



INSPIRED
walk

CHRISTIAN LIVING

VOLUME 1

A photograph of a person walking away from the camera on a gravel path. The person is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, dark shorts, a patterned cap, and a yellow wristband. The background shows a sunset or sunrise with a pink and orange sky and some green bushes on the left.

GETTING STARTED

UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS
INVOLVED AS YOU BEGIN YOUR
CHRISTIAN WALK

TOPIC SERIES

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INSPIRED WALK - TOPIC SERIES

CHRISTIAN LIVING

VOLUME ONE

GETTING STARTED

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CHRISTIAN LIVING – Volume 1

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INTRODUCTION

When we become born again, it is important that we discover how to move forward in our new life.

The Christian life is not always easy and it is full of challenges ahead. However, it is always easier when we begin our Christian walk with the right foundations for our Christian journey.

In Volume One of the Christian Living TOPIC SERIES, the aim is equip the new born believer on what he/she needs to know and understand as he/she navigates in the Christian walk.

I'm A New Christian, Now What?

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

So as a new Christian, what's next? Therefore the moment you became a born again Christian through faith in Jesus Christ, is the moment that your eternal life began.

It is now important to understand what has spiritually happened to you as a result of putting your trust and faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour.

The Christian life will not always be perfect. You will still make mistakes; you will still face life's challenges. However the major difference is that you will face life with Jesus Christ by your side. You will encounter the issues of life with God guiding you and directing you. You are no longer alone. God will never leave you nor forsake you (**Deuteronomy 31:6**).

God wants us to understand salvation. God wants us to have the confidence of knowing for sure that we are saved. You must therefore understand what happened in you spiritually at the moment of your salvation and what you can do next.

A) WHAT HAPPENED AT THE MOMENT OF YOUR SALVATION

The moment you receive Jesus by FAITH, the following happens:

1. The Holy Spirit now lives inside of you (**1 Corinthians 6:19,20**)
2. You are now a child of God and are part of the spiritual family of God (**John 1:12**)
3. You are a new creation in Christ. This means that you are a new person in Christ. You now have a new nature in Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:17**)
4. ALL Your sins are forgiven. Therefore you are no longer condemned to eternal punishment, but instead you shall have eternal life through Jesus Christ (**Ephesians 1:7**)
5. You now live your life by FAITH & BELIEF in God (**2 Corinthians 5:7**)
6. The Bible is your infallible & God inspired manual for life (**2 Timothy 3:16,17**)
7. In Christ Jesus, the Lord will enable you to fulfill and experience His plan and purpose for your life. (**Romans 8:28**)
8. You have eternal life through Christ & God will never leave you or forsake you (**John 3:16**)
9. Your salvation is secure in Christ Jesus (**John 10:28,29**)

B) WHAT'S NEXT AFTER ACCEPTING JESUS CHRIST

1. Read and meditate on the word of God daily (Psalms 1:1-3)

The Bible is ultimately our final authority in our Christian walk. The Bible is the God-inspired word of God which corrects, reproves, instructs and equips us in our life and for the work of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Therefore our reading and meditation of the Bible enables us to understand the mind of God for every situation in life.

2. Pray to God daily (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Prayer is communication with God. As a Christian you have the privilege of directly communicating with the Creator of the Universe. You can talk to God about every issue in your life. You can thank Him for all that He does in your life. You can talk to God any time of the day.

Prayer draws us near to God.

3. Get water baptized as an outward sign that you now trust in Christ for salvation (Romans 6:3-4)

Water baptism is an outward sign to the world that you have given your life to Jesus Christ.

We are not saved through water baptism but we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ **(Ephesians 2:8-9)**.

Therefore water baptism is done after you become a Christian to symbolize Christ's death and resurrection and that we as Christians will also be resurrected in Christ.

4. Share the gospel of Jesus Christ with other people (Matthew 28:18-20)

As a Christian it is also important to learn to share the gospel of Christ and His salvation to other people. You can share the gospel to friends, family, workmates or even strangers.

Everyone needs to hear the gospel of Christ and God desires that all people become saved.

Therefore we must play our part to share God's word and God's free gift of salvation to others because it is an act of love.

5. Trust God in every area of your life (Proverbs 3:5,6)

As Christians we no longer live according to our feelings or moods or according to the values of this world. Instead we live according to the word of God.

We therefore must put our trust and faith in God. We must rely on God and the promises and instructions that He gives us in the Scriptures. We

must learn to trust God in every situation because God will work all things for good (Romans 8:28). Therefore God can also use bad situations in our life for His glory and for our spiritual growth as we walk with Him.

6. Obey the Lord (Matthew 7:24,25; James 1:22-25)

The Bible says that we must be “doers of the word and not hearers only”.

Therefore we must be willing to exercise our faith in God by obeying His scriptures. Our obedience to God will reflect the nature of Jesus Christ to others. Our obedience to God will enable us to grow spiritually in the Lord.

7. Have God control your life daily (Galatians 5:16-25)

Being a Christian means that we now submit our entire life to the Lordship and control of Jesus Christ. As a Christian it is Jesus who is in the driver’s seat of your life. We therefore surrender to Him daily and allow Christ to lead us in whatever we do.

Therefore whether we are in the workplace, with family, with friends, in relationships or in whatever plans we have for our life – we surrender everything to God and seek God’s guidance and direction in every area through prayer and reading His word.

8. Join a good Bible-based church that teaches Bible based Christian doctrine. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

The church is not a building. The church is actually the people. The church are born again believers.

However it is important to join a good Bible-based church that teaches and preaches the word of God correctly and where you can fellowship and grow with other Christian believers.

It is therefore important to be prayerful and to research with God's guidance for the right church to join.

9. Spend more time associating with good & genuine Christians who will encourage you to grow in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:33)

Whether you're in the workplace, with family, with friends, it is important to ensure that you spend more time with Christian believers who will build and encourage you to grow in Christ.

LIFE QUESTIONS

1. As a Christian how have you changed as a person since the time you became born again?

2. What areas in your life do you still struggle with as a Christian?
3. What have you been doing to ensure that you continue to grow or mature spiritually as a Christian?

Is Grace Ever A License to Sin?

What is grace? The grace of God is when God gives us what we don't deserve. Grace is God's unmerited favor.

Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us that we are saved by grace and not by our own merit or our own works.

Therefore the grace of God is important for our salvation because if we were to attempt to work for our salvation, then we would certainly fail.

Ephesians 2:8 also informs us that salvation is a gift received through faith in Jesus Christ.

However, does the fact that we are saved by grace and not by our own works mean that grace gives us a license to sin? Does the fact that we live under grace mean that we are no longer obligated to obey God's moral laws? If salvation is a gift and if salvation is by grace – then are we free to live as we please?

Antinomianism is the false belief that because God's grace exists, then there are no moral laws which God expects Christians to obey. Therefore the belief is that a Christian can wilfully and rebelliously live a lifestyle of lying, cheating, sexual immorality and all sorts of sins, and still call him/herself a "Christian".

Antinomianism falsely presumes that God no longer cares about sin or our sinful lifestyle. In fact, most

professing Christians who are antinomian, prefer not to speak about sin or to expose sinful behavior.

Antinomianism is based on a deceptive and false understanding regarding the true meaning of the grace of God.

An **antinomian** is one who takes the principle of salvation by faith and God's grace to the point of asserting that Christians are not bound to follow the moral law contained in the 10 Commandments.

The word "antinomian" means *against the law* and this belief system is unbiblical.

Romans 6:1-2 says: *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?*

True grace will compel the Christian to seek after God and to desire to please God. When you are under true grace, you will begin to have a growing hatred towards sin. However when you do sin as a Christian, you will feel a sense of brokenness, godly sorrow and a genuine desire to repent or change.

True grace understands that even though salvation is free for mankind – this same salvation came at a heavy price. It cost the Son of God. It is Jesus Christ who paid for our sins by His blood on the Cross, so that we may be freely saved.

Therefore the true grace of God does not undermine the penalty that Jesus paid for our sins on the Cross.

The true grace of God leads to genuine repentance from sin and will cause a genuine spiritual transformation in the life of the Christian believer.

True grace compels us in Christ to walk away from sin, instead of running towards it.

The true grace of God compels us to hate sin, instead of seeking the pleasures of sin.

The true grace of God will persuade us of our need to live a life of obedience to God.

Romans 6:12-13 says: *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.*

Therefore if we are under grace, then we should not allow sin to “reign in our mortal bodies”.

When we are truly saved by grace, we will not justify our sinful actions. Instead we will repent of them.

When we are truly saved by grace, we will not wilfully and habitually seek the pleasures of sin, but instead we will allow Christ to reign and sanctify us so that we walk in righteousness for the glory of God. Therefore the true grace of God makes us instruments of righteousness and not instruments of sin.

Romans 6:14 says: *For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*

According to Romans 6:14 we should not allow sin to have dominion over us because we are under grace and not under law.

Antinomians have misinterpreted **Romans 6:14** and other verses like it by presuming that since Paul says that we are “not under law”, then it means that we are not obligated to obey the moral laws of God.

Examples of God’s moral laws include most of the 10 commandments with the exception of the Sabbath, such as God’s view of adultery / sexual immorality; God’s view of idolatry; God’s view of stealing, killing, personal relationships etc.

Indeed, whilst we are not saved by the Old Testament laws, this does not mean that Christians should completely ditch God’s moral laws. The genuine Christian who is saved by the true grace of God will be persuaded in Christ to be obedient to the word of God. Even scriptures such as **1 Corinthians 6:9-10** and many others include elements of God’s moral laws and Paul warns people not live wilfully and rebelliously under the control of various sins.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 says: *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor*

thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Therefore, whilst we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9) – it is the fact since Christ lives in us, then Christ will give us the ability to walk in obedience to God's word and to live as instruments for righteousness (Romans 6:13).

The true grace of God teaches us to renounce ungodliness and to live a life that pleases God.

Titus 2:11-12 says: *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,*

Therefore the true grace of God does not give us a license to sin

LIFE QUESTIONS

1. In your personal life, has your individual understanding of God's grace been leading you to a life of godliness and hatred for sin – or has your understanding of grace been leading you more into a life of wilful sinning?

2. Why is the grace of God an important factor in both the life of the unbeliever and the Christian believer?
3. What does it mean in Titus 2:11-12 that the grace of God trains us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions?

How Do I Distinguish Between Good & Evil?

How can we distinguish between good and evil? How can we know the difference between right and wrong? There are many bad and ungodly lifestyles which universally condemned in the past that are today, now considered to be “good” in our culture and society. There was a time when sex before marriage was considered to be inappropriate. However we now live in a world where if a person is still a virgin by age 20 – that person can be ridiculed or humiliated.

What used to be considered a bad lifestyle, is now promoted as being good and as part of our “evolution” as mankind.

There was a time in the past when homosexuality was considered to be a bad and inappropriate lifestyle. However we now live in a world where homosexuality and same-sex marriage are promoted as being a normal part of life. In fact, the view of homosexuality has changed even within various liberal minded churches which openly support homosexuality.

There are various ideologies, doctrines and teachings that were considered to be unthinkable in the past which are now encouraged and promoted within culture and also within religion.

So these days we live in a world where morality is declining at a very fast rate. What used to be good is now

considered to be evil – and what was considered to be bad in society is now promoted as being good.

Isaiah 5:20-21

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!

The world has been turned upside-down. Many people can no longer distinguish between right and wrong or good and evil. Instead the concept of good and evil is viewed through a humanistic or individualistic lens. So what's wrong to you, might be right to someone else – and what's right in your mind, might be wrong to others.

So the question is: **How do we distinguish between right and wrong or good and evil?**

1. Our Standard Must Be The Bible

Our standard for what is good and what is evil must come from God's word – the Bible.

The Bible is God's infallible word to mankind. The Scriptures reveal the nature of God, the plan of God and His values and principles for life.

Therefore our source which helps us distinguish between right and wrong is the Bible. It is NOT our political leaders; it is not a famous celebrity nor is it even our church leaders who can be our source to tell

us what is right or wrong. Instead the ultimate source and final authority in everyone's life is the infallible word of God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.*

Psalms 119:11 - *Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.*

Our knowledge of God's word helps us to discern the things that are sinful from the things that are righteous. When God's word is instilled inside of us then we become equipped to live a life that is pleasing to God.

God therefore gives us the standard through the Bible for what is good and evil in our life. God's word is *also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.*

2. We Must Know God and Have a Relationship with Him

We cannot know the difference between right and wrong without knowing and relating with the ultimate Lawgiver.

Therefore it is not only important to know the Bible – but it is also imperative to know the Author of the Bible.

Therefore when we have a personal relationship with God, combined with knowledge of His word, we will intimately know the nature of God.

As we relate with God personally and intimately we will have a desire to please God and to obey His word.

One of the main reasons why morality is on the decline is because many people do not live to please God. Instead many people ultimately live to please themselves and to fulfill their own fleshly desires.

2 Timothy 3:1-4 says: *But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,* So it's clear that in the last days, man's love for God will grow cold. Mankind will hate the things of God more than ever before. This hatred for God and the things of God leads to a culture where people do not care about what is right or wrong – but people will only care about what pleases their own flesh.

3. We Must Have A Reverential Fear of the Lord

The fear of the Lord refers to having reverence or deep respect for God and His position and authority in our life.

Proverbs 8:13 says: *The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil...*

Therefore if we are to hate what is evil and love what is good, then we need to have the fear of the Lord.

We need to respect God's authority in our life.

We cannot discern between good and evil if we do not respect or fear God.

Proverbs 9:10 says: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.*

Therefore, just as **Proverbs 9:10** explains: if we are to have wisdom to discern between right and wrong, then we must begin by fearing God.

4. We Must Love God

Jesus said in John 14:15: *If you love Me, you will keep my commandments.*

Loving God is therefore essential to keeping God's commandments and to discerning between right and wrong.

The more we love God, the more we will hate what is evil. The more we love God, the more God will put His desires in our heart.

When we love God, we do not create our "own truth". When we love God we do not create our own ideas of what should be right and what should be wrong. Instead our love for God will compel us to obey God's commandments because we understand that God alone is the source and standard through

how we discern the difference between good and evil.

Conclusion

Discerning between good and evil is essential to every individual's life. Without the ability to distinguish the difference between right and wrong, our life will be filled with many mistakes and ungodly choices. It's therefore important for us to always ask God for wisdom in every area of life and to have the understanding that our relationship with God is integral to living a life that is pleasing to God.

LIFE QUESTIONS

1. In every area of your life, what criteria are you using as your ultimate standard to distinguish between right and wrong / good and evil?
2. Are there any specific scriptures, stories or commandments in the Bible which you personally disagree with? Why?
3. Are there any specific issues, topics or areas of your life where it is difficult for you to distinguish between what's right or wrong? What are these areas and why?

How Do I Avoid Spiritual Deception?

We live in a world where spiritual deception is on the increase. With deceptive teachings that have crept into the church such as the prosperity gospel, seed-faith teachings, word of faith theology, new age teachings and many others, it is imperative that people understand the nature of deception and how to avoid spiritual deception.

The Bible warns us that spiritual deception will not only increase but it warns us of a great deception or a “strong delusion” that will happen when the antichrist appears and before Jesus Christ returns (**2 Thessalonians 2:3-4**).

2 Thessalonians 2:8-12 says: *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, 10 and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, 12 in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

When we read **2 Thessalonians 2:8-12** we learn that there is a type of deception that has the following characteristics:

1. This deception is performed through the activity of Satan
2. This deception involves satanic power and false signs and wonders
3. This deception affects those who refuse to love the truth
4. This deception also affects those who have pleasure in unrighteousness

In **Matthew 24:24**, Jesus says: *“For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.”*

Here Jesus is warning of the fact that there will be false believers / teachers who will perform miraculous signs in order to deceive or lead people astray including genuine Christian believers.

The Bible also warns us many times to avoid being deceived by strange teachings, philosophies and doctrines.

For example, Paul says in **Colossians 2:8**: *See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.*

In **2 Corinthians 11:4** it says: *For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you*

receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.

It is therefore important to understand the meaning of deception; how people are deceived and how a Christian can avoid being led astray by the many false prophets and false teachings that plague our world today.

WHAT IS DECEPTION?

Deception can be defined as the manipulation of appearances such that they convey a false reality.

When studying deception, you will discover that with deception, there is always the deceiver and then there is the deceived / victim.

Deception generally depends for its success on keeping intended victims unaware that deception is actually taking place.

- Therefore deception includes concealing and disguising one's true nature and motives from the intended victim. This is why it's important for false teachers to *"disguise themselves as servants of righteousness"* according to **2 Corinthians 11:15**
- Deception includes hypocrisy or pretentious behavior. For example, in **Matthew 23:1-39**, Jesus exposed the hypocrisy and deception of the Pharisees.
- Deception involves information control. This includes both dissimulation (hiding or

withholding information) and simulation (putting out wrong or misleading information).

- Deception may involve the deceiver imitating or appearing as a type of saviour to the intended victim or victims. This is why the Bible warns of false christs (**Matthew 24:24**).
- Deception also includes the deceiver imitating the nature and characteristics of the intended victims so that the victim is unaware of how dangerous the deceiver is or of what kind of danger lies ahead for the intended victim. When the deceiver imitates the victims, the victims assume that they are in good company. An example is when Jesus said in **Matthew 7:15**, *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves."*

HOW TO AVOID SPIRITUAL DECEPTION

The only way we can avoid spiritual deception is in the following ways:

1. We Must Be Genuinely Born Again & Have A Relationship With Jesus Christ

Jesus said that He knows those who belong to Him and that His sheep hear His voice and that no one can steal His sheep (**John 10:27-28**).

It is therefore imperative for a person to be born again and have a genuine relationship with God in order to avoid deception.

Those who hear and obey the voice of Christ spoken in the Bible are able to discern between the voice of the enemy and the voice of God.

However, such discernment is only possible through having a relationship with God.

2. We Must Love The Truth Found in the Word of God

2 Thessalonians 2:10-11 mentions the fact that victims of deception can be those people who do not love the truth but instead they love falsehoods. They do not love the word of God nor do they rightly interpret or *divide the word of truth* (**2 Timothy 2:15**).

2 Timothy 4:3-4 says that there is a time when *people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions*.

This scripture gives us some insight that there are situations in life where deception is not entirely voluntary, but deception is a matter of choice. In other words, people choose to be deceived.

Therefore people love falsehoods because it suits their inner sinful passions and they hate the truth because the truth may speak against their sins or sinful desires.

3. We Must Love Righteousness & Hate Evil

Romans 12:9 says that we must “... *hate what is evil; cling to what is good*”.

In **John 3:19**, Jesus spoke of people who *loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil*.

Avoiding deception in our life, means that we must love the things that God loves and hate the things that God hates. We love light and not darkness. We must therefore pursue righteousness and seek to bear good fruit in our daily life. We must no longer cling to our old sin nature but we must walk in the fear of the Lord.

Colossians 3:5-10 says: *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator.*

4. We Must Hate The World & The Philosophies of this World

James 4:4 tells us that friendship with the world means enmity with God. Therefore we must not love the world and its ideologies.

Romans 12:2 says that we should not be conformed to the standards of this world? But why?

It is because the world's systems, values, principles and practices are against God and His written word.

The world's philosophies and ideologies can easily lead people into deception. Therefore hating the world's philosophies enables us to avoid spiritual deception and being deceived by those who follow the world.

1 John 2:15-17 says: *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world — the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions — is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

5. We Must Walk in the Spirit

In **John 16:13**, Jesus says that one of the purposes of the Holy Spirit in our life is to guide us into all truth. Therefore the Holy Spirit is essential

towards helping us avoid living in deception or being led astray.

The Holy Spirit will help us discern between the truth and falsehoods through the standard of the Scriptures and not the traditions or philosophies of men.

Walking in the Spirit of God enables us walk in God's truth but living according to the flesh or sin nature leads us into spiritual deception.

Galatians 5:16-17 says: *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.*

6. Imitate the Bereans

If we are to avoid spiritual deception, we must imitate the example of the Bereans in **Acts 17:10-11**.

The Berean Christians were said to be noble and they did not accept a culture of being spiritually spoon-fed. Instead the Bereans would study the scriptures for themselves and crosscheck anyone who preached to them. They examined Paul's message in **Acts 17:11** because they wanted to make sure that what he preached was the truth and not a lie.

1 John 4:1 says: *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

Therefore to avoid being deceived by false prophets and false teachings, it is essential that we learn to test and verify all things through the word of God and discern which spirit is really behind the teachings.

Paul warns us in **1 Timothy 4:1-2** that the Holy Spirit warns us of deceiving spirits that will teach people doctrines of demons and will cause people to depart from the true faith and follow demonic teachings.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 says: *Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2 through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared,*

GOD'S WORD IS OUR STANDARD

The Bible is the ultimate standard for our Christian walk. It therefore important that all teachings be measured against the word of God. Jesus Christ Himself used the Scriptures to avoid being deceived by the devils temptations and suggestions (**Matthew 4:1-11**).

LIFE QUESTIONS

1. Since you became a Christian, in what ways have you become a victim of spiritual deception?
2. What specific false teachings or doctrines were you a victim of and how did you realize you were being deceived?
3. What measures have you put in place in your life to avoid spiritual deception in the future?

What is to Pray Without Ceasing?

In **1 Thessalonians 5:17**, Paul says *“Pray without ceasing”*. However, what does he mean?

Does he mean that we should literally pray without stopping?

To pray without ceasing means that as Christians we should always be conscious of the fact that God is always with us in whatever we do and wherever we go.

Therefore because God is omnipresent, then we should always have a culture of speaking to Him in whatever situation we are in or at any moment in our life.

Praying without ceasing reflects that as Christians we have a one-on-one relationship with the living God.

Praying is not a duty or an assignment. Instead prayer is spiritual communication with God with whom we have a relationship with. God is available to us 24 hours a day – 7 days a week.

To pray without ceasing means that God is always approachable and He is always ready to listen to us. God does not give us a timetable as to when or what time we should approach Him.

Hebrews 4:16 says *“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

Therefore praying with ceasing reminds us that we can boldly approach God's throne at any time during our day because His love and grace allows it.

Whenever we are anxious or in need; whenever we are confused or require wisdom – we can pray to God during our moment of need and trust that He will answer us and give us peace.

In **Jeremiah 33:3**, God says *"Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known."*

In **Philippians 4:6-7**, Paul says *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

So no matter what situation or condition we are in, we can pray to God immediately and consistently concerning our problem or circumstance.

James 5:13 says *"Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise."*

1 Thessalonians 5:18 says *"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."*

Therefore in all circumstances in our life we must approach God and have a culture of sharing or communicating our thoughts and experiences to Him.

Praying without ceasing reminds us that God is always ready to forgive us whenever we sin during the day. Whenever we sin or hurt others, God is ready to forgive us when we confess our sins.

1 John 1:9 says *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

Therefore whenever we do something wrong, we must get into the habit of immediately confessing to God so that our conscience is always aware that God is watching and that He knows all that we do in our life. God is all-knowing and He knows every detail of our life.

Praying without ceasing is a reminder that we pray to a God who knows us so well that He knows how many hairs we have on our head. Therefore we cannot hide from Him. However we can approach Him at anytime with our faults and He is just and faithful to forgive us.

Praying without ceasing also reminds us that we should never give up praying and we should trust that God will answer us and lead us in the right direction.

Luke 18:1 says *“And He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.”*

Proverbs 3:5-6 says *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.*

6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths.”

Therefore we must have a culture of always acknowledging God in whatever we do so that He is able to lead and direct us in life.

It is therefore necessary for us to develop a culture of praying without ceasing because God is with us and He will never leave us nor forsake us.

LIFE QUESTIONS

1. How often do you pray or talk to God during the day?
2. Do you talk to God about every area of your life, no matter how big or how small? Why / Why not?
3. Are there some topics in your life which you avoid talking to God about? Why?

What is the Fear of the Lord?

What does it mean to have the fear of the Lord? The word fear has several meanings.

One of the definitions the word fear by **Oxford Living Dictionaries** is that fear is *A mixed feeling of dread and reverence.*

Biblically the fear of the Lord is like two sides of a coin. There is the side of fear that includes dread or terror of God. Then there is the side of fear that includes reverence, respect and honor for God.

A scripture that best describes the fear of the Lord in relation to dread or terror is **Matthew 10:28** where Jesus says *“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

An example of the fear of the Lord which describes reverence and respect of God is **Psalms 112:1** which says *“Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments.”*

Therefore when we fear the Lord we are aware that

1. There are benefits to respecting, loving and obeying God.

2. At the same time the fear of the Lord reminds us that there are consequences to disobeying or disrespecting Him.

When we have the fear of God in us, we are restrained from living a wicked or unrighteous life because we are constantly focused on God's reaction to whatever choices we make in life.

The fear of the Lord also reminds us that there are consequences to bad or wicked choices in life. **Proverbs 10:27** says: *The fear of the LORD prolongs life, But the years of the wicked will be shortened.*

So when we understand that God must be revered and honored, we are also reminded that we must always have a humble and obedient attitude in our daily living. We do not serve ourselves, but we serve a mighty and powerful God who is worthy of all honor and praise.

The Fear of the Lord Leads to Knowledge & Wisdom

The fear of the Lord is therefore a lifestyle where we are constantly reminded that God is everywhere and He watches all that we do – including what we do in secret. The fear of the Lord reminds us that we must constantly be conscious of God's presence and that we must live according to God's values and principles.

Therefore when we have the fear of the Lord, we endeavor to view every choice we make in life through

the eyes of God. **Psalm 25:12** says: *Who is the man who fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way he should choose.*

The fear of the Lord encourages us to seek the wisdom of God rather than to live by our own understanding. The fear of the Lord motivates us to intimately know what please God rather than to seek the pleasures of the flesh.

Proverbs 9:10 says: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.*

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

The Fear of the Lord Attracts God's Favour & Protection

The fear of the Lord leads to God's favour, help, and salvation in our life.

Psalm 115:11 says: *You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield.*

Psalm 147:11 says: *The LORD favors those who fear Him, Those who wait for His lovingkindness.*

Proverbs 19:23 says: *The fear of the LORD leads to life, So that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil.*

The Fear of the Lord Leads to Salvation & Righteous Living

Proverbs 15:16 says: *Better is a little with the fear of the LORD Than great treasure and turmoil with it.*

Malachi 4:2 says *"But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall."*

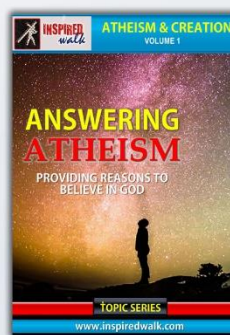
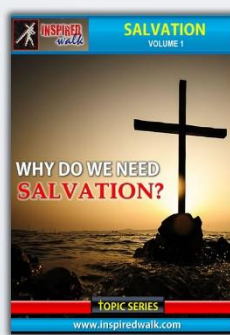
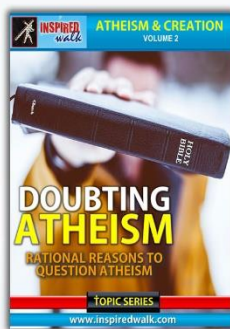
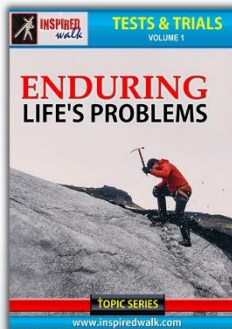
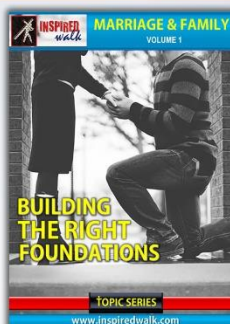
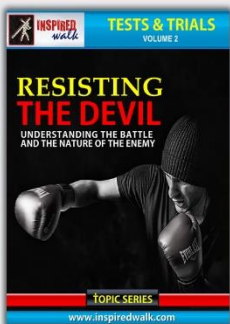
Psalm 85:9 says: *Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, That glory may dwell in our land.*

Ultimately those who fear the Lord will seek Him and seek a genuine relationship with God. The true Christian life cannot be lived without the fear of the Lord and the understanding that God must be revered, respected and honored.

LIFE QUESTIONS

1. What specific areas in your life do you lack the fear of the Lord?
2. In what ways does the fear of the Lord lead us to a life of obedience to God?
3. Why is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom according to Proverbs 9:10

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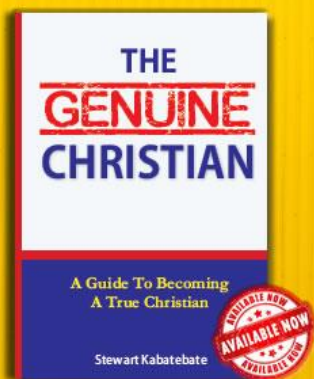
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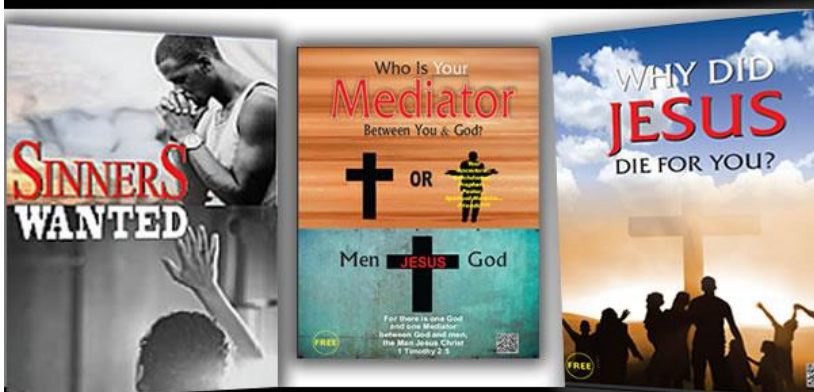
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