against the opposition with faith and fortitude.

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

1 Peter 5:8-9

OBSTACLES

Do not let them hinder or cause you to stumble.

Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

2 Peter 1:10-11

DIVERSIONS

Don't be sidetracked by worldly cares and riches.

"And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."

Mark 4:18-19

Keep On Keeping On

If indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I,

Paul, was made a minister.

Colossians 1:23



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Deeds of the Flesh

*Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, **enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying**, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Galatians 5:19-21

The deeds in **bold type** are ones that cause interpersonal problems. The other deeds seem more atrocious. However, the ones listed below are those which are at the root of problems found in a group of people, especially a group of Christians.

enmities

“hatred.” The opposite of agape, “love.”

strife

contention, the expression of enmity.

jealousy

resentfully or painfully desirous of another’s advantages.

outbursts of anger

anger boiling up and spilling forth.

disputes

a partisan and contentious spirit.

dissensions

divisions; refusal to conform to authority or doctrine.

factions

parties, into which divisions crystallize.

envying

a feeling of discontent and resentment aroused by and in conjunction with desire for the possessions or qualities of another.

Christians Take Notice!

* definitions from American Heritage Dictionary



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Fenced In or Fenced Out? Or Both?

There was a playground for children surrounded by a secure fence with only one gate. The children loved to play there. One day someone said, "They are penned in—like animals, like prisoners. That's not good. Let's remove the fence and free them from such confines."

The fence was removed. No more confinement. No more prison-like barriers.

Then a parent noticed that the children were only playing near the center of the playground. Why weren't they using all of the space. In questioning the children, they found out that the children didn't feel secure without the fence. It became apparent that the fence was both protective and restrictive. It kept them inside where it was safe, and kept out what was harmful.

CONFINED OR PROTECTED?

A similar misconception is held by some when it comes to God's children. They believe the restrictions and prohibitions of the Lord's commandments keep them penned up, taking the joy out of living.

The truth is, His commands are not burdensome; they are wholesome. They protect His followers from harm from without, and keep them from harming themselves by wandering off.

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

1 John 5:3

But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

2 Thessalonians 3:3

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.

Jude 1:24



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Four Steps to Achieve

PLAN PURPOSELY

First: one must have a plan with a purpose.

“For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?”

Luke 14:28

PREPARE PRAYERFULLY

Second: one must make adequate preparation considering “if the Lord wills.”

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will 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. Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.”

James 4:13-15

PROCEED POSITIVELY

Third: one must think in terms of “I can.”

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:13

PURSUE PERSISTENTLY

Fourth: one must persevere.

“But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.”

Luke 8:15



Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

James 1:12



SELECTED THOUGHTS



'I Have Feelings, Too!'

His name was Frank. He was what one would call “weird.” 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

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



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Intentions

Good intentions that never produce action are worthless.

The smallest deed is better than the grandest intention.

One cannot build a reputation on intentions; it is built on actions.

When actions are not the same as intentions,
the problem can be traced to character!

It's inconsistent to judge yourself by your best intentions
and others by their worst actions.

Judged by Deeds, Not Intentions

The Lord will judge us according to our actions, not our intentions.
*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each
one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to
what he has done, whether good or bad.*

2 Corinthians 5:10

**What matters, is not what you would do for the Lord if you
had riches or ability, but what you are doing with what you
have now.**

A Great Example

*Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which
has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of
affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the
wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and
beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, begging us with
much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the
saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave
themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.*

2 Corinthians 8:1-5



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Puppies, Kittens, and Babies

Everyone loves puppies, kittens, and babies. But they grow into dogs, cats, and adults. And as such sometimes they are hard to love. In December the events surrounding the baby Jesus are on the minds of many. But the baby Jesus grew up a long time ago.

Jesus the Man

He came to His own people and they rejected Him. In His home town they sought to throw him over a cliff. Religious leaders sought to trap Him in His words; failing that they sought to kill Him. His teachings were considered hard, and many followers left. Some of His teachings that were considered hard are:

You will die in sins unless you believe that He is God.

If you reject the Son, you'll be rejected by the Father.

One must come to the Father through Him.

To be His disciple, one must take up his cross and follow Him.

Disciples must love Him more than family.

To love Him is to keep His commandments.

One is to believe and be baptized to be saved, or be condemned.

Today Jesus Is Adored and Ignored

Some relish the fact that He came
but ignore the reason He came.

Some adore the baby Jesus (Christ-child),
but not the man (Christ-lord).

Some enjoy visions of a baby in manger,
but not a king in heaven.

Some participate in the activities of Christmas,
but not the actions of a Christian.

Some clamor for the spirit of Christmas,
but not the spirit of Christ.

Some pay lip service to Him,
but reject His rule, His commandments, His Way.



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Know the Person

I recently read this quote by Philip Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, "Many a man would rather you heard his story than granted his request."* This made me stop and think about the words of Jesus in

Matthew 11:28-30:

"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 will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Jesus wants us to know Him personally as well as know what he says. Jesus wants His followers to hear His story: Who He is, where He came from, why He came, what His goals are, where He is now. To know His power, to know His love, to know His kindness, to know His willingness to forgive, to know His salvation.

The New Testament reveals, not only the way of salvation, but the author of our salvation.

Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.

Hebrews 12:2

KNOW THE MAN AS WELL AS THE PLAN

And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. 1

John 5:20

If you only focus on what is being said and not the person who is speaking, change your focus!

*The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader by John C. Maxwell



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Oh My Ego!

(A true story; name withheld to avoid embarrassment.)

A young man, new on the job, had impressed the boss with his abilities. He was given preferential assignments and privileges. He was thoroughly convinced that the others workers also realized just how good he was.

One day he saw several employees engaged in a conversation, and he knew they were talking about him. So he slipped behind a partition where they couldn't see him, but he could hear them talking.

Anticipating hearing what they thought about his great talent and abilities, he listened very carefully in order to savor the compliments. Oh, was he surprised to hear just how great they thought ... their football team was!

His ego was seriously deflated.

*... I say to everyone among you not to think more highly
of himself than he ought to think ...*

Romans 12:3

**“We wouldn’t worry so much about what others think of us if
we knew how seldom they do.”**

– Anonymous

What really matters is what the Lord thinks of us.

Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. But to me it is a very small thing that I may 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.

1 Corinthians 4:1-4



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Testing . . .

"For the ear tests words as the palate tastes food."
Job 34:3

I came across this verse the other day, and it struck me, that just as we taste food to see if it is palatable we need to test the words we hear. A number of Biblical passages speak of being careful what we say. But this verse teaches us to test what we hear.

Here is a handy check list to use to filter out what is not fit to hear.

Test Words Before Hearing

Is it true?
Is it hearsay?
Is it gossip?
Should I hear it?
Why am I being told this?
Will hearing it benefit me?

Is this not what we teach our children in the song: "O Be Careful"?

O be careful little ears what you hear,
O be careful little ears what you hear,
There's a Father up above
And He's looking down in love.
So, be careful little ears what you hear.

When someone asks, "Have you heard
the latest . . .?" Reply, "Should I?"



SELECTED THOUGHTS



What Not to Love

(antidote follows)

PREEMINENCE

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.

Proverbs 16:18

For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Romans 12:3

MONEY

For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

1Timothy 6:10

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

1Timothy 6:17-19

PLEASURE

All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor.

Ecclesiastes 2:10

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Matthew 16:26

Instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.

Titus 2:12

WORLD

Do not love the world nor 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 and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

1 John 2:15-16

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

Colossians 3:2



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Who Moved?

When God seems far away, remember He has not moved.

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

James 4:8

When faith becomes weak, recall that He remains faithful.

If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

2 Timothy 2:13

**When the glories of God are hard to see, consider
who's vision is poor.**

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Hebrews 13:8

ADMONITION

Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," so that we confidently say, "the lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?"

Hebrews 13:5-6

Trials and circumstances test our
faith, causing it to grow or shrivel.



10 Ways to Make the Most Of Bible Class

- ❶ Attend promptly and regularly.
- ❷ Bring your Bible.
- ❸ Come prepared. If there is a lesson book or lesson sheet, review it beforehand.
- ❹ Participate in the class. Share the fruits of your study with others.
- ❺ Listen carefully to what the teacher and other students have to say.
- ❻ Take notes. This will help you remember.
- ❼ Disagree sweetly. Your attitude will make it easier for them to consider your comment.
- ❽ Show the teacher your appreciation. A word or note of encouragement does wonders.
- ❾ Talk up the class. Show some enthusiasm. Share with someone else what you have learned. Invite others to attend with you.
- ❿ Application! This is probably the most difficult part, but a Bible class is of little value if the lessons learned are not applied to everyday life.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.

Titus 2:11-12

Attending a class is important. Paying attention is more important.



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

Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

1 Peter 4:19

Be a Friend of Jesus

“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

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



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Fault is the easiest thing in the world to find.

An Easy Job

I was given the following advice by an elderly brother years ago: “Look for the good in others.” It’s advice that is full of wisdom.

On occasion I have held up a white sheet of paper with one small black spot on it. I then would asked the class, “What do you see?” Some would say, “A black spot.” They focused only on the spot and overlooked the white paper.

LESSON

We must see more than the faults in others.

Fault Finding

JESUS

(Fault: From Nazareth)

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?”

John 1:45-46

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

(Fault: Galileans)

They were amazed and astonished, saying, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? “And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? ... And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others were mocking and saying, “They are full

of sweet wine.”

Acts 2:7-8, 12-13

PAUL THE APOSTLE

(Fault: Personal presence)

For they say, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible.”

2 Corinthians 10:10



SELECTED THOUGHTS



The Gift of Encouragement

ENCOURAGE (defined) 1. To inspire with hope, courage, or confidence; hearten. 2. To give support to; 3. To stimulate; spur.

— AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY

Who Needs to Receive the Gift?

ANYONE WHO IS SUFFERING

When one is dealing with personal sorrow.

And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother [Lazarus].

John 11:19

ANYONE WHO IS DESPONDENT

When one is overwhelmed by trials or persecution.

We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

ANYONE WHO IS BEING TEMPTED

When one is being lured by the forbidden.

But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 3:13

Be aware of those who need
encouragement . . . and then give it!



SELECTED THOUGHTS



Lessons in a Nutshell

BE NOT ANXIOUS

Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

1 Peter 5:7

BE A LIVING SACRIFICE

Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God.

Romans 12:1

BE THANKFUL

*In everything give thanks; for this is God's will
for you in Christ Jesus.*

1 Thessalonians 5:18

BE CARING

That the members may have the same care for one another.

1 Corinthians 12:25

BE TRUTHFUL AND HONEST

*But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects
into Him who is the head, even Christ.*

Ephesians 4:15

BE AT PEACE

*Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which
no one will see the Lord.*

Hebrews 12:14

RESIST TEMPTATION

*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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### **LESSONS APPLIED**

*Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His  
calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things,  
you will never stumble.*

2 Peter 1:10



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### A True Story

A church member considered himself an authority on Biblical Greek words and definitions. He spoke with boldness and often challenged the Bible teacher on the meaning of a word.

Patently bearing up under such criticism, the teacher finally inquired as to the man's training in Greek studies. He bristled with indignation that someone dared to question his expertise.

However, his credentials became suspect when he was unable to recite even the first three letters of the Greek alphabet.

#### MORAL

*For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.*

Romans 12:3

#### IDENTITY

*"Proud," "Haughty," "Scoffer," are his names,  
Who acts with insolent pride.*

Proverbs 21:24

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What is considered pride may be  
nothing more than vanity.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### By Way of Reminder

*Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you.*

2 Peter 1:12

**Remind: frequent recalling to mind so as to keep the memory fresh.**



**Remember what you were before becoming a Christian.**

*“But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”*

Galatians 3:22

**Remember what you have in Christ.**

*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

**Remember what needs to be done, and to do it.**

*Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Ephesians 4:1-3

By frequently calling things to mind, we keep such thoughts fresh in our memory. Consider how many things you are able to recall just by frequent repetition: phone numbers, Social Security numbers, vehicle license plates, addresses, computer and ATM passwords, credit card number, etc.



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### Characteristics of a Christian

The features that identify, tell apart, or describe a Christian.

One who:

- Is slow to lose patience, enduring any inconvenience.
- Is quick to be gracious and kind.
- Looks for a way to be helpful.
- Refrains from trying to impress others with his own importance.
- Thinks the best, not the worst, of others.
- Is wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove in dealing with others.
- Is not easily provoked or irritated.
- Does not gloat over the wickedness of other people.
- Exhibits the love of Christ in his heart and life.

**These characteristics can be summed up as  
“LOVE.”**

Love of the Lord and love of others.

*And He said to him, “you shall love the lord your god with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

Matthew 22-37-39

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Character is not created during a  
crisis - it is only exhibited.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Concupiscence

Are you guilty of this sin mentioned in the King James Version of the Bible? It's one of many archaic words found in that translation. Here are three passages where the word is found in the KJV. Following each verse is the same passage in a newer translation.

#### **Romans 7:8**

*But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. – KJV*

*But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire.– NKJV*

*But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind.– NASB*

#### **1 Thessalonians 4:5**

*Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God – KJV*

*Not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God–NKJV*

*Not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God–NASB*

#### **Colossians 3:5**

*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. – KJV*

*Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.– NKJV*

*Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. –NASB*

***Now, that's easier to understand!***



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### Denying God and Moral Decline

The two are inseparable. Once God is out of the picture, moral decline is inevitable. When accountability to a higher power is removed one is free to do whatever is desired. It is happening today as it did back then.

*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened ... Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.*

Romans 1:19-20, 24-27

**What is being considered  
acceptable today reminds  
one of Sodom and  
Gomorrah.**



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Examples

#### OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

Are given so we may learn from the successes and failures of others who lived long ago.

*Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*

1 Corinthians 10:11

#### NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

Show us how others lived for the Lord during the difficult early years of Christianity.

*The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*

Philippians 4:9

#### CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES

Provide guidance and encouragement for living as a Christian in today's world.

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

Philippians 3:17

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We all look for examples, just be sure they are good ones.

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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 had enough faith to be healed, but not enough gratitude to express thanks. 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 the response (in thought or in word) 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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### Hard Lessons

Of all the lessons of life that have been difficult for me to learn and properly apply, two stand out in bold relief.

(1) Another's opinion or judgment can be different from mine without one of us being considered wrong. And I can have (and need to have) fellowship with brethren who hold contrary opinions.

(2) I must make a distinction between my opinions and judgments and what is the doctrine of Christ. My "think-so's" are not to be bound on others nor used as a test of fellowship.

**Learning these two lessons and making proper application, paves the way for unity and peace among the followers of Jesus Christ.**

### WORKER BEES

There is much work that needs to be done in a congregation by both men and women that is not the work of it's elders and deacons. The congregation that has many busy "worker bees" is truly blessed. (You can tell if there are many worker bees in a congregation by the buzzing sound made by all the activity.)

*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.*

1 Corinthians 15:58

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I don't want to be bound by another's opinion, neither should the other person be bound by mine.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### **Incongruous**

(Inconsistent, incompatible)

### **Beauty and Indiscretion**

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

Proverbs 11:22

### **Ruler and Wickedness**

*Like a roaring lion and a rushing bear  
is a wicked ruler over a poor people.*

Proverbs 28:15

### **Fool and Honor**

*Like one who binds a stone in a sling,  
so is he who gives honor to a fool.*

Proverbs 26:8

### **Faithful and Talebearer**

*He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets,  
but he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.*

Proverbs 11:13

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A FATAL INCONSISTENCY  
Hating your brother and loving God.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Jesus Loves Me

(Hymn's Extra Verses for the Elderly)

4

Jesus loves me, this I know,  
though my hair is white as snow.  
Though my sight is growing dim,  
still He bids me trust in Him.

5

Though my steps are oh, so slow,  
with my hand in His I'll go.  
On through life, let come what may,  
He'll be there to lead the way.

6

Though I am no longer young,  
I have much which He's begun.  
Let me serve Christ with a smile,  
go with others the extra mile.

7

When the nights are dark and long,  
in my heart He puts a song.  
Telling me in words so clear,  
"Have no fear, for I am near."

8

When my work on earth is done,  
and life's victories have been won,  
He will take me home above,  
then I'll understand His love.

9

I love Jesus, does He know?  
Have I ever told Him so?  
Jesus loves to hear me say,  
that I love Him every day.

#### REFRAIN

Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me;  
Yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so.

– Anonymous



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



### Modern Sayings with Biblical Roots

#### **AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?**

*Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"*

Genesis 4:9

**An unwillingness to assume responsibility for the what one does to another.**



#### **EYE FOR AN EYE**

*"But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise."*

Exodus 21:23-25

**A demand for revenge.**

(However, it originally was a statement of justice: that the punishment should fit the crime. The avenging was not to be an act of overkill.)



#### **FLY IN THE OINTMENT**

*Dead flies make a perfumer's oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor.*

Ecclesiastes 10:1

**Anything that hinders or prevents success.**



#### **PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR IN HIS OWN COUNTRY**

*And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household."*

Matthew 13:57

**Those who are personally acquainted often fail to recognize one's abilities or accomplishments.**



#### **WALKING ON WATER**

*And in the fourth watch of the night He [Jesus] came to them, walking on the sea.*

Matthew 14:25

**High regard for one who performs particularly difficult tasks.**



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Moment of Decision

(A CRITICAL OR DECISIVE TIME ON WHICH MUCH DEPENDS.)

After some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.” Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and departed, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Acts 15:36-40

### SETTLING DISPUTES

Sometimes opinions or judgments of honest and sincere Christians are at odds with each other. This should not lead to a falling out. Rather a solution that does not alienate needs to be found. Paul and Barnabas visited the churches separately by dividing up the work.

### POSTSCRIPT

Years later, Paul wrote, “... Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.”

2 Timothy 4:11

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We must live with the consequences of  
our choices, whether good or bad.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



### More Moments of Decision

(A CRITICAL OR DECISIVE TIME ON WHICH MUCH DEPENDS.)

#### WONDERS OF GOD'S POWER

*An angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed.*

Exodus 3:1-2

The miracles of the Bible ought to cause us to take a close look at them to discern their purpose. Miracles were not performed indiscriminately, but always for a purpose.



#### WORSHIP

*Joshua said, "choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."*

Joshua.24:15

The "gods" (that which is worshiped) of this world are ever present. It can be the god of wealth, or power, or prestige, or any other thing one may revere. What we go after here determines where we go hereafter.



#### CONFESSING (OWNING UP TO)

*The bystanders were saying to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too."*

Mark 14:70

It can be difficult to confess faith in Jesus, especially when dire consequences may be the outcome. Jesus owned up to being God's Son and was crucified. Paul owned up to being a Christian, and suffered often. Lying is not an option. Denying only compounds the problem.

*If anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.*

1 Peter 4:16



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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

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One prepares for the future by making  
the best use of today.

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### Peer Pressure

*But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.*

Galatians 2:11-13

Barnabas (Son of Encouragement) was a good and kind man, but he fell prey to the influence of Peter and the other Jews.

#### What We Must Learn

Peer pressure is not only felt by the young. Anyone can feel the influence of others, especially of those we respect. It is important that we be fully aware of the strong pull of peer pressure and resist it.

***Be biblically, not politically, correct.***

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Be aware that even your friends can  
influence you adversely.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Say What Needs to Be Said

John the Baptist's message from the wilderness was not, "Smile, God loves you." It was "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come."

Jeremiah was not put into a miry pit for preaching, "I'm OK, you're OK." It was for crying against the adultery, idolatry and other wickedness of his nation.

Noah's message from the steps of the ark was not, "Something good is going to happen to you." He condemned the world and was a preacher of righteousness.

Jesus Christ was not crucified for saying, "Consider the lilies, how they grow," but for saying, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ... fools and blind guides ... whitewashed tombs ... generation of vipers."

– Selected

*Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 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 4:2-4

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Avoiding saying what needs to be said  
may please others, but not God,

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Practice

*The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me,  
**practice** these things, and the God  
of peace will be with you.*

*Philippians 4:9*

**PRACTICE (Greek: *prasso*)** to perform repeatedly or habitually.  
*Do it over and over so that it becomes a habit.  
Do it to become skilled in applying it to daily life.*

### LESSON

Living for Jesus takes practice, practice, and more practice. To put it another way, it's making daily application of what we have learned.

### AT ALL TIMES

Every day of the week. Every activity you engage in. Every situation you encounter. Every opportunity you experience. Every trial you endure. Every temptation you face.

To borrow a current term that indicates "at all times": It's 24/7!

*Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its  
passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk  
by the Spirit.*

*Galatians 5:24-25*

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There is no substitute for practice.  
Absolutely nothing!

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Sacrifices

*You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

1 Peter 2:5

**Christians are directed to offer up spiritual sacrifices.  
But what are they?**

### SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES

#### GODLY LIVING

*Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

Romans 12:1

#### SHARING AND CARING

*But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.*

Philippians 4:18

*For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.*

2 Corinthians 8:3-5

*And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

Hebrews 13:16

#### PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

*Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.*

Hebrews 13:15

*To You I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call upon the name of the Lord.*

Psalms 116:17



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Sorrow

Mental suffering or pain caused by injury, loss, or despair.

#### Two Kinds of Sorrow

*For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.*

2 Corinthians 7:10

Godly sorrow is according to the will of God, rendering the heart humble, contrite, submissive; disposed to mortify every sin, and to walk in newness of life.

Worldly sorrow is according to the will of the individual. It promotes great emotional distress over what has been lost or has happened. Often it causes men to do desperate things.

### REPENTANCE

A change of mind involving a turning from sin.

#### Five Aspects of Repentance

**Regret:** To feel sorry, disappointed, or distressed about; look back with distress.

*When there is no regret, one feels self-acquitted.*

**Reform:** To improve by alteration, correction of error, or removal of defects; put into a better form or condition.

*When there is no reform, there is a strong likelihood the deed will be repeated.*

**Remorse:** Moral anguish arising from repentance for past misdeeds.

*Moral anguish is needed as a constant reminder of the seriousness of sin.*

**Repugnance:** Aroused disgust or aversion; offensive or repulsive.

*A strong repugnance keeps sin from appearing attractive again.*

**Restoration.** To bring back into existence or use; reestablish; to bring back to an original condition; to put (someone) back in a former position; to make restitution of; give back.



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### 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.

Sincerity in religion is a must, but it alone is not enough to establish what is correct. One may be sincerely wrong as much as one may be sincerely right.

*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

*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

*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 10:22

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Sincerity is not enough to established truth. It's possible to be sincerely wrong,

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



### Study (Be Diligent)

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

(KJV)

*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. (NASB)*

2 Timothy 2:15

#### **CONTEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 2:14-18**

*Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.*

#### **THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR TIMOTHY**

Timothy knew the Scriptures. He had been taught them from childhood. Now, without Paul by his side, he was to give due diligence to teach the Word, avoiding wrangling and “worldly and empty chatter.” He was to be diligent in defending the Word. And he was to be diligent in his daily conduct so as to be approved by God.

#### **THE MESSAGE FOR US: BE DILIGENT**

**Know the Scriptures – Live by the Word –  
Share the Good News**

Knowing the Word is no substitute for living by the Word. The message to all Christians today is to give due diligence in being a disciple of the Lord. As faith without works is dead, Bible knowledge without application is worthless. Being able to quote Scripture is good, but applying it to your life is the goal of such knowledge. *Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.* James 4:17

FOOTNOTE: diligent (study): **spoudazo**: persevering, painstaking effort; to hasten to do a thing, to exert oneself.



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Suffering as a Christian

*Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.*

1 Corinthians 16:13

The morals of society have never been the same as those found in the New Testament. Sometimes there have been similarities but at other times they have been far different. The morals in this country have been drifting farther and farther away from Bible morals: marriage is just a “relationship” subject to end for any reason; co-habitation before marriage is commonplace; perverted lifestyles are defended as acceptable; right-or-wrong has been replaced by “if it feels right, it’s okay.” And some churches have fallen prey to such nonsense.

The challenge for Christians today is to stand firm for Bible morals, no matter who criticizes, or what the cost may be.

\* \* \*

*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.*

1 Peter 4:12-16

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Christian morals have never been held  
by the majority.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### The Bible Message

#### **Believe in God**

**Believe that God created the heavens and the earth,  
and all life forms.**

*You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also  
believe, and shudder.*

James 2:19

#### **Believe in Jesus**

**Believe Jesus to be God's Son, sent into the world  
as the Savior.**

*Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.*

John 14:1

*"Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise  
believe because of the works themselves."*

John 14:11

#### **Be in Jesus**

**Be a disciple (learner and follower) of Jesus.**

*So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you  
continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and  
you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."*

JOHN 8:31-32

*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

#### **Trust in Jesus**

**Yield to His will. Obey Him.**

*"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."*

John 14:15

**Believe in God, Believe in Jesus, Be in Jesus, and Trust in  
Jesus. Be saved!**



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Thou Shall Not!

“Thou Shall Not’s” seem restrictive (and they are). But they also can be protective. The “Thou Shall Not’s” in the Bible are given to keep us out of trouble, to keep us from harming ourselves. We should not loathe them but rather embrace them.

Today we embrace many “thou shall not’s” (we call them “do not’s”) that limit our activities while being protective.

#### A FEW ‘THOU SHALL NOT’S’

Do not fool around with a loaded gun.

Do not ride a bicycle on the freeway.

Do not walk alone through a crime-infested area at night.

Do not give out your PIN number.

Do not open email attachments unless you know it is safe to do so.

Do not pick up hitchhikers along side the road next to a prison.

Do not try beating a train to the crossing.

Do not count on the lottery for your retirement.

(And many, many more.)

#### QUESTION?

Why should we chafe under God’s “Thou Shall Not’s” that are given for our protection? We need to thank God for them!

*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.*

1 John 5:3

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“Thou shall not” must be heeded.

Ignoring it is foolhardy.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



### Three Moments of Decision

(A critical or decisive time on which much depends.)

*Peter and the apostles answered and said, "We must obey God rather than men."*

Acts 5:29

#### HAVE COURAGE

We need courage when we face our adversaries, be they rulers, friends, or family. Obeying God is more important than obeying anyone else.



*"If you [Cain] do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."*

Genesis 4:8

#### CONTROL ANGER

When anger is allowed to linger in the mind, it grows restless and must be put to rest or it will be put into action.

*"Be angry, and yet do not; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity."*

Ephesians 4:26-27



*When Cephas came to Antioch, Paul opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.*

Galatians 2:11

#### CONFRONT WHEN NECESSARY

Confrontation is never pleasant, but sometimes it is necessary.

Inappropriate conduct among church leaders (or members) can be devastating. Hoping that by putting off addressing the problem it will go away only makes matters worse.

*Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.*

1 Timothy 5:19-20

*"If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother."*

Matthew 18:15



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Total Commitment

**The difference between a contribution and total commitment is usually the difference between failure and success.**

A chicken and a hog were walking past a church building one day when they noticed the Sunday morning sermon posted on the outside bulletin board, "Helping the Poor." They walked a ways when the chicken suddenly came across with a suggestion. "Say, Brother Hog, why don't we give all the poor people a nice breakfast of ham and eggs?" The hog thought a moment and replied, "That's all right for you to say because for you it is only a contribution, but for me, it's total commitment!"

-Selected

*Agabus the prophet took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.' When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem. 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.'"*

Acts 21:12-13

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It's all or none. There is no middle ground in being a disciple.

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### ‘That’s the Way It’s Always Been Done’

A new bride was wanting to impress her husband with a dinner of baked ham and all the trimmings. Not wanting to make any mistakes, she decided to fix it the way her mother always did it.

She began by taking the ham out of the package and cutting a little off each end before placing it in the pan. Her husband, who was watching, inquired, “Why did you do that?” Her reply was “I don’t know. That’s the way mom always did it.”

Some days later she had the opportunity to ask her mother why she always cut a little off each end of the ham before cooking it. Her reply?

“Well,” her mother said, “I never had a pan large enough to cook a whole ham, so I had to cut a little off each end to make it fit.”

– Selected

#### THE MORAL OF THE STORY

“That’s the way we’ve always done it” may not be a valid rationale to continue doing it. The reason for doing it a certain way may no longer exist. A new way may or may not be better than the old way, but to hang on to the old way “just because we’ve always done it that way” may not be best.

On the other hand, to demand change just for the sake of change is not best either. The scriptural way (old or new) that works best for the church at the time should be the basis for deciding how it’s to be done.

**What is “old” is not necessarily inferior;  
What is “new” is not necessarily superior.**

*Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature ... But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.*

1 Corinthians 14:20, 40



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



### Things to Pursue

Pursue (*dioko*): to pursue, follow (after), given to, press toward, with vigor and determination to achieve the goal.

**Pursue righteousness,  
godliness,  
faith,  
love,  
perseverance  
and gentleness.**

*But flee from these things [desire to be rich, love of money], you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.*

1 Timothy 6:11

*Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*

2 Timothy 2:22



**Pursue peace with all men, and sanctification.**

*Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.*

Hebrews 12:14



**Pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.**

*So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.*

Romans 14:19

"Press on" is the marching order for  
soldiers of the cross.



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### Uncomfortable Truths

**The rulers of Jesus' day were confronted by facts concerning Him that they found unacceptable.**

When Jesus healed a blind man, the Pharisees refused to believe He did it. They discounted all the testimony of credible witnesses. They stubbornly denied it and sent the man away! They answered him, "*You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?*" So they put him out.

John 9:34.

When Jesus' miracles were found to be beyond question, the chief priests and Pharisees sought to kill Him. *So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.*

John 11:53

When the soldiers reported finding an empty tomb after Jesus' resurrection, the rulers paid the guards to lie. The chief priests and elders said, "*You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble.*" *And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.*

Matthew 28:13-15

#### UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTHS TODAY FOR MANY

God is not dead. He is alive! Jesus now reigns in heaven! Unless you believe in Jesus you will die in your sins! There will be a resurrection and all will be judged! There is a heaven and there is a hell!

Ignoring, denying, or challenging these truths is to flail against the wind. To accept them opens one's eyes, ears, and heart to the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

*And He [Jesus] said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."*

Mark 16:15-16



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### What About Him?

*So Peter seeing him said to Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?"*

*You follow Me!"*

John 21:21-22

Peter, having been told what would befall him, asked what was going to happen to "him." [It is commonly believed that this man was John.]

### 'You Follow Me'

We need to be a faithful follower of the Lord. This is a personal commitment that must not depend on whether others (family, friends, brethren) follow the Lord.

We can help and support each other in following Jesus, but at the judgment each will give a personal account.

*So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this – not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.*

Romans 14:12

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Faith and fidelity are strictly personal obligations.

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## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### A Potpourri of Poignant Proverbs Biblical and Contemporary

*Do not associate with a man given to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man, lest you learn his ways, and find a snare for yourself.*

Proverbs 22:24-25

**If you run with dogs, you'll have to contend with fleas.**

*He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with the tongue.*

Proverbs 28:23

**Flattery looks like friendship—  
just like a wolf looks like a dog.**

*Do you see a man wise in his own eyes?  
There is more hope for a fool than for him.*

Proverbs 26:12

**Some people are so proud of themselves they can  
strut sitting down.**

*Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck,  
write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor  
and good repute in the sight of God and man.*

Proverbs 3:3-4

**One of the most difficult things to give away is  
kindness--it has a way of coming back to you.**

*When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable,  
but he who restrains his lips is wise.*

Proverbs 10:19

**Wisdom is knowing when to speak your mind  
and when to mind your speech.**



## SELECTED THOUGHTS



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### Unconditional Love

Unconditional Love and Unconditional Acceptance  
Are Two Separate Actions

#### PSYCHOBABBLE

The practical extension of the theories of unconditional love is a permissive attitude and a morally nonrestrictive atmosphere. The terminology of unconditional love can be traced to those involved in humanistic psychology and counseling. Humanists believe that a human being will find answers to his own dilemmas and naturally blossom into his best self in an atmosphere of unconditional love and acceptance, by which they mean a permissive, unstructured atmosphere.

– Adapted from an anonymous source

#### GOD'S UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

*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

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

Romans 5:8

#### GOD'S CONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE

##### Eternal Life with the Lord Is Conditional

*And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

Revelation 20:15

##### Forgiveness Is Conditional

*But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.*

Matthew 6:15

##### Acceptance Is Conditional

*I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.*

Luke 13:3

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