

Grow or Die

**10 Day
Devotion**

ISOB
International School
of the Bible

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This devotion book is taken from the ISOB discipleship course Grow or Die. It is intended for two purposes.

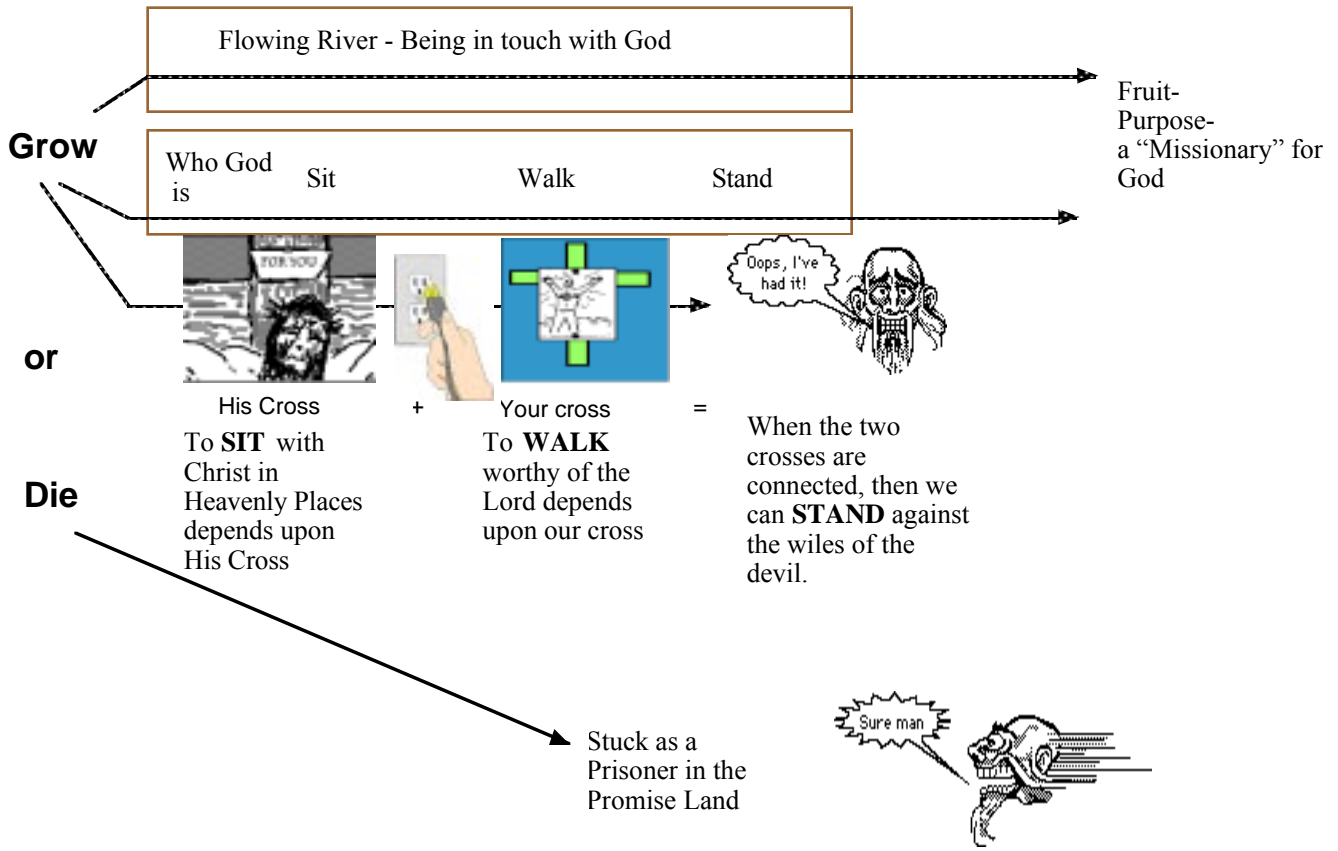
First it can be used by individuals in their daily devotions, and as an introduction to the full Grow or Die Course.

Second, it is designed for team building for groups planning to take short term mission trips.

For more information on the full course and other materials, contact ISOB at ISOB@XC.ORG or (770) 565-8736

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Grow or Die Path of the Believer in Christ



Day 1- Focusing on Jesus

Do you want Jesus to show up on your mission trip, your ministry, your job, your family, your life?

Here is what to do. Give the Word of God first place; lean and rely upon it, and He will show up, or in other words, He will be “glorified”.

The key to having a successful mission is found in Colossians 3. Read Colossians 3:1-17. The theme is:

1. Focus on Jesus: Read Col. 3:1-2 and 16
2. Put off the “old man”. Read Col. 3:5-9
3. Put on the “new man”. Read Col. 3:10,12,13, 17-25

4 The Promise is; Jesus will be **glorified**, or His presence will show up. Glorify is a word that is used when a drape is taken off of a new sculpture for a showing. The real thing is revealed. Read Col. 3:4. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in (the splendor of) His Glory.

Our first short term mission trip was based upon this theme, and the Glory and presence of God was manifested in the lives of each team member and for the entire mission trip.

How can one “focus on Jesus”? How can we set our minds on things above, and set our affections on things above? Through the Word of God!

Our team had devotions in the Word of God for three months prior to the trip. During our trip we met every morning for devotions in the Word for one hour before lifting a finger to do any work. The result was, the Presence of God came, and our trip was a success. God was glorified, He showed up through the Holy Spirit and in the lives of each member, through love and unity. Every bit of work we did had an efficiency and a joy that was caused by the supernatural presence of God. We did more work in a shorter period of time. Everyone who was touched, was not touched by us, but by the presence of God!

The Word of God is compared to the Manna in the Old Testament. The Israelites were ordered in two ways:

1. Not to try to save Manna for the next day; worms would come in and it would rot. Exodus 16:19-20. We cannot live on the Word that we got yesterday.

2. Not to wait until the sun got hot because the Manna would melt. We need to rise early to meet God in His Word and make Him the first priority.

Manna actually means “what is this?”. The Israelites did not give much value to this supernatural bread, yet it sustained them. They could not understand how it worked. So many Christians have the same attitude towards God’s Word.

Day 2-The Word of God

1. According to this Scripture, how much does God value His Word?

Psalms 138:2

2. According to these Scriptures, how do we benefit from God's Word?

Psalms 119:2

Psalms 119:11

3. What does this parable tell us about the Word of God?

(Mark 4:3-11). Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow.

4 And as he sowed, it happened that indeed some fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and ate it up.

5 And another fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth. And it sprang up at once, due to not having deepness of earth.

6 And when the sun rose, it was scorched. And because it had no root, it withered away.

7 And another fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

8 And another fell on good ground and yielded fruit, going up and increasing. And one bore thirty, and one sixty, and one a hundredfold.

9 And He said to them, He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

10 And when He was alone, they who were about Him, with the Twelve, asked Him concerning the parable.

11 And He said to them, To you it is given to know the **mystery** of the kingdom of God. But to those outside, all these things are given in parables

(Mark 4:13-20).13 And He said to them, Do you not know this parable? And how then will you know all parables?

14 The sower sows the Word.

15 And these are those by the wayside, where the Word is sown. And when they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the Word that was sown in their hearts.

16 And these are those likewise being sown on stony places; who, when they hear the Word, immediately receive it with gladness.

17 But they have no root in themselves, but are temporary. Afterward when affliction or persecution arises for the Word's sake, they are immediately offended.

18 And these are those being sown among thorns; such as hear the Word,

19 and the cares of this world, and the deceit of riches, and the lust about other things entering in, choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful.

20 And these are those sown on good ground, who hear the Word and welcome it, and bear fruit, one thirty, one sixty, and one a hundredfold.

4. Read verse 4:11 again. Discuss what you think is the MYSTERY of the Kingdom of God.

Day 3 Bearing Much Fruit **The Theme-Grow or Die!**

A believer in Jesus Christ has only two choices, to Grow as a disciple or to Die, that is to stay stagnant as a prisoner to Satan. Fruit is the result of growth, death is the only other possibility.

Read John 15:8. How important is fruit to God?

Three kinds of fruit.

- 1. Fruit of the Spirit:** Interior fruit. This is the fruit that makes you like Jesus. Read Gal 5:22-23; list the fruit mentioned here.
- 2. Fruit for our lives:** This includes our social, family, health and body, financial, etc. Read 1 Corinthians 9:7.
- 3. Missionary fruit:** Fruit for others; ministry. Read John 4:36.

All fruit has seed inside of it for reproduction. Read Genesis 1:11
Once the interior fruit grows inside of us, it spills out seeds which produce exterior fruit, or ministry to others.

Fruit comes through and by the Word of God (only). Jesus is the Word -
Read John 1:1-2

Read John 15:5 How much can we do without the Word?

Read John 15:7 Where are His Words to abide? Abide means to settle down in a permanent home.

Read John 15:10 How do we abide in Him?

It all has to do with the Word, even abiding in Him is defined as keeping His commands.

How much or how little of the Word we get is up to us. Are you keeping your garden clean? Do you obey so you can abide?

As you studied in the parable of the sower in Mark 4, the Word planted in our heart is God's system for bearing fruit.

Another principle for fruit bearing is found in John 15:16 **Read-** Jesus wants our fruit to last. He said that He ordained us. Ordained is a word that means to lay horizontal, prostrate and passive. I believe this refers to our natural "flesh" abilities. He lays us out flat, so that the Word will do the work! The "hard things" we go through in

life are meant to “lay us out” for fruit bearing! This insures that the fruit is from His power and not our efforts.

Read John 15:18-27. Jesus warns us that part of the fruit bearing process will be persecution and suffering, but that the Holy Spirit will be there as our comforter. Have you experienced this?

Seeds need nourishment. They need certain water and minerals. We need to add to the seed sown. There is a process within which a believer in Jesus Christ grows. To understand that process and path, and to cooperate with God in it, will insure that the believer will Grow.

To be ignorant, and or to refuse to cooperate with God, will certainly render the believer a **“Prisoner in the Promise Land”**.

The Israelites made it to the Promise Land. In the Book of Judges, the people of God, even though they were in covenant with God, were prisoners to their enemies. Gideon and his people are our examples of prisoners getting free.

In the same way, God’s people today are prisoners to fear, guilt, addictions, condemnation, low self esteem, pride and many other spiritual enemies.

The way to avoid staying in prison, is to Grow! Grow through the process Jesus prescribes for us in John 15.

The end of the growth process is **Fruit. Fruit** is a result of abiding in the vine which will develop the **“missionary”** within each believer. Look at the Book of Revelation, the end result after all the battles is **Fruit**.

The path of growth is fellowship with God on a daily basis within the process Jesus described in John 15.

Day 4 - Prisoners in the Promise Land

If Satan can keep us ignorant of the fullness of the Cross of Jesus, and of our responsibility of taking up our cross, then he can keep us as Prisoners in the Promise land.

Judges 6: Lets look at Gideon as an example of a child of God, in the Promise Land, but in bondage as a “prisoner”. His people were in bondage to poverty due to the past 200 years of idol worship.

Read Judges 6:1-11- Gideon was working hard at making life work with his own power, but he ended up with failure, low self esteem and hopelessness. He was hiding in his wine vat underground in order to avoid the Midianites who would come in hordes and wipe out the crops and steal the livestock. No matter how hard he and his people tried, they could not overcome the enemy. The Midianites were those enemies that beat down God’s pastures and robbed the seed. In the same way today’s Midianites demons rob the Word of God. Notice that they waited until Israel had sown their crops, then they swarmed down to destroy them. They came as grasshoppers. Israel was greatly impoverished.

How did Gideon get free and become a fruit bearer for God?

1 God spoke to the Israelites. Read-6:8 In God's mercy, He heard the cries of the Israelites and sent a prophet. His mercy endures forever. The prophet told the Israelites that God was their God, He had delivered them from bondage once and that the reason they were in bondage again (this time in their own Promise Land) is that they did not obey the voice of God (The Word of God). If we do not LIVE on the Word of God daily, we will surely become slaves and prisoners to our enemies. There is no way around it.

2. God spoke to Gideon personally. Read-6:12 The angel of the Lord, the personal representative of God came to Gideon. This could have been an Old Testament appearance of Jesus. He called Gideon a “Mighty Man of Valor”. Why did He use these words to someone who was acting like a coward, who had no self esteem and was threshing wheat in hiding so that his enemies could not spot him? God always deals with us this way, He sees what we will become. He calls those things that be not as though they are Romans 4:17. He looks not at what we are, but at what we can be in Him. These are faith words talking.

3. Gideon was honest with God, he told him just how he felt; **Read-6:13** "If God is with us, then why are we suffering so much?" A lot of people ask this question. "If God is love, why do good people suffer?". If I have been serving God, then why am I going through this tough time now?" He asked God “where are all the miracles that you performed with our forefathers in Egypt?” He felt forsaken by God.

4. God revealed Himself to Gideon as the covenant making God - Read -6:18-21 He showed Gideon Who He is, and He showed Gideon his real position as a covenant partner with God. So often God answers our questions with a revelation of Who He is!

5. Gideon brought his best to God. Read 6:19 Gideon took up his cross. The price of the goat and home baked bread and soup that Gideon brought was extreme for someone in poverty circumstances.

6. Gideon saw the Cross of Jesus It could have just been an expensive meal, but God turned it into a covenant meal. In Leviticus 2:1 the meat or meal offering

was to be burnt on the altar by the priest. The fact that the Angel of The Lord burned up Gideon's offering with the tip of His staff, was a sign of the covenant. I believe in Gideon's Hebrew mind, he saw a blood covenant that day between him and God. He saw God exchange power, name and circumstances with him.

The Blood Covenant changes your family and your name, and, what your inheritance is. Gideon got God's name, God got Gideon's name **Mighty Man of Valor**: was the Lord's name, defeated weak one was Gideon's name; they swapped.

7. Gideon could hear God speak even better now. Read-6:22 This was Gideon's main attribute, he took the time to build a relationship and continued to hear God speak.

8. He had the peace of God, because of the Cross. Read-6:23-24 (Jehovah-shalom)

9. Gideon had to tear down family idols. After the Cross of Jesus we need to tear down the altars -Idolatry is based upon one simple thing; SELF LOVE. This is more of taking up our cross. **Read-6:25-32.** Idols are not as obvious today as they were in Old Testament times. An idol is anything that makes you walk in the flesh and not in the Spirit. The most accurate test is what or whom do you worship? The most accurate test for worship is whom do you obey, your reasoning, your flesh, another person, or the Spirit of God and the Word of God? Walking in the flesh is obeying your flesh (natural desire) and walking in the Spirit is obeying the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. To pull down idols, one must be in contact with the Word of God and the Holy Spirit so one can cease obeying their natural desires.

10. After tearing down the idols, Gideon was clothed [possessed] with the Spirit of God: Read-6:34- He had the power of God. Gideon had the power to obey God and stop obeying the reasoning and natural circumstances in his life. The first thing that happened is that the enemy attacked. When we tear down the spiritual idols, we can expect a manifestation of the battle in the natural.

11. He learned to fellowship with God at a very strong level of trust in spite of circumstances (perhaps even because of them). -6:36-40

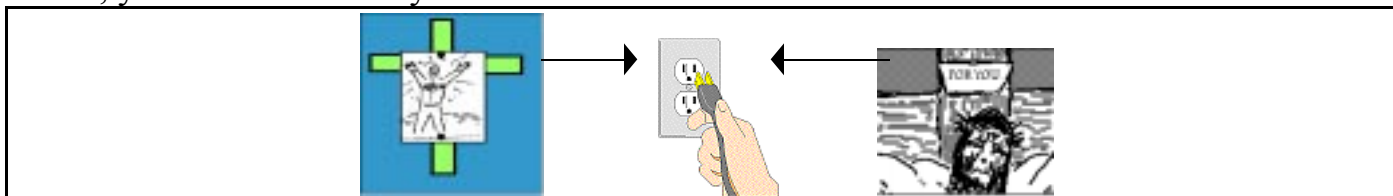
12. Gideon bore fruit for the Kingdom of God. He became one of history's greatest deliverers of God's people. God turned a defeated man with hopeless circumstances into a great historic victory because of two things: 1. The Cross, and 2. Gideon's appreciation of the Cross to the extent he would go all out for God and make Him the focus of all of his life, not just first or second place, and Gideon's cooperation to tear down idols and strongholds.

In spite of the fact that Gideon had been subject to family sins, curses, and the worshipping of idols, The Angel of the Lord brought the Cross on the scene with the sacrifice, and was saying " There is no way out for you sonny boy, except that I take on the curse and sin that you have coming to you. By virtue of this covenant, I am taking your sin, your family curses, your generational sins passed down, and results of idol worship both by you and your ancestors. I will take your name which is "cursed by God" and you will be called by My Name, O' Mighty Man of Valor".

Day 5 - The Presence of God (Also use as a daily devotion)

Connecting the Crosses Coming into The Presence of God

We need to experience the presence of God in our daily life. We need to know that our relationship with Him is based upon a blood covenant with Jesus. (John 6:53). Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.



There are always two crosses that must connect to make a blood covenant

We know about the Cross of Jesus, how He died, was buried and was resurrected. But how do we take up our cross? (Luke 9:23-24) Then he said to them all: If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.

Here is the path prescribed in the Old Testament for taking up your cross. It was a pattern given to the priests who worshipped in the Tabernacle.

**First the Cross of Jesus
Look at the check list on page 3.
for a check up.**

The blood covenant swaps everything that we have that is bad for everything that God has that is good. We cannot have forgiveness of sins without making Jesus Lord; Romans

10:9-10.

Start out today by being honest with Jesus. 1 John 1:9 says If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

A big part of taking up your cross is being GUT LEVEL HONEST with God. You need to be totally transparent and tell Him everything. Take time to pour out your heart to him as you would your best friend! **You need to walk in love, and when you blow it, run to God to get cleansed. Look at Appendix A and give yourself an honest evaluation.**

Next - The Word of God

This is the time to spend some time in The Word of God. The Word is alive, it is supernatural, it will come alive if you have the intention of obeying it. Actually the Word is not an it, it is Him. John 1:1-2 says that Jesus is the Word of God. When you listen to the Word you are listening to Jesus.

Next - Thanksgiving

Now that you have been in the Word, you know you are right with God, Satan is judged, you have a lot to be thankful for.

Even if you do not have things around you to be thankful for, try to find some. If you cannot, just thank Him for what the Word says. Thank Him because the Word says to, and because you know you have victory if you hang on. Thank Him for the Promises that He made to you that have not come into your life as yet.

Next give Him your will and desire. Give Him complete Lordship and control even over your desires

Exchange the desires of your heart (even if they may be good) for God's plan or will for your life. Lay down your wants desires and plans and ask God for His. Tell Him that He can do whatever He wants with your life.

Trust Him that even if you do not know what He is going to bring into your life, that if He brings it, it will be good. Repent from your ways of trying to control and manipulate your life. Turn it over to Him.

Next your mind

Exchange your old thoughts for the mind of Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:4-6 The warfare is in our mind. Demons constantly accuse us and bombard our minds with half-truths. Isaiah 11 tells us that God replaces our natural intellect with that of the Holy Spirit: i.e. Spirit of The Lord, Knowledge, Counsel, Wisdom, Understanding, Might, Fear of the Lord.

We need to get our mind renewed by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, Romans 12:2. Sometimes our intellect does not know how to pray, Romans 8:26 says we should use our prayer language to pray God's perfect will. Every time you use your prayer language, you are praying out God's Word and God's will. Your speech center dominates the entire brain, so your mind is being renewed and smoothed out to tell your flesh to conform to God's will.

Now your emotions

Exchange your old emotions induced by your flesh and the World, for God's fruit of peace, joy, love, hope, etc.

This is the place of a sacrifice of praise. Read Psalms 145-150 out loud if you don't *feel* the praise in your heart. God is seeking those who worship Him in Spirit and in Truth John 5. From this point of praise, God will seek you and desire your company!

Give Him those emotions that you have been holding back; perhaps your tears, maybe the raising of your hands, or perhaps just revealing to Him your true emotions. Go ahead, no one is looking except Him!

Now you are in His presence

Just take time to enjoy Him, His word, His company. You may feel like praying for others now. You may feel just like worshipping Him. In here you realize His love, you realize that He

is IN you not just with you. You realize that it is His grace that makes you clean. In here you have peace no matter what is going on around you!

Appendix F

A Spiritual Check up.

- **Love** - Are you treating others with the unconditional love of God?
- **Selfishness** - Putting your own needs over the needs of others. Love is concerned with the welfare of the other person. Are you more concerned with yourself and how you feel?
- **Stealing** - Can you remember taking money for property that was not yours?
- **Cheating** - Did you get anything from anyone unfairly?
- **Lying** - Any designed form of deception.
- **Slander** - Speaking evil of someone. You do not have to lie to slander. Have you spoken about others without love?
- **Immorality** - Are you guilty of stirring up desires that you could not righteously feed? Sexual vice, all impurity, even against your own body.
- **Drunkenness**, drugs sorcery, carousing.
- **Foul or polluted language**, evil words, unwholesome or worthless talk. Filthiness, foolish, silly and corrupt talk.
- **Envy** - Behind the talk of other's failures and faults usually lurks envy.
- **Ingratitude** - How many times have others done things for you that you are not grateful for?
- **Anger** - Have you been bad-tampered?
- **Cursing** - Have you used gutter language?
- **Course jesting**- Needless frivolity, silly talk. Talking and acting like a moron. Jests and practical jokes that tend to undermine the sacred and precious standards of life. Have you made fun of an ethnic group or a certain part of the world, a state or region in your country, or some politician? Ethnic and regional jokes have no place in holiness.
- **Hardness** - Did you fight back, murmur or return evil for evil?
- **Habits** - Have you continually over-indulged natural appetites; how about your eating habits?
- **Halfheartedness** - Can you remember times when you deliberately shirked your full share of responsibility?
- **Hindrance** - Have you destroyed another's confidence in you by needlessly taking up their time? Have you betrayed another's confidence in you?
- **Hypocrisy** - Did the life you lived before some people make all you said of Christ and His gospel a lie?
- **Broken Vows** - Is there a vow you made to God that you have not kept?
- **Unforgiveness** - Are you holding any resentment against anyone, friend or foe?
- **Divisions**, clicks, the party spirit of having differing groups.
- **Lustful**, rich wasteful living, greediness. Overspending on shopping, Wasting time.
- **Not treating** wives, husbands, children and parents with love and honor.
- **Not being content**, being jealous of what others have and you do not have.
- **Idolatry** - Any desire in your life above your desire for God.
- **Strife** - Have you stirred up strife by unneeded words?
- **Witchcraft** - Manipulating another to meet your needs.

- **Rebellion to authority** - Boss, teacher, parent, spiritual leader, etc.
- **Love of the World** - Includes: Sins of the eyes - What are you reading or watching? Lust of the flesh - What are you desiring? Pride of life - What part of your life do you think you can handle without God being involved? - Pretending in thought or life to be more or less than you really ARE.
- **Pride** is the greatest sin of all. Examine these areas:
 - Do you focus on the failure of others or are you concerned with your own sense of spiritual need?
 - Are you self-righteous and critical or compassionate and forgiving, looking for the best in others?
 - Do you look down on others or esteem all others better than yourself?
 - Are you independent and self-sufficient or dependent, recognizing your need for others?
 - Must you maintain control or do you surrender control?
 - Do you have to prove you are correct, or are you willing to yield the right to be correct?
 - Do you have a demanding spirit or a giving spirit?
 - Do you desire to be served or are you motivated to serve others?
 - Do you desire to be promoted or are you happy when others are promoted?
 - Do you need to receive the credit or are you happy when others are recognized?
 - Do you feel confident in how much you know or are you humbled by how much you have yet to learn?
 - Are you self-conscious or not concerned with yourself at all?
 - Do you keep people at arm's length or do you risk getting close to others. Are you willing to take the risk of loving intimately?
 - Are you quick to blame others or do you accept responsibility?
 - Are you unapproachable or easy to be entreated?
 - Are you defensive when criticized or receive criticism with a humble and open heart?
 - Are you concerned with being respected or being real?
 - Are you concerned about what others think or what God thinks?
 - Do you work to maintain your image or do you die to your reputation?
 - Do you find it difficult to share your spiritual needs with others or are you willing to be open and transparent?
 - Do you try to hide your sin or are you willing to be exposed when you are wrong?
 - Do you have a hard time saying, "I was wrong, will you please forgive me?"
 - When confessing sin, do you deal in generalities or do you deal in specifics?
 - Are you remorseful over your sin when you get caught or are you grieved over your sin and quick to repent?
 - When there is a misunderstanding or conflict, do you wait for others to come and ask forgiveness or do you take the initiative?
 - Do you compare yourself with others and feel deserving of honor or do you compare yourself to the holiness of God and feel a desperate need for mercy?
 - Do you think you have little or nothing to repent for or do you have a continual attitude of repentance.
 - Do you think that everyone else needs revival or do you continually sense a need for a fresh encounter with the filling of the Holy Spirit?
 - Are you proud when you are around a new Christian or do you delight in his/her zeal? Are you willing to learn from them?
 - Are you intimidated when you are around a more mature Christian, or are you hungry to learn from his/her experience?

SURGERY NEEDED?

If the Holy Spirit shows us sin, we must go back to the place where the Lord first met us. It is the cross again. We see the Lord Jesus once crucified, for that sin, bearing our penalty.

A line of blood trickles down from The Cross' splintered base. The sight should shock and grieve us because we see the awfulness of God's judgment. This is not the law representing God Who is armed with a holy wrath and determined to punish the sinner without hope or help. Instead it is LOVE demonstrated in the infinite cost and sacrifice God is willing to give in order to save us from sin. It is the most terribly beautiful picture of the Gospel, showing God's hatred for sin and heartbreak over man's selfishness. Our sin nails Jesus to the cross all over again. We tear open His wounds and make His redemption a mockery. Well might "Heaven put on the robes of mourning and Hell hold a jubilee." All God's care and love and DARE we still sin?

Walk out into the light of reality. Drop your self-deceit and face this sin for what it really is. Turn from it, from your heart. Take sides with God against it. Purpose in your heart NEVER to go back into that sin again.

"Oh God, You know my foolishness, and my sin is not hid from You...for Your Name's sake, pardon my iniquity, for it is great...If you, Lord, would mark iniquities, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared" (Ps. 69:5; 25:11; 130:3-4).

Will you do this now? Will you go to your gracious and loving Father as a little child and humbly ask His forgiveness?

"If we confess our sins, He is FAITHFUL and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"(I John. 1:9). The LORD is merciful and gracious...He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities; For as the heaven is above the earth, so great is His mercy towards them that fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:12).

CONFESSION

Confession is humbling yourself and admitting your wrong. Restitution is the willingness to pay back or restore wherever possible. If you are now forgiven before the Lord, are you ready to ask Him for the courage to confess and restore to others you have wronged? Your conscience must be clean before both God AND man if you want to know true freedom. You cannot stand for God with a dirty past in others eyes. Memories of your failure in their eyes will drive you deeper into bondage each time you remember them. If you have not asked their forgiveness, your guilt will kill your faith and rob you of direction and purpose. You will not, of course, have to confess every sin to everyone; just the sins committed against the ones you know you have wronged. The RULE: The circle of CONFESSION should only go as far as the circle of COMMITTAL. Those sins against God alone, you have left with His loving forgetfulness (Ps. 103:8-13; Is. 43:25; Jer. 31:34). Those against God and man must be put right with BOTH God and the person(s) wronged.

Portions of this Appendix F were taken from Winkie Pratney's tracts published on the WWW.

Day 6 - Who God is

The first thing we need to know about God is that He is the Creator!

Not only is He the Creator, but by Him, all things still exist and are held together. Look up these Scriptures and discuss what they say about Who God is as Creator. Colossians 1:16-17- Hebrews 11:3 - Hebrews 1:2

Now look up these Scriptures and discuss what they say about Who God is.

1. He is uncreated and eternal. John 1:1-3 and Genesis 21:33
2. He is all powerful. Luke 1:37
3. He is all knowing. Ps 147:5
4. He is ever present Jer 23:23-24
5. He is a spiritual being John 4:24
6. He is triune, three persons in one. God the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. Matthew 3:16-17 John 1:1-14, John 14:9-20
7. He is infinite. (Isaiah 40:12-13).
8. His nature is love. Ephesians 2:1-7, 1 John 3:1, 1 John 4:9-10
God does not HAVE love, He IS love. God loves us with an unconditional love. His love does not depend upon how good or bad we are. While we were dead in sins He loved us. A dead man cannot do anything but receive life! Humans love with conditions. "If you are good enough, or do what I tell you, then I will love you", we say. Not God! He loves just because He IS love. That is called AGAPE. Unconditional love.
9. His character is the fruit of the Spirit described in Galatians 5:22-23
10. He never changes. His emotions do not run hot and cold like humans. Hebrews 13:8,
James 1:17 Describes a sun dial shadow that turns as the sun moves during the day. But James says with Jesus, there is NO shadow of turning. In other words, He is always shining at high noon! You can depend upon Him.
11. Jesus is God. John 1:1-2&14
12. Jesus is the Word John 1:1-2&14
13. Jesus was born of a virgin Luke 1:26-38. Romans 1:3-4 states this: - regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.
Can you imagine asking the teenager Jesus, who are your parents? Jesus might say "well you see on my mamma's side, I am from the family of David, but on my Dad's side, well, I AM".
14. The Holy Spirit is God. John 14:16--23

Day 7 - Sitting With Christ

Ephesians 2:5-6, 5 (even when we were dead in sins) has made us alive together with Christ (by grace you are saved), and has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,

According to this verse, are we are SITTING with Christ in the heavenlies; or are we going to after we die and go to Heaven?



To **SIT** with Christ in Heavenly Places depends upon His Cross.

Look again at Ephesians 2:5; it says that we were dead in our sins. Can a dead man do anything? No way, a dead man does not need to learn to walk or stand, or to throw away bad habits, a dead man needs LIFE ! A dead man cannot give himself life, he cannot even try. It took God through Christ to give us life.

We need to know who we are before we can live like we should. These next few lessons on SIT, WALK and STAND are inspired by Watchman Nee's book by the same title. It is based upon three verses in Ephesians.

Ephesians 2:6 and has raised us up together and made us **sit** together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you **walk** worthy of the calling with which you are called,

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to **stand** against the wiles of the devil.

We are living in a spiritual war and we need to **STAND** against the enemy, but we cannot stand unless we are **WALKING** worthy of the Lord, and one cannot walk (as hard as he may try) unless he knows who he is in Christ, that he is **SITTING** in the heavenlies already.

First let's define sit in terms of the spiritual world.

Our legs are holding us when we stand, but when we sit we are resting our weight on the chair. It is a matter of effort or rest. We either become weary or rested. We rest our entire weight on Jesus, our very selves, our very future.

In creation God did everything before He created us. Adam began his life with the Sabbath. What did man have to with the creation in the first 6 days? How much help did God receive from Adam in creating the heavens and the earth? What was Adam's first day like? It was a day of rest. Read Genesis 1. God created everything in 5 days, then He created man on the 6th day. Man did not help God. The first day that man awakened to was the 7th day, which was the day of rest. Only after Adam was totally provided for did he go to work.

**God worked, then rested.
Man rests, then works.**

This is the Gospel! God completed the work of redemption. He purchased us from bondage to sin and Satan and gave us a new nature, a new birth which implanted the very life and character of God inside of us. We could do nothing to earn this. All we can do is enter in by faith when we hear about the offer.

You may or may not feel different, but your feelings are not reliable. You need to become accustomed to believing God's Word and put your emotions and feelings aside. Some wonderful and beautiful events have taken place in the life of a Christian, and the enemy, Satan will use your old sense ruled mind to hide those facts from you. They are facts, they can be relied on. When we begin to take the Word of God as final authority, we will begin to see the truth. Final authority is not circumstances, it is not your emotions, it is God's Word. Take a journey into the Word of God to see who you are!

There is a legal side and an experiential side to who we are. When we submitted to Jesus as Lord, and when the Word of God was planted in your heart by God, you entered into the death and resurrection of Jesus. You experienced the new birth. 1 Peter 1:23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the living word of God, and abiding forever.

Legally, we have been crucified with Christ according to Galatians 2:20 and Romans 6:6. 20 Galatians 2:20 - I have been crucified with Christ, and I live; yet no longer I, but Christ lives in me. And that life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith toward the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself on my behalf.

But we may not be experiencing that reality as yet. This is where so many new believers get on the wrong track. Just because they are not experiencing the truth in the Word, or worse, they may be experiencing the opposite of what the Word says, they get discouraged and quit believing. In the world, seeing is believing, but with God, you must believe before you will ever see.

How did this happen?

Jesus became your sin and you became His righteousness

2 Corinthians 5:21 For He has made Him who knew no sin, *to be* sin for us, that we might become *the* righteousness of God in Him.

A blood covenant has been applied to your life. A great exchange has taken place between you and Jesus Christ. On the cross, He took every bad and negative thing in your life. At the resurrection He gave you every positive thing in the nature of God Almighty! He begot you as sons and daughters and seated you with Him in a realm FAR above all your enemies. Satan, your enemy, will do all in his power to steal this from you with lies. But if you know the truth, and stand on the truth, you will be a winner!

Look up the following Scriptures and discuss/or write down the truth contained in each Scripture.

Ephesians 2:12,

Ephesians 2:1

Ephesians 2:6

2 Peter 1:4

John 10:10

Colossians 1:14

Ephesians 1:7

2 Corinthians 5:17

2 Corinthians 5:21

Romans 3:21-22

Romans 4:3-9

Romans 6:4-10

Hebrews 2:14

Hebrews 10:19-20

Hebrews 9:12

<p>If this is true, why is life still beating me up? Why don't I feel the way these Scriptures say ?</p>

I am so glad you asked. That is an important question. My friend it took years to get a sin and curse consciousness, and it will take some time to get your mind renewed to the truth. From Satan's point of view he is trying to steal the seed of the Word out of your heart. If he puts enough pressure on you with circumstances and guilt, you will stop believing. From God's point of view, He is testing you. He wants to develop character in you. Not the kind of test that teachers give, pass or fail, but testing as it is used in refining gold. The word test means to put into a fire and burn off the impurities. God is interested in seeing your faithfulness in adversity; He wants to know if you will believe His Word even if things look just the opposite.

Read 1 Peter 1:6-7. What does it say about testing and trials?

The proof of whether or not you believe is NOT how you feel. The proof is what will come out of your mouth from the abundance of your heart. - Luke 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth the good. And an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth the evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his **mouth speaks**.

The only way to overcome and get healed from things like, sin, fear, guilt, addictions, feeling unworthy, feeling like a failure, etc. is to accept these facts. When we

know for sure, that God loves us, that we belong to Him, that He has made us a new creation and old things have passed away, when we know that our new identity is in Christ, that we have been purchased from slavery and been given the choice to accept the absolute Lordship, authority and care of God, that is when we begin the process of overcoming all the bad things in our life.



The easiest thing to remember is the Cross. The Cross of Jesus took everything that is bad in our life, and that comes into our life, and transforms it into a blessing.

Don't be a chicken you are an eagle!

One day an eagle's egg fell from its nest and rolled into a chicken pen. The eagle was born with the chickens and acted like a chicken. But it kept seeing a difference as it grew. No one was there to tell it that it was not a chicken, but an eagle.

When storms came, the eagle would rush off to the chicken house with the rest of the chickens, running for cover. But the eagle always looked over his shoulder and up, and he saw these other strange birds on the cliff. They were not afraid, they were not running. They were standing with their wings locked into special sockets (that make them like a wing welded to the fuselage of an airplane), they gazed right into the storm even though it was still miles away. They waited and waited then, bang! The storm hit them but instead of hurting them all it did was make them soar. They went straight up into the air, up to 30,000 feet above the storm into clear air. The eagle would say to himself, "oh man look at those guys, I wish I were like them".

One day he looked UP, and saw an eagle flying and soaring high with a storm. All of the sudden he knew, "I am not a chicken, I am an eagle. Why should I run?". He climbed the hill, locked his wings, then he took off and soared!

My friend, you are not a mere human, you are not a chicken. You are made to soar in the heavenlies with Christ. Look up!

Now remember the parable of the sower in Mark 4 (read it). Satan comes to steal the seed of the Word of God sown in your heart. Today a seed of who you are was sown. Tomorrow, stand fast if discouragement comes through some circumstance. The Word is true! Circumstances come and go.

Day 8 Walking with Christ

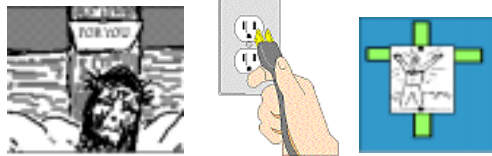
Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you **walk** worthy of the calling with which you are called,



To **WALK** worthy of the Lord depends upon our cross. Luke 9:23 And He said to all, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and **take up his cross** daily and follow Me.

In the Sit lesson we learned what Christ did for us, all by grace. However the Christian life does not end there. Our Christian walk is a relationship between two persons, God and us. A relationship does not come instantly, it requires much time. Therein lies the problem with most Christians, they do not wish to take time, to give their priority to keeping their relationship living and vital with God.

Read Romans 12:1-2. What are some of our daily responsibilities?



Remember, our relationship with God is a blood covenant. It takes two parties, two deaths to make it valid.

We need to spend time in God's Word so that our minds will be renewed, and so that He may plant His will into our hearts by the seed of the Word. We must spend time communicating with the Holy Spirit, Who is taking Jesus' place here on earth. We must spend time fellowshiping with the Father. We must spend time confessing our sins, faults, frustrations and failures to Jesus so that He may cleanse us.

The word believe has two parts to its meaning. First it means to believe in our hearts, and then it means to take action. Faith without works is dead. **Read** James 2:26.

Our works do not produce faith or favor with God, but our faith is supposed to produce works. In other words, the evidence that we really have faith is that we obey and do the thing required of us, the action that God is requesting of us. This is what we are calling WALK. Another way of putting it is **that we are to do the works of faith.**

Our life with Christ is a partnership. We need to hear from Him, then we need to obey. Some Christians get stuck and get into a spiritual prison because they do not wish to WALK. They do not realize that God gave us a free will to obey or not obey. They do not realize that we are under God's authority as Lord. But we are under His authority **ONLY** because we choose to put ourselves there, He does not control us.

We do have responsibilities as a believer. What Christ did needs what we can do in response.

Walking in the Spirit

Read Galatians 5:16 How do we avoid the lusts of the flesh?

Read Romans 8:1 Who are those people who do not have condemnation?

Walking in the Spirit is a simple but different way to live. It is a process that goes like this:

1. You continue to look into the Word of God and ask God to show you how to live. Ask Him, and seek out what His standards are for your life. For instance, it says to not lie, to treat your wife with love, to submit to your husband, to treat your children with kindness, to not get drunk, don't be selfish, don't be angry, etc.
2. You determine to live the way God wants you to, knowing that only God in you can walk a life worthy of the Lord.
3. When you fail, and you will, be totally honest with yourself, God and others around you. Repent (turn) quickly. The promise is that when we repent (turn) that the Kingdom of God is at hand, or, within our reach.
4. Confess your sin to God. 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
5. Confess what the Word of God says about your situation in a positive way, i.e., Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ, and I live; yet no longer I, but Christ lives in me. And that life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith toward the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself on my behalf.
6. As you continue to live this way, pretty soon those old habits and old sinful ways begin to disappear. The grace of God takes over and gives you the character of God instead of your old character.
7. Grace kicks in for your sin. If you sin, you are sowing bad seed that will bring bad things into your life

Galatians 6:7-9 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that he also will reap. For he sowing to his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh. But he sowing to the Spirit will reap life everlasting from the Spirit. But we should not lose heart in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not faint.

But while you walk in the Spirit, God gives you grace for your mistakes, and takes the penalty of the sin that you would normally suffer, and gives you a blessing that you do not deserve.

We cannot stand without the walk. Our enemy will “eat our lunch”

Spiritual warfare can only be successful as a result of our “walk”. If you examine Psalm 91, all the promises of victory in warfare are dependent upon abiding in the Secret Place of the Most High. That means being in His presence, and adapting and putting on His character. If we attempt to make it in life with our old character, we have already lost the spiritual war. However if we are walking in God's character, then the enemy only

sees Jesus and not us. Remember, the enemy has no place in Jesus. Jesus already defeated Satan.

Authority is really the main issue

One very important reason to walk worthy of the Lord is that it will defeat Satan in your life. We hear a lot of talk about Satan being defeated by Jesus at the Cross. Indeed in a very real way he was, but in another way he was not. Satan was not put out of commission, he was not annihilated, nor blown up as with a bomb in a war. All you have to do is look around this world and you will see that Satan is alive and active.

The defeat was just this. That mankind was under the authority of Satan and Jesus made a way for us to escape that authority by submitting to His authority. When we are under the Lordship or authority of Jesus, we are safe from Satan and his kingdom. We have “repented” and have found the Kingdom of God. When we are not under the authority of Jesus, His Word and the Holy Spirit, we are, by default, under the authority of Satan and his kingdom.

The essence of sin is rebellion. Mankind does not by nature wish to submit to authority. But mankind does not understand that man **MUST** be under someone’s authority; he was created not to be his own master. By default we will indeed be under someone’s authority. We must choose; if we do not choose, we are under Satan’s authority.

I know people, even Christians, who don’t mind living by rules and regulations, but tell them to obey a living being, and they go crazy and rebel. The only way to be under the authority of this Living Being God, is to spend a lot of time with Him finding out what He wants. If my boss tells me to do a task and when it is finished come report to him for further orders, I better do just that. If I wait for him to come find me, I have not truly submitted to his authority. I need to report for duty every time the last task is finished and find out what he is thinking.

God is not going to hit you with a big stick to get you to submit. Life and Satan have a big enough stick, so that when we try to make it on our own, we feel that pain.

The reason we walk worthy of the Lord is not only to please Him our best and closest friend, but to keep ourselves under the wings of His protection.

Romans 10:9 Because if you confess the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. This is clear, if you confess, or agree that Jesus is your Lord, and know for a fact that He is alive to carry out that Lordship, you shall be delivered from danger!

Day 9 - Standing against the wiles of the Devil

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Now that we understand Sitting (who we are in Christ), and Walking (living a life worthy of the Lord), we are prepared for spiritual conflict, which is called Standing



His Cross +
Sit

+ Your cross
Walking and Standing

=

=
Victory

No Victory without Conflict

We must recognize that we dwell in an enemy's territory. What was revealed to the apostle in his heavenly vision must hold good in our daily lives. Satan has been cast down into the earth; he has great wrath because he has but a short time. He cannot now reach the glorified Jesus, but seeks to reach Him by attacking His people. We must live always under the holy consciousness that we are watched, every moment, by an enemy of unimaginable cunning and power who is unwearied in his endeavor to bring us entirely, or even partially-however little it may be under his authority. He is literally the prince of this world. All that is in the world is ready to serve him, and he knows how to make use of it in his attempts to lead the church to be unfaithful to her Lord, and to inspire her with his spirit, the spirit of the world.

He makes use not only of temptations to what is commonly esteemed to be sin, but he knows how to gain an entrance into our earthly engagements and businesses-in the seeking for our daily bread and necessary money, in our politics, in our commercial combinations, in our literature and science, in our knowledge, and all things-so to make all that is lawful in itself into a tool to forward his devilish deceptions. (quote from Andrew Murray in his book *The Power of The Blood of Jesus* , chapter 9)

How does the enemy work?

Jesus was teaching His disciples in Mark chapter 4. He told them that **THE** mystery of the Kingdom of God was contained in this parable. He asked them in verse 13 - And He said to them, Do you not know this parable? And how then will you know all parables? Jesus used this very visible agricultural example of seed being sown to explain and unveil the mystery of the unseen world. Mark 4:9-11.

The entire Kingdom of God works like this parable. God plants the seeds of His Words in our hearts (regardless of the condition of our heart). These seeds represent all of God's purposes for our lives, beginning from being born again, to be filled with the Spirit, to being healed physically and mentally, being provided for, bringing us into our proper relationships in life, and everything else that is God's purposes for us; it all works by the seed of the Word being planted.

Read Mark 4:14-20. What are the various methods that Satan uses to steal the Word, and to make it unfruitful?

There is a process that God has in transferring His will to earth. Seeds take a long time to grow. They also grow violently. They use a lot of energy to push aside everything that comes into their way. To convert our problems into blessings takes time and it takes our patience to hang on after all hope seems to be gone

In Luke 19:11-13 (**Read**) His disciples thought that the Kingdom of God was coming to earth right now. That all their problems would be solved the next day. He taught His disciples a lesson for you and me.

He told a parable about a king going into a distant country to obtain a kingdom, and then soon to return. He called his servants and gave them each an amount of currency equal to about 4 months salary (10 minas). He told them to OCCUPY until He came back. Many of them detested his authority.

There were four classes of people present at his return.

1. The group that detested his authority and did not want anyone to reign over them, were banished from his presence and killed.

2-3. Others OCCUPIED or did business and traded with the currency. According to their success, they were given more currency and rewarded with kingdom authority over many cities.

4. Others did not OCCUPY because they thought that the king was a mean person who would punish him for OCCUPYING. Not only did they not get any rewards but his currency was taken away. Use it or lose it!

What is this word OCCUPY

The word OCCUPY means to do business, to trade for profit. Business by definition is to take a raw material or service, add value to it and make it more profitable so it can be useful or sold. It means to exchange or to even change something to make it more profitable. It is used in the Bible to describe people who had businesses, cattle farms and other businesses both good and bad.

Proverbs 3:13-18 Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gets understanding. For the profit (MERCHANDISE, OR OCCUPY) from it is better than the gain from silver, and its produce more than fine gold; she is more precious than rubies; and all the things you can desire are not to be compared with her.

We are to change our problems into profit. We are to take the raw materials of problems and do business with them by producing blessings. Another word is reconcile, which means to turn something from an enemy to a friend.

Matthew 25 unfolds this mystery

The parable of the Talents; Matthew 25:14 is almost the same parable as Luke 19. The master left and left currency later to return.

The Wise and Foolish Virgins: Matthew 25:1 Tells about 5 foolish and 5 wise virgins. The only difference was that the foolish did not hang on long enough when their bridegroom was late in keeping his promise. The foolish did not have enough oil to hang on long enough.

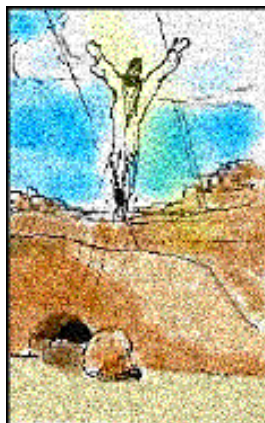
Virgins mean that they kept their sins cleansed before the Lord. So they were all believers. The difference is in being wise or foolish. The wisdom is hearing God speak, the Lamp would be the Word of God (Ps 119 & Proverb 6:23) and the Oil would be the Holy Spirit. When those are combined then they know that their Lord is going to

come to deliver them even if ALL HUMAN hope is gone. They are going to hang on to what Jesus said to them no matter what. The Lord will come back now, into your situation to change your problems into blessings. The wise virgins knew their master's personality. I can hear them saying "I don't care if he is late, he is a man of honor and integrity, he will keep his word. He will never leave me nor forsake me". The wise virgins stay connected to God and His Word and His Holy Spirit to such a degree, that nothing can move them.

This is the script of life. We need to recognize where we are in it. It will make suffering more compatible. Yes Jesus is returning to earth someday, but He will also return for you now, to turn your problem into a blessing

**What is our guarantee that this will work?
The Resurrection is our guarantee.**

If Jesus had not been resurrected, we would have no hope. But the fact that He was resurrected is conclusive evidence that your problems cannot hurt you if you are willing to be a change agent for God.



Our calling is to be change agents for God.

Our purpose is to take the curses that are programmed to hit us and others, recognize that they have been disarmed, and stand until what Jesus did to them is realized here in our life. The Cross of Jesus is ABSOLUTE. Nothing was left out. All apparently BAD things MUST BY LAW become a blessing, IF, you know how to stand.

If the demons would have known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. Known what? If they had known that they were actually performing the redemptive will of God for the world. Same with us. If the devil would have known what a blessing would have become of his attacks on us, he would have never attacked us. I believe that in some way he does know the risk, but he is counting on the fact that we will never find out how to be a change agent. This is not supposed to be fun! This is painful, it hurts. We share in His sufferings..

There were two brothers walking through the woods one day. All of the sudden a huge bee came up and stung the older brother on the eyelid. He fell to the ground in pain holding his eye where the bee had done its damage. The bee began circling around the younger brother as he was watching his older brother in pain. The younger brother panicked and began to scream for fear that he would too be stung. The older brother looked up at him as said " what in the world are you screaming for ?". The younger one

answered, " this bee is after me, he is going to sting me !" The older brother said, " no, no, he can't sting you, you see he already stung me, and that's all he's got, all he is doing is buzzing around you making a lot of noise, you're going to be OK."

Death, where is your sting, grave where is your victory ? Jesus took the worst Satan could give, Satan's power has been spent on Jesus, the only thing he can do now is buzz around your head and scare you.

Day 10 - Walking in Love

1 Corinthians 13:3-8. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

John 15:9, ."As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.

In speaking about love, Jesus is not speaking about love produced by human effort, but about the actual love of God. Here in the parable of the branch and vine, Jesus is making the point that He, through the Holy Spirit, will be IN us as our life.

When Christ is in our heart through the Holy Spirit, the love of God is in our heart as well. But we have a choice to walk and live in that love in the same way Jesus demonstrated. It is not automatic.

1 Read John 15:9. What does Jesus say about His love? What command does He give us?

2. Read Romans 5:5. What does this say about the love of God?

3. Forgiveness - Look up these Scriptures on forgiveness, and discuss them and/or comment on them.

Matthew 6:14-15

Matthew 18:21-35

Colossians 3:13

4. Giving - **Read** John 3:16 What does love DO?

5. Unselfishness **Read** Galatians 5:19-21. What is it that selfish people miss out on?

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