

Schemes

In my *studied* opinion, the devil's number one scheme is LIES—in *whatever* form (Ex.: non-truths, deception, 'spinning,' misleadings, withheld truth and *half-truths*).

- In Genesis—in order to lead all mankind into sin, his tactic was to **deny the word of God** (i.e., lie). (Gen. Ch. 2)
- At Christ's temptation, his scheme was to try to **get Christ to doubt or be confused** about **God's word** (i.e., lie). (Mt. Ch. 4)

He is still up to these tricks, but seems most successful just keeping Christians from even KNOWING much about the word he would *otherwise* have to get us to doubt or be confused over (or that there's a battle going on).

II Corinthians 11:12-14 says *one* scheme of his is to *appear as* an **angel of Light**. He'll usually not come out **blatantly** with the suggestion of sin—but that suggestion will be thrown in among some **seemingly "good"** works." For example, have you ever seen a notoriously **greedy** business mogul do famously charitable acts to make their public "image" less *offensive*? We should beware of **wolves in sheep's clothing**, as this is another strategy of the devil. (II Tim. 3:5)

Still others include:

- **Unforgiveness** and/or bitterness. (II Cor. 2:10-11)
- Widow misbehavior. (I Tim. 5:14-15)
- **Ignorance** of doctrine. (Eph. 4:14-15)
- **False doctrine**. (I Tim. 6:21, Eph. 6:11)
- Idols. (I Jn. 5:21; including Money—Col. 3:5, I Tim. 6:10)
- Apathy. (Ex.: "the only thing needed for **evil** to *prevail* is for **good men** to do **NOTHING**") (Rev. 3:16)
- Temptation. (I Th. 3:5)
- Trying to get Christians to blatantly disqualify our witness by *blatant* sin(s). (I Cor. 9:27, etc.)
- **Guilt, condemnation** and **accusation** (Rom. 8:1, Rev. 12:10)
- Fear. (II Tim. 1:7)
- Worry, anxiety, and lack of peace. (Phil. 4:6-8, etc.)
- Ignorance of the **Bible** and that there's even a **battle** being waged. (II Cor. 2:11)
- ETC. (**Many more** are revealed in God's **word... go find** them)

Christians are promised victory in *this* life through Jesus Christ. Besides putting on all the armor and weapons God has provided, we are:

- a) Not to yield to temptation, OR
- b) Quit under *trials* and *suffering*.

If you want to experience a victorious Christian life, read the following verses, and **DO** what they say:

See: Mt. 4:1-12, Eph. 4:26-27, 6:10-13, Jas. 4:8-12, I Pet. 5:7-10, ETC.

Imposters

WHAT SPIRITUAL WARFARE IS NOT

- A demon at every *doorstep*, behind every *bush* and *headache*. (i.e., errantly ‘**extreme**’)
- A Hierarchy of clearly-named demons and demon “clusters” or families (i.e., so-called “**spiritual mapping**”)
- Demon possession of Christians (vs. **Oppression**). No such promise for lost people.
- Something that **NEVER happens** to believers (i.e., to **deny** him is to be defeated by him).
- “**Generational sins**” and **curses** Christians **MUST** inherit, even though we are freed in Christ.
- Etc. (What other “new” wild theories can *man* come up with?)

Other Considerations

- a) The devil **can’t be everywhere** at the same time. He’s not omnipresent.
- b) The devil **didn’t “make you do it”** (i.e., an attitude of irresponsibility)
- c) Life *under the law* is like **telling a child not to eat out of the *open candy dish***. (i.e., the flesh erupts in aggressively rebellious fashion. (Rom. 6-7)
- d) The **mystery of godliness** and the **mystery of iniquity** are as *follows*—*Christ lives in believers and the *devil* is the father of ALL lost people. Christ is “the *mystery of godliness!*” (I Tim. 3:16—“He”, II Th. 2:7, Eph. 2:2, Col. 1:27, Jn. 8:44)*
- e) The flesh (i.e., sin nature) is **not eradicated** and the Christian will **never be perfect** IN THIS LIFE. (Rom. Chs. 6-7)
- f) **Sin is NOT you**, if you are in Christ. You are a **NEW person**, and NOT a *spiritual schizophrenic* or a *confused mix* of either two natures or two identities. You do have *two natures*, but the old self is **not you**. (**See:** Identity and Inheritance).
- g) Some people *distinguish* between sin as a **habit** vs. **occasional sins**. Certainly the Bible teaches us to be **WARY** of confessors who are not possessors, or tares among the wheat. Just be sure that, *as a believer*, you continually live your life in Christ-like honor, so no one needs to confuse you for a *lost soul* or accuse you of being **less holy** than a **moral lost person**. (I Jn. 3:4, 8-9, Mt. 7:21-23, 13:24-30)
- h) The **devil** can work through Christians. (Mk. 8:33, Eph. 6:12)
- i) The **devil can** make people rich—not just God. (Lk. 16:19-31, Jas. 2:6, 5:1; Deut. 8:18, etc.)
- j) The **devil can** do miracles—don’t be **deceived**. (Mt. 7:22-23, Mk. 9:39)
- k) As I was taught at Highland Baptist Church in College, whenever *someone* says something to you **contrary** to your faith and the **word of God**, say, “I don’t

receive that,” (*at least* to yourself).

DOCTRINE I

Topics: God/Trinity, Christ, Holy Spirit, Bible, Salvation/Sanctification

To have an *effective* Christian life requires some knowledge of basic Christian beliefs. The following is a brief overview of the major points of the **top 10 foundational Christian doctrines**. You will encounter these *doctrinal subjects* repeatedly as you read the Scripture, though never in as organized a way as theology books present them.

Because this web site's discipleship materials are aimed at **growing up Christians** and not educating just to get more knowledge, each of the following 10 doctrinal subjects will end with my "**top 10**" choices of *related practical* verses.

"General Revelation

Ps. 19:1-6	Revelation is world-wide and continuous
Rom. 1:18-32	Revelation of the wrath of God
Ac. 14:17	The providence of God
Matt. 5:45	The goodness of God
Acts 17:28-29	God is intelligent and living"

Basic Theology, by Charles Ryrie, p. 614 (Moody Press: Chicago), 1999

THE GODHEAD (Trinity)

1. Trinity "Proofs" of the Triune God:

- a) We Have One God vs. Many Gods. (Eph. 4, I Th. 1:9, Jn. 17:3, Deut. 6:4, Isa. 48:16, Mt. 28:18-20, II Cor. 13:14)
- b) No One of the Three Members of the Godhead is Less Than Fully God. (I Cor. 8:5-6)
- c) The Members of the Trinity Interact in the Following Ways (i.e., Their "Chain of Authority"):
 - Believing in and beholding Christ is **doing so** to the Father. (Jn. 14:44-45)
 - Christ spoke and did what the Father **initiated** (Jn. 12:49-50, 14:10, 21, 17:4, 8), as did the Spirit. (Jn. 16:13)
 - Receiving the Holy Spirit is receiving Christ. (Jn. 13:20)
 - The Father received glory from Christ's glory (Jn. 13:31-32, 14:13, 17:1, 5), as Christ does from the Holy Spirit. (Jn. 16:14, 17:4-5, 22, 24)
 - To know and see Christ is to know and see the Father. (Jn. 14:7, 9)
 - Christ is in the Father and the Father is in Christ (Jn. 14:10-11, 20, 17:21)
 - Christ asks the Father, Who sends the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16, 26)
 - The Holy Spirit's coming is Christ coming to not leave believers as orphans. (Jn. 14:18)
 - To the one who loves Christ (by obeying commandments) , God the Father will love him (Jn. 14:21, 16-17, 19, 23)
 - In Christ's humbling humanity, He was subservient to the Father (Jn. 14:28, Phil. 2, etc.)
 - The Father sent Christ from and received Him back to **heaven** (Jn. 15:21, 16:5,

17:18), as Christ originated from heaven. (Jn. 15:26, 16:7, 28, 17:8, 13, 23, 25)

- To hate the Father is to hate Christ. (Jn. 15:23)
- The Spirit takes from what is Christ's (Jn. 16:14-15), as Christ took from what was the Father's (Jn. 16:15, 17:7, 10)
- While Christ was on earth, disciples asked **Him** for things (Jn. 16:23-24); Now they ask the **Father** in Christ's name. (Jn. 14:14, 15:7, 16:23-24, 26)
- The Father gave Christ authority and the right to choose saved individuals. (Jn. 17:2, 9)
- Eternal life is ***knowing God*** the **Father** and **Christ** the Son (Jn. 17:3, 5)

d) The Interchangeably Ambiguous "Lord" Appellations. (Mk. 12:29, God the Father, I Cor. 8:6, Jn. 13:13, Christ the Son, etc.)

e) The Personhood of All Three Godhead Members.

Personhood of the Father

- Mind—Isa. 55:8
- Will—Col. 3:12
- Emotion—Neh. 8:10

Personhood of the Son

- Mind—I Cor. 2:16
- Will—Jn. 1:43
- Emotion—Jn. 11:35

Personhood of the Holy Spirit

- Mind—Rom. 8:27
- Will—I Cor. 12:11
- Emotion—Eph. 4:30

f) The Gender Identification of All Three Godhead Members: Male (i.e., "He," "Him")

- Father—Jn. 6:39
- Son—I Pet. 1:19-20
- Holy Spirit—Jn. 16:13

f) The Deity of All Three Persons of the Trinity: **See**: Divine Attributes, below

GOD THE FATHER

2. God the Father (1st Person of the Trinity)

a) Divine Attributes

Divine/Divinity (Deity)—Ac. 17:29

Omniscient (All-Knowing)—Heb. 4:12-13, etc.

Omnipresent (All- or Ever-Present)—Ps. 139:7-12, etc.

Omnipotent (All-Powerful)—Rev. 19:6, Gen. 17:1, Ps. 91:1, etc.

Sovereign—Ps. 100:3, Rom. 9:14-16

Eternal—Ps. 90:2, Deut. 33:27, Rom. 16:26

Unchangeable—Ps. 18:31, Heb. 6:17, Mic. 7:18, Heb. 6:18, Jas. 1:17

Invisible—I Tim. 1:17, Col. 1:15, I Jn. 4:20, (Rom. 1:20)

Holy—I Cor. 3:17, Lev. 19:2, I Pet. 1:16, Ps. 99

Just—Lk. 18:7, Rom. 9:14, Gen. 18:25

Impartial—Eph. 6:9, Gal. 2:6, Rom. 2:11, Ac. 10:34

Righteous—Rev. 19:1-2, II Tim. 4:8?, II Th. 1:5, Jn. 17:25, Ps. 11:7

Love—I Jn. 4:8, 16, Jn. 3:16, Rom. 5:8, etc.

Judgment—Heb. 12:23, Heb. 10:26-31, Rom. 11:22, etc.

Kindness.—Eph. 2:7, Rom. 2:4, 11:22

Merciful—I Pet. 1:3, Eph. 2:4, II Cor. 1:3

Faithful—I Cor. 1:9, II Cor. 1:18, Lam. 3:22-23, Rev. 19:11, I Pet. 4:19

True—Rom. 3:4, Heb. 6:18, Rev. 19:11

b) **Names** (**See:** I Am: 365 Names of God, by John Paul Jackson (Streams Publishing: North Sutton, N.H.), 2002)

KEY VERSES

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have **to do**. (**Heb. 4:13**)

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (**Gal. 4:6**)

And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, **conduct yourselves in fear** during the time of your stay upon earth; (**I Pet. 1:14-17**)

See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. (**I Jn. 3:1**)

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior, because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, **FOR I AM HOLY.**" Cf.: (**I Pet. 1:15-16, cf.: Mt. 5:48, II Cor. 6:17-18**)

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for **our God is a consuming fire**. (**Heb. 12:28-29**)

And God, who knows the heart, *bore witness* to them, *giving* them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; (**Ac. 15:8**)

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the *glory* in the church and in Christ Jesus to *all generations* forever and ever. Amen. (**Eph. 3:20-21, cf.: Mk. 10:27**)

Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is **no variation**, or shifting shadow. (**Jas. 1:17**)

And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast *sent*. (**Jn. 17:3**)

GOD THE SON

3. God the Son/Jesus Christ (2nd Person of the Trinity)

Dare to Compare (Father vs. Son Divine Attributes):

Divine/Divinity (Deity)—Col. 1:19, 2:9; Tit. 3:5 = II Pet. 1:11 (“Savior” refers to God and Christ), cf.: Rev. 21:5-6 = 22:13 (“Alpha and Omega refers to God and Christ), Rev. 16:7 = I Cor. 12:3 (“Lord” refers to God and Christ).

Omniscient (All-Knowing)—Jn. 16:29-31, Jn. 4:18, Jn. 1:47-48

Omnipresent (All- or Ever-Present)—~Eph. 5:14, I Pet. 5:10, 1:11, Rom. 8:9

Omnipotent (All-Powerful)—Heb. 7:16

Sovereign—Ac. 10:36, Rom. 10:12-13

Unchangeable—Heb. 13:8

Invisible—I Pet. 1:8, I Jn. 3:2

Holy—Ac. 2:27, Jn. 6:69, Ac. 4:27

Just—I Pet. 3:18, Mt. 12:20

Impartial—Lk. 20:21, Mt. 22:16

Righteous—I Jn. 2:1, II Pet. 1:1

Love—Jn. 13:34, 15:12, Jn. 15:13

Judgment—Jn. 5:22-23, II Cor. 5:10

Kindness—*See all His healings and miracles!* (cf.: II Cor. 10:1)

Merciful—Heb. 2:17, Jude 1:21, Lk. 17:13-14, etc.

Faithful—Rev. 3:14, Heb. 2:17, 3:2, 6, 2:17

True—Rev. 3:14, Lk. 20:21, Jn. 8:40, 1:14, 17

b) **Humanity**—Phil. 2:5-11, I Tim. 2:5, Rom. 5:15, Jn. 19:28, Ac. 25:19

c) **Life**—Ac. 10:38-43, Jn. 20:30-31, 21:25. **See:** the entire New Testament (*especially* the Gospels)

d) **Death, Burial, Resurrection, Ascension, Seating and Future Second Coming**—I Cor. 15:3-8; Eph. 4:10, Col. 3:1, I Jn. 2:28. **See:** the entire New Testament (*especially* the Gospels)

KEY VERSES

Christ is the Only Source of Salvation

"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is **no other name under heaven** that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." (**Ac. 4:12**)

Christ is the Victor over Satan, Sin and Death

but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who **abolished death**, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, (**II Tim. 1:10**)

Christ is Unchanging

Jesus Christ is **the same** yesterday and today, yes and forever. (**Heb. 13:8**)

Christ is Powerful and Glorified

and in the middle of the lamp stands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be *afraid*; I am the **first and the last**, and **the living One**; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. (**Rev. 1:13-18**)

Christ is the Soon-Coming Lord, Authority and God

But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when **He delivers up the kingdom to the God** and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. And when all things are subjected to Him, then **the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One** who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all. (**I Cor. 15:23-28, cf.: Ac. 10:36, Rev. 22:12-13**)

We Have Been Called into Fellowship with Him

what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with **His Son** Jesus Christ. (**I Jn. 1:3, cf.: I Cor. 1:9**)

Christ-Likeness is the Goal of Sanctification

but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (**Eph. 4:15-16**)

Christ is the Source of Godliness

And by common confession great is **the mystery of godliness**: **He** who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Beheld by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory. (**I Tim. 3:16, cf.: Col. 1:27**)

Christ Prays for us

Hence, also, **He is able to save forever** those who draw near to God through Him, since **He always lives to make intercession** for them. (**Heb. 7:25, cf.: Rom. 8:34**)

Christ Gives Help in Times of Temptation

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with

confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of *need*. (**Heb. 4:15-16**)

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

4. God the Holy Spirit (3rd Person of the Trinity)

a) Deity Proofs and Divine Attributes—

Teacher of all Christians—omnipresent and omniscient (Lk. 12:12, Jn. 14:26)

Author of the Old Testament—Ac. 28:25

Spirit of God and of Christ—Eph. 4:30, Rom. 8:11, II Cor. 3:17

The Spirit is “of God”—Mt. 12:28

God’s Spirit—Isa. 61:1

Christ’s Spirit—Phil. 1:19

Leader of Christ, while on earth—Mt. 4:1

Comes forth from Christ—Jn. 3:33-34

Seal of God’s salvation—Rom. 8:9, I Cor. 3:16, Ac. 19:2

Sanctification source of power—Rom. 8:13

Sin against Him is *worse* than against the Father or Son—Mt. 12:31

The Spirit is Holy—Mt. 28:19, Rom. 1:14, 9:1, ETC.

Originated the Virgin Birth of Christ—Mt. 1:18

Omnipresent—Lk. 11:13, Jn. 3:34

Knows the Future—Lk. 12:12

Limitless—Jn. 3:34

Life-Giver—Jn. 6:63, Rom. 8:2

Eternal—Heb. 9:14

Omniscient (Knows ALL Truth)—Jn. 16:13, 15:26, I Cor. 2:10

Came from Heaven—Jn. 15:2, I Pet. 1:12

Authority—Ac. 1:2

Enables Men to Confess Christ—I Cor. 12:3

Oneness with Christ—II Cor. 3:17

Source of Grace—Heb. 10:29

Has Glory—I Pet. 4:14

Has Power—Rom. 15:13, Ac. 8:39, cf.: Christ—Heb. 7:16, and the Father—II Tim. 1:8

“Lord” Equivalent?—II Cor. 3:17, cf.: Christ—Ac. 20:24 and the Father—Rev. 22:5

b) Gender Identification: “He” (i.e., masculine orientation) vs. “She” or “It” (i.e., not a thing)—Jn. 16:13

c) Names—Spirit, Helper, Holy Spirit, The Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, the Spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, etc.

d) **Ministries**—**See**: Key Verses, below

KEY VERSES

Sealed and Indwelt by the Spirit

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the Gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were **sealed** in Him **with the Holy Spirit of promise**, who is given as a **pledge** of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. (**Eph. 1:13-14, cf.: II Cor. 1:22, Jas. 4:5**)

Assured by the Spirit

The Spirit Himself **bears witness** with our spirit that we are *children of God*, (**Rom. 8:16**)

Filled with the Spirit

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but **be filled with the Spirit**, (**Eph. 5:18**)

Led by the Spirit

For all who are being **led by the Spirit of God**, these are sons of God. (**Rom. 8:14, cf.: Gal. 5:18**)

Mind-Set on the Spirit

For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the **mind set on the Spirit is life and peace**, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is **not even able** to do so; and those who are in the flesh **cannot please God**. (**Rom. 8:6-8**)

Grieving and Quenching the Holy Spirit

And do not **grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, by whom you were **sealed** for the day of redemption. Do not **quench** the Spirit; (**Eph. 4:30, I Th. 5:19**)

Taught by the Spirit

“But when He, **the Spirit of truth**, comes, **He will guide you into all the truth**; for He will not speak on His **own initiative**, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will **disclose** to you what is **to come**.” (**Jn. 16:13, cf.: I Jn. 2:20-21**)

Gifting by the Spirit

But to *each* one is given the **manifestation of the Spirit** for the common good. (**I Cor. 12:7**)

The Spirit Empowering Evangelism

but you shall receive **power** when the **Holy Spirit** has come upon you; and you shall be My **witnesses** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” (**Ac. 1:8**)

Behavior of the Spirit

But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is **no law**. (**Gal. 5:22-23**)

THE BIBLE

1. **Inspiration**—II Tim. 3:16-17, II Pet. 1:20-21

2. **Inerrancy**—i.e., the Bible, in the original writings, was accurately and exactly—word-for-word—what God wanted written, and is His divinely-inspired Scriptures and revelation.

3. Extra-Biblical information

CANONICITY: Basic Theology, by Charles Ryrie, pp. 119-124, (Moody Press: Chicago), 1999

THEORIES OF INSPIRATION: Basic Theology, by Charles Ryrie, pp. 76-86 (Moody Press: Chicago), 1999

KEY VERSES

The Inspired Word

All Scripture is **inspired** by God and profitable for *teaching*, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for *training* in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, **equipped** for every good work. (**II Tim. 3:16-17, cf.: II Tim. 2:15**)

The Inerrant Word (i.e., every word is accurate)

Every word of God is *tested*; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. (**Pv. 30:5**)

The Prophetic Word

For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"—and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so **we have the prophetic word made more sure**, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (**II Pet. 1:16-21**)

The Certain and Sure Word

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away." (**Mt. 24:35**)

The Eternal Word

As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore. Jesus said therefore to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life." (**Jn. 6:66-68**)

The Life-Giving Word

And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" (**Mt. 4:3-4**)

The Valuable Word

How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver. (**Pv. 16:16, cf.: Josh. 1:8**)

The Powerful Word

For the word of God is **living** and **active** and **sharper** than any two-edged sword, and **piercing** as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (**Heb. 4:12-13**)

The Effective Word

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth, And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; **It shall not return to Me empty**, Without **accomplishing** what I desire, And without **succeeding** in the *matter* for which I sent it.” (Isa. 55:10-11)

The Basis of Judgment

“And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.” (Jn. 12:47-48)

(See Also: Why Read the Bible)

SALVATION AND SANCTIFICATION

1. **Terms See:** The Gospel/Three tenses of Salvation section
2. **Three Tenses See:** The Gospel/Three tenses of Salvation section
3. **Nature of:** moment in time, eternal effects, miracle, positive, irreversible, the work of God, intended for all men, etc.
4. **Requirements See:** Additions or Lordship Salvation errors
5. **For all Men (vs. just some)**—II Cor. 5:14-15, Jn. 1:7, I Tim. 4:10, etc. **See Also:** Calvinism Errors
6. **Blessings of See:** Identity and Inheritance
5. **When and How Received**—At the moment sincere heart faith is exercised toward Jesus Christ. How is by the grace and the miraculous power of God. **See:** Additions to Faith and Assurance of Salvation
8. **Titles (Reveal Content)**
SALVATION TERMS: Redemption, reconciliation, justification, salvation, propitiation, born again, conversion, forgiveness of sin, sanctified, adoption as sons washed, regeneration, made righteous, spiritual baptism, sealed, betrothed, deliverance, healed, ransomed, purified, perfected, etc.

SANCTIFICATION TERMS: Sanctification, doing right, fighting the good fight of faith, established in your faith, Christ shining on you, morning star rising in your heart, strengthening the things which remain, rising from sleep/the dead, enduring trials and suffering, walking and pleasing God, obeying God’s commandments, walking in truth, being saved, being perfected, building oneself up on your most holy faith, living by faith, keeping oneself in the love of God, enduring to the end, kept from stumbling, keeping faith and a good conscience, proving zealous for what is good, proving oneself a doer of the word, proving to be Christ’s disciple, good

behavior, dead to sin and alive to God, being holy in all your behavior, obeying Christ, growing in respect to salvation, renewing your mind, walking in Christ, excelling still more, walking in the light, knowing God, etc.

9. Extra-Biblical Information

THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT: **See:** Basic Theology, by Charles Ryrie, pp. 355-357 (Moody Press: Chicago), 1999

KEY VERSES

It Has Extreme Value

For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, (**Heb. 2:2-3**)

It is the Purpose Christ Came and Died

“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (**Lk. 19:10, Cf.: Mk. 1:38, Jn. 12:27**)

It is Good News (vs. Bad News) by Definition and Content

Lk. 2:10, Ac. 13:32, Heb. 4:2, 6.

It is Sure, Certain and Prophesied

Ac. 13:32, Rom. 16:25, Eph. 3:9, Col. 1:26, II Pet. 1:19, , etc.

It is Eternal

Mk. 16:20, Rev. 14:6, etc.

It is a Gift—Not the Result Earned by Works

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. (**Eph. 2:8-9**)

It is Salvation from Punishment

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. (**Rom. 5:9**)

It's Core Issue is Forgiveness of Sin

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, (**Eph. 1:17, cf.: Col. 1:14**)

Its Has Three Tenses (i.e., past, present and future)

I Th. 1:9-10, Tit. 2:11-13, I Pet. 1:3-5, ETC.

It is God's Will for ALL Men (therefore, go evangelize!)

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one *mediator* also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, (**I Tim. 2:3-5, cf.: II Pet. 3:9**)

DOCTRINE II

Topics: Devil/Demons/Angels, Man, Sin, Church, Prophecy

MAN (i.e., Mankind)

1. Origins—Gen. 2:7, 21-25, Mal. 2:10, Rom. 5:12, I Cor. 15:45, (II Pet. 3:5).
2. Purpose—To do God's will through an intimate, daily relationship with Him, the effect of which is it glorifies God. (Gen. 1:28, 2:15—work and populate the earth; Ecc. 2:24, 12:13-14, etc.)
3. Genders and Roles—Tit. 2:3-5 vs. Pv. 31, Pv. 22:15-16, I Cor. 11:3, 11-12, Ch. 7, Eph. 5:22-33, Col. 3:18-20, I Tim. 2:11-15, I Pet. 3:1-7, ETC.
4. Man in the Image of God and Nature of Man—Gen. 1:27; Ac. 14:15, Jas. 3:9.
5. Man as Sinner—Rom. 3:9-18, 5:19, 3:23. See: Gospel/Elements/You Are a Sinner
6. Future—Jn. 14:1-3, Heb. 9:27, Rev. 21; Mt. 10:28, Lk. 16:23-24, Jude 1:7, etc. See: Evangelism/On Hell and Doctrine/Prophecy

KEY VERSES

Created, and Made in the Image of God

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." (**Gen. 1:26, cf.: Jas. 3:9**)

Role on the Earth

And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (**Gen. 1:28**)

All are Sinners (by Nature, from Birth)

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—(**Rom. 5:12**)

For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. (**I Cor. 15:21-22**)

Short Life's Stay on this Earth

Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. (**Jas. 4:14**)

Need Evangelism

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one *mediator* also between God and men, *the man* Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time. (**I Tim. 2:3-6, cf.: II Cor. 5:16**)

Marriage, Family and Singleness

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." (Gen. 2:18)

But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. (I Cor. 7:8)

Wives: Be Submissive to Your Husbands

And let not your adornment be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. (I Pet. 3:3-4, cf.: Col. 3:18)

Husbands: Love your Wives

You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (I Pet. 3:7, cf.: Eph. 5:25)

SIN

1. **Definitions**—In a phrase, “doing evil” (good and evil being defined by God in His word).
2. **Origins**—Gen. 2:15-3:7, etc.
3. **Extent of the Fall**—I Cor. 15:22, etc.
4. **Source: Choice or Nature?** Nature *leads to* choice. All men will sin by choice, because they are sinners by nature. No one will ever not sin, no matter the strength of their will. Some sins are *willful*, some *accidental*, but all are evil.
5. **Ethics Systems and Sin and Ethics List** Theologians often *categorize* ethics systems as moral absolutism (sometimes colloquially referred to as ‘legalism,’ wherein moral decisions are never gray and never conflict; they are either right or wrong), moral relativism (Ex.: *situational* ethics), a-moralism (where there are either no morals, or very few, such as the ‘I am good to people and do no one any harm’ mentality), and hierarchical ethics (i.e., moral absolutes based on the Bible, priority going to the ‘greater good’ *if ever* in conflict, and applied by faith—the position I hold).

REPRESENTATIVE ETHICS (“VIRTUES”)

Boasting in Christ, Contentment, Delighting in God, Encouragement, Enduring suffering, Faith, Forgiveness, Generosity, Gentleness, Good conscience, Goodness, Graciousness, Gratitude, Heavenly-mindedness, Hope, Humility, Impartiality, Joy, Kindness, Loving God, Mercy, Morality, Not jealous, Patience, Peace, Praise, Pure speech, Reasonableness, Rejoicing in trials, Responsibility, Reverence, Seeking God first, Self-control, Selflessness, Soundness of mind, Suffering ethically, Truthfulness, ETC.

REPRESENTATIVE SINS (“VICIES”)

Adultery, Anger, Anxiety, Argumentativeness, Arrogance, Bitterness, Boastfulness, Covetousness, Cussing, Deception, Dissention, Divisiveness, Drunkenness, Envy, Fear, Flattery for the sake of taking advantage, Fornication, Gossip, Greed, Guilt, Hatred, Homosexuality, Idolatry, Impatience, Jealousy, Laziness, Love of money, Lovers of self, Lust, Lying, Materialism, Murder, Partiality, Prejudice, Pride, Profanity, Quick temper, Rape, Rebellion, Reviling, Self-centeredness, Selfishly ambitious, Selfishness, Sensuality, Sorcery, Stealing, Swindlers, Thievery, Violence, Worry, ETC.

6. Consequences—Sin will *ultimately* be punished and **judged** by God. The deserved and earned outcome of sin is “death.” This term encompasses several ideas: **Estrangement** from a relationship with God, **separation** from fellowship with Him (as *believers*), **natural consequences** of sin being in this world (Ex.: *hurricanes*, sickness) and **specific judgments** on sin, at times, in this life, **bodily death** and *ultimately* an **eternity in hell** for those who do not trust Christ. (Rom. 3:23, ETC.)

7. Titles (Reveal Content)

Moral corruptness/badness, evil, godlessness, lawlessness, iniquity, missing the mark, transgressions, whatever is not from faith, unrighteousness, gone astray, falling away, rebelling, wickedness, disobedience, etc.

KEY VERSES

Everyone Must Deal with Their Sin Problem

“But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out.” (Num. 32:23)

Sins Estrange the Lost from God

But your iniquities have made a **separation** between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear. (Isa. 59:2, cf.: Rom. 3:10-12, 5:19)

Sin Causes Death (Separation from fellowship, Bodily Demise and Hell)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 6:23)

Forgiveness of Sins at Salvation

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, (Eph. 1:7)

Christian Cleansing of and Cure for Experiential Sins

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an *Advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; (I Jn. 1:9-2:1)

Commitment to NOT Sin

Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the **love of the Father is not in him**. For all that is in the world, the **lust of the flesh** and the **lust of the eyes** and the **boastful pride of life**, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is *passing away*, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever. (I Jn. 2:15-17, cf.: I Pet. 4:3)

Sin Defined

Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin. (Jas. 4:17, cf.: II Jn. 1:11)

Everyone who practices sin also *practices* lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. (I Jn. 3:4)

We Can Have Victory Over it

knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. For sin

shall not be master over you, for you are not under **law**, but under **grace**. (Rom. 6:6-7, 14, cf.: Heb. 10:1-2)

Sins are Not “You,” (in Christ) but You are Responsible for Them

But if I am doing **the very thing I do not wish**, I am no longer the one doing it, but **sin which dwells in me**. (Rom. 7:20)

THE DEVIL

1. Personhood of the Devil (i.e., being/entity)

- Mind—II Cor. 11:3
- Will—Isa. 14:12-14, II Tim. 2:26
- Emotion—Rev. 12:17, Lk. 22:31

2. Origins and Fall—Eze. 28:13, (Isa. 14:12-15)

3. Purpose and Plan/Scheme(s)—Jn. 10:10, I Pet. 5:7, etc. **See:** Warfare

4. Deeds—Sin, though he sometimes **appears** as an angel of light.

5. Future—Lake of Fire/Hell. (Rev. 20:10)

6. Titles (Reveal Content)

Beelzebub, satan, devil, the evil one, serpent, liar and the father of lies, lucifer (“bright”), dragon of old, the tempter, prince of the power of the air, god of this age, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience, ruler of the demons, the deceiver, accuser of the brethren, murderer, roaring lion, the mystery of iniquity, etc.

KEY VERSES

His Plan for Your Life

“The *thief* comes only to **steal**, and **kill**, and **destroy**; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.” (Jn. 10:10)

Our Adversary and Enemy

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, **prows about** like a *roaring* lion, seeking someone to **devour**. (I Pet. 5:8, cf.: Mt. 13:39)

A Deceptive Tactician

And no wonder, for even **Satan disguises himself** as an angel of **light**. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also **disguise themselves** as servants of **righteousness**; whose **end** shall be according to their **deeds**. (II Cor. 11:14-15)

We are Not Ignorant of His Schemes

in order that **no advantage be taken** of us by Satan; for we are **not ignorant of his schemes**. (II Cor. 2:11, cf.: Eph. 6:11)

Hinders the Losts’ Salvation (in Evangelism)

in whose case the **god of this world** has **blinded the minds** of the unbelieving, that they might **not see** the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (II Cor. 4:4)

Accuses Christians (Blame, Guilt, Finger-Pointing)

And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the **accuser of our brethren** has been thrown down, who **accuses them** before our God **day and night**. (Rev. 12:10)

Tries to Defeat our Spiritual Walk

For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the **tempter** might have **tempted you**, and our labor should be *in vain*. (I Th. 3:5)

Thwarts God's Work (only Partially and Temporarily)

For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet **Satan thwarted us**. (I Th. 2:18)

Can Use (Self-Centered) Believers

But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, **Satan!** You are a **stumbling block** to Me; for you are **not setting your mind on God's interests**, but **man's**." (Mt. 16:23)

We Can Have Victory Over Him!

You are from God, little children, and have **overcome them**; because *greater* is He who is in you than **he who is in the world**. (I Jn. 4:4)

DEMONS

1. Personhood of Demons

- Mind—Mk. 1:24, Mt. 8:29, Jas. 2:19
- Will—Lk. 8:32
- Emotion—Lk. 8:28, Jas. 2:19

2. Definition Fallen angels, unclean, evil spirits (unholy, not chosen).

3. Names Evil spirits, fallen angels, demons.

4. Origins and Fall—Eze. 28:13, (Isa. 14:12-15), by implication (and association with the devil).

5. Purpose and Plan Assist the devil in his **plans**, by implication (and association with the devil).

6. Power—Mk. 5:1-10, 8:16, etc.

7. Numbers/Quantity—Many (Mk. 5:9)

8. Future (end)—Rev. 20:10 Lake of Fire/Hell, by implication (and association with the devil).

KEY VERSES

They Exist—They Are Real

Mt. 17:11, 8:28-33, I Cor. 10:20, etc.

They Are Fallen Angels

Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. And *angels* who **did not keep their own domain**, but **abandoned their proper abode**, He has kept in eternal **bonds** under darkness for the **judgment** of the great day. (**Jude 1:5-6**)

They Are Unclean Spirits

Mt. 10:1, 12:43, Mk. 9:25, etc.

Hell is Their Eternal Future

For if God did not spare angels when they **sinned**, but cast them into hell and **committed** them to pits of darkness, **reserved** for judgment; (**II Pet. 2:4, cf.: Rev. 20:10**)

There Are Many of Them

Mk. 5:9, 15, etc.

The Have Power Greater Than Humans

Mk. 1:24-26, 5:1-5, 9:26, Rev. 16:13-14

They Assist the Devil in Using Their Power for Evil

Mt. 9:34, Dan. 10:10-14

They Can Possess Lost People and Oppress Saved People

Ac. 10:38, Mt. 8:16; II Cor. 12:7-9

Christ Defeated and Has Authority Over Them All

But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons." And others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven. But He knew their thoughts, and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls. And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by **the finger of God**, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." (**Lk. 11:15-20**)

Christians Can Experience VICTORY Over Their Ploys

Put on the full armor of God, that you may be **able to stand firm against** the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this *darkness*, against the spiritual forces of **wickedness** in the *heavenly places*. (**Eph. 6:11-12**)

ANGELS

- 1. Definition**—Chosen, holy, "ministering spirits." (Heb. 1:7, 14, Ps. 104:4, Lk. 9:26, I Tim. 5:21, etc.)
- 2. Origins**—Pre-Gen. 1:1 (Job. 38:4-7)
- 3. Purpose/Function**—Assist God's execution of His plan. (Heb. 1:4, etc.). For an excellent exposition on the ministry of angels, **See:** Basic Theology, pp. 150-153, by Charles C. Ryrie, (Moody Press: Chicago), 1999
- 4. Ability/Power**—Mt. 28:2, Ac. 12:6-11, etc.

5. **Numbers/Quantity**—Many—a multitude of heavenly hosts. (Ps. 148:2, etc.); “Myriads” (Heb. 12:22, Rev. 5:11)

6. **Categories/Names**—For an excellent exposition on Michael, Gabriel, archangels, cherubim and seraphim, **See:** Basic Theology, pp. 146-149, by Charles C. Ryrie, (Moody Press: Chicago), 1999

KEY VERSES

Have a Higher Ranking than Humans

But one has testified somewhere, saying, "WHAT IS MAN, THAT THOU REMEMBEREST HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT THOU ART CONCERNED ABOUT HIM? “THOU HAST MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS; THOU HAST CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND HAST APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF THY HANDS;” (Heb. 2:6-7)

Continually Praise the Godhead

And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." (Rev. 5:11-12)

Conduct Ministry Missions

And of the angels He says, "WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS, AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE." (Heb. 1:7)

Minister to Christians

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? (Heb. 1:14, cf.: Mt. 4:11)

Rejoice in Evangelism Results!

"In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Lk. 15:10)

Have a Special Concern for Children

“See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you, that their angels in heaven continually behold the face of My Father who is in heaven.” (Mt. 18:10)

May be Seen in Human Form

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Heb. 13:2)

Can be Instruments of the Spirit’s Leading (including Prayer Answers and Encouragement)

Mt. 28:5-7, Ac. 8:26, 12:5-10, 27:23-24

Will Carry Believers to Heaven

“Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.” (Lk. 16:22)

Are Not to be Worshipped

And I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. And he said[^] to me, "Do not do

that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; *worship* God." (Ac. 22:8-9, cf.: Col. 2:8, Rev. 19:10)

THE CHURCH

1. **Founding** For an *excellent* exposition on the church's founding, **See:** Lectures in Systematic Theology, p. 313, by Henry C. Thiessen, (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, MI), 1979
2. **Universal vs. Local**—Col. 1:24-25, Eph. 5:23, 27, (universal), Rom. 16:5, I Cor. 16:19, Col. 4:15, (local).
3. **Purposes:** Christ's (human) representative on earth *until* He returns. (I Jn. 4:17, etc.)
4. **Priorities/Ministries:** 1) Exalt the Savior, 2) Edify the Saint, 3) Evangelize the Sinner (i.e., Worship, Discipleship and Evangelism). (**See Also:** Body Life)
5. **Offices/Leadership** Elder/Pastors, Deacons, Laity/"Brethren." (**See:** I Tim-Tit, Eph. 4:11-13, I Pet. 5:1-3, etc.).
6. **Ordinances** Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Some argue for *foot washing*. (Ac. 2:38, I Cor. 11:23-26, ETC.).
7. **Spiritual Gifts** **See:** Spiritual Gifts
8. **Vision for the "Ideal Church"** (including "Body Life"), and **Ideal Pastor** and **Layman**—**Coming Later.** **Temporarily See:** Body Life
9. **Titles (Reveal Content)**
The gathering/assembly, the congregation, the church ("called out" ones) of (the living) God, the disciples, the Way, the brethren, the body of Christ, Family, the house of God, the little flock, the bride of Christ, a holy priesthood, a house of prayer, the pillar and support of the truth, the people of God, the building of God, etc.

KEY VERSES

Christ is It's Head

For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the *wives* ought to be to their husbands *in everything*. (**Eph. 5:23-24**)

It is Universal and Local

Col. 1:24-25, Eph. 5:23; II Cor. 1:1, Phm. 1:2.

It is Composed of Many Members of One Body

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. (**I Cor. 12:13, cf.: Eph. 4:25**)

It is God's Representatives on Earth (Ex.: in Evangelism)

in order that the manifold **wisdom** of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. (**Eph. 3:10**)

It is Powerful

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.” (**Mt. 16:18**)

It is to be Growing Up in Maturity

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (**Eph. 4:11-13**)

It is to Be Known for its Praying

And He began to teach and say to them, "Is it not written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS'? But you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN." (**Mk. 11:17**)

It is to be Loving

“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (**Jn. 13:35**)

It is to be Charitable

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.” (cf.: I Jn. 4:17) (**Mt. 5:13-14**)

It is Participatory and with Some Spontaneity

Rom. 12:5, 10 15:5, 7, 14, 16:3-6, 16, Gal. 5:13, 6:2, Eph. 4:2, 5:21, I Th. 5:11, I Cor. 14:26, 12:7, 11, etc.

It is Not Denominations or a Building

I Cor. 6:11-13, I Pet. 2:10, etc.

PROPHECY

1. **Introduction**: REALITY CHECK: The **Bible Speaks** of the Future! (up to 27% of the Scriptures!)

2. **Disputed Issues**—Literal vs. figurative interpretation, pre-, mid- or post-tribulational rapture and pre-, mid- or post-millennial second coming of Christ, does the Church go through the Tribulation, whether we are in the Tribulation or it has already taken place, etc.

3. **Importance** (cf.: to Sanctification)—It’s in God’s word (a lot!). It affects sanctification (See: 5, below). It tells believers how the “last chapter of life” turns out, etc.

4. **Major Events** The Tribulation, the Second Coming of Christ, Resurrections, Judgments, the Millennium, the Eternal State, etc. See: the Book of Revelation, ETC.

5. **Application** (Prophecy is “**impractical**” and “**intellectualism?**”)—I Cor. 15 (espec. v. 58), Phil. 3:17-20, Col. 3:2-4, I Th. 4:18, 5:11, I Pet. 1:13, II Pet. 3:11-12, Heb. 13:14, I Jn. 3:2-3, ETC.

KEY VERSES

God Wants us Knowledgeable of This 27% of the Bible!

But we do not want you to be **uninformed**, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. (I Th. 4:13)

No Human Knows Prophecy’s Timing

“But of that **day and hour no one knows**, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the *Father alone.*” (Mt. 24:36)

Christ is Coming Back SOON

Tit. 2:13, Mk. 8:38, II Th. 2:8, Lk. 18:8, II Tim. 4:1, 8, Rev. 22:7, 12, 20, etc.

Heaven and Hell are Men’s Eternal Destinations (and All Men Face Judgment)

Jn. 14:1-3, Jn. 3:15-16, Rev. 21; **See**: “On Hell;” II Cor. 5:10.

Prophecy Knowledge Affects sanctification (i.e., it is Not Mere Intellectual Pursuit)

When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but **then** face to face; now I know in part, but **then** I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. (I Cor. 13:11-12)

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this **hope** fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (I Jn. 3:2-3)

And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in **shame** at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him. (I Jn. 2:28-29)

Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the **grace** to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR **I AM HOLY**." (I Pet. 1:13-16)

For our **citizenship** is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the **body of His glory**, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, my beloved. (Phil. 3:20-4:1)

Since **all these things are to be destroyed** in this way, *what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God*, on account of which the **heavens will be destroyed by burning**, and **the elements will melt with intense heat!** (II Pet. 3:11-12, cf.: I Th. 4:18, 5:11)

CONCLUSION

Because this study in doctrine merely touches on issues, I **strongly recommend** you read either of the following *excellent* texts for more detail than can be covered here:

Basic Theology, by Charles C. Ryrie, (Moody Press: Chicago), 1999

Lectures in Systematic Theology, by Henry C. Thiessen, (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, MI),
1979

SPIRITUAL GIFTS (IDENTIFIED)

What is a “Spiritual Gift?”

NEWS FLASH to some: Spiritual gifts *do exist*, and they’re not just for the professional!

A spiritual gift is defined as a **supernatural enabling** for a particular spiritual service or ministry. They are qualitatively different and distinguishable from natural **talents** or learned **skills**.

When are Spiritual Gifts Received or Given?

Spiritual gifts are received at salvation, though they can be “*stirred up*” for usefulness later. (I Tim. 4:14)

How Many Spiritual Gifts Do Individual Christians Possess?

Every Christian has (at least) **one**. No believer has none. I Cor. 12:7, <I Cor. 4:23-24>

- (II Tim. 1:6) May imply only one gift per believer.
- (II Tim. 1:11) May imply the apostle Paul had *at least* **three** spiritual gifts.

Can You Acquire one Later On in the Christian Life?

There is no clear evidence of *anyone* acquiring one later once the four “fallings” of the Spirit had occurred (Ac. 2:1-13, 8:14-17, 10:44-46, 19:6-7). What comes with growth and ministering is **becoming more Christ-like** in that area.

How Many Spiritual Gifts are there in Total?

Following are the most central passages listing spiritual gifts:

4 MAJOR SPIRITUAL GIFT PASSAGES

For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each **exercise them** accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. (**Rom. 12:3-8**)

But to **each one** is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as **He wills**. (**I Cor. 12:7-11**) **See Also:** Chs. 12-14

But to **each one** of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND

HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He gave **some** as apostles, and **some** as prophets, and **some** as evangelists, and **some** as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the *fullness* of Christ. (**Eph. 4:7-13**)

As **each one** has received a special gift, **employ it** in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be *glorified* through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (**I Pet. 4:10-11**)

SPIRITUAL GIFTS LIST (WITH EXAMPLES)

The following list is derived from the *above* Scriptures. The "*examples*" referenced are **NOT necessarily** examples of the named spiritual gift, but can be examples of actions emulating the gift, or a similar act as an expression of the **CHARACTER of Christ**.

1. Apostle (Rom. 1:1, 11:13, I Cor. 9:1, II Cor. 12:12)
2. Prophet/Prophecy (I Cor. 13:2a-b, Mk. 6:4, Ac. 3:22-23)
3. Evangelist (Rom. 10:15, II Tim. 4:5)
4. Pastor (I Pet. 5:1-3, etc.)
5. Service (Tit. 3:14, etc.)
6. Teacher/Teaching (Jas. 3:1-2, etc.)
7. Exhortation (Ac. 13:15-16⁺)
8. Giving (cf.: I Cor. 13:3a)
9. Leadership (Tit. 2:7)
10. Mercy (Lk. 10:33-36)
11. Word of Wisdom (I Cor. 6:5)
12. Word of Knowledge (Jn. 1:48, Jn. 4:18)
13. Faith (I Cor. 13:2c-f)
14. Gifts of Healing (Lk. 17:13-17, etc.)
15. Discerning of Spirits (Ac. 8:20-22)
16. Various Kinds of Tongues (I Cor. 13:1)
17. Interpretation of Tongues (Ac. 2, etc.)
18. Speaking? (general category or repeat of other named gifts, or separate unto itself?)

Are There any Spiritual Gifts UNNAMED in the New Testament?

Preachers sometimes say the lists in the New Testament cannot be proven to be exhaustive, but it is a **safer** bet not to speculate about any others "unidentified." I Cor. 13:3 indicates **martyrdom commitment** may be a spiritual gift. Some believe that **singing** <I Cor. 14:15> and **praise** <I Cor. 14:16> are spiritual gifts, but there's no solid proof. Others believe **celibacy** and

encouragement are “spiritual gifts,” but while **celibacy** and **encouragement** certainly are *gifts*, and **spiritual** by nature (Mt. 19:11-12, Rom. 1:11), they seem more like a person’s call into ministry—a gift, and spiritual, yet not classified as a “spiritual gift.” Some may offer **fasting** and **suffering** as spiritual gifts, but there’s no solid proof of these either.

Can we Classify Spiritual Gifts?

The Bible has several lists of gifts, but whether they were intended as *categories* is hard to prove. Some people see the different listings as indicating the following *possible* categories:

- a) **Sign Gifts** (Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues, Healings, Discerning of Spirits, Word of Wisdom and word of Knowledge—the category title stemming, in part, from the doctrine espoused in Heb. 2:4, ETC.)
- b) **Leadership Gifts** or *Office* Gifts. (Eph. 4:7-13)
- c) **Speaking or Serving**: Taking these two terms as category distinctions. (I Pet. 4:10-11)

How do you Define These Gifts, and How Can I Know what Spiritual Gift(s) I Have?

In College, in 1978, I was blessed to be at a very biblical church which presented us with what must have been one of the first scientifically-researched **spiritual gifts inventory** ever (at which time I confirmed that *teaching* was my gift). I have seen at least 2 other inventories *recently*, so although I do not yet have either **spiritual gift descriptions** or **inventories** on this web site, I know they are easily accessible on the internet or at your local church. I **strongly encourage** you to **identify** then **USE** whatever gift (or gifts) God has given you!

SPIRITUAL GIFTS (USED IN MINISTRY)

Above all, spiritual gifts are to be **USED**, in *biblical* ministry. Once you discover your gift, **prayerfully seek God** to find how He would **use you** to **bless the Church** and *minister* to people, especially in the top-priority ministries of **evangelism** and **discipleship**. (I Cor. 12:7, 14:12, etc.)

See Also: Body Life

EVANGELISM

See: Why Evangelize?

FOLLOW UP

See: Gospel Tract Page 2

OTHER SPIRITUAL SUCCESS FACTOR CONSIDERATIONS

LOVE

The **ultimate expression** of a successful Christian life is that we **love** God and love men—especially believers. The **ultimate example** of love is when Christ laid down His life for others. In our “politically correct” society, it seems that “**luv**” (i.e., emotion-based good feelings, good will and generally being “**nice**” to people) is considered *synonymous* with biblical love. If the two were exactly the same we would not need our Bibles at all. And if they are the same, all politically correct advocates would be Christians, as they would be espousing **everything** God wrote of in His word. (Ex.: II Tim. 3:5)

Love as a theme is *strewn throughout* all these discipleship (and evangelism) materials, but because it is the **supreme ethic** for the Christian, a specific focus is in order. We need to dig a little deeper and be accurate to see what love **truly is**. The following *list* is intended to *enhance* your understanding of what God is calling every believer to do—**LOVE** (in its many forms and manifestations):

Love:

- Patient (vs. anxious/impatient)
- Kind (vs. mean or rude)
- Not Jealous (i.e., content)
- Does Not Brag (i.e., modest)
- Is Not Arrogant (i.e., humble)
- Does Not Act Unbecomingly
- Does Not Seek its Own (i.e., selfless/not selfish)
- Is Not Provoked (i.e., volitional)
- Does Not Take Into Account a Wrong Suffered (i.e., forgiving)
- Does Not Rejoice in Unrighteousness (i.e., pure)
- Rejoices With the Truth (i.e., Bible-centered)
- Bears All Things (i.e., perseveres)
- Believes All Things (i.e., has faith)
- Hopes All Things (i.e., has hope)
- Endures All Things (i.e., endures vs. quits)
- Never Fails (i.e., is victorious)—(I Cor. 13:3-8a)

PRINCIPLES OF LOVE

- God IS Love—I Jn. 4:16
- Love is the Highest Ethic—I Cor. 13:13
- Christ’s Death is it’s Ultimate Expression—I Jn. 4:9-10, Jn. 3:16, 15:13, Rom. 5:8
- God’s Love for Us is Eternal (past, present and future)—Jer. 31:3, Ps. 136:1

- Nothing can Separate us from Christ's Love—Rom. 8:35-39
- God's Love was Poured Out in our Hearts at Salvation—Rom. 5:5, II Tim. 1:7
- We did not Initiate our Love of God—I Jn. 4:10, 19
- Christians are to Pursue Putting On Love—II Tim. 2:22, I Tim. 6:11, I Cor. 14:1a, Col. 3:14, I Jn. 4:12, 17
- We are to **Love God** Fully—Mt. 22:37-40
- All Things Work Together for our Good when we Love God—Rom. 8:28
- We are to **Love Christians**—I Jn. 3:16, 4:11-12, 20-21, I Pet. 1:22
- Obeying Christ's Commandments Demonstrates/Proves we Love Him and Christians—I Jn. 5:2-3, Heb. 13:1, I Th. 4:9
- Loving Christians Shows the World we are Christ's Disciples—Jn. 13:35, I Jn. 4:7, 16
- Love Covers Many Sins—Pv. 10:12, I Pet. 4:8
- Love is Not Afraid or Fearful that God will Punish us—I Jn. 4:18
- Love is not Lip service or Hypocrisy but Expressed in Deed and Truth—I Jn. 3:18, Rom. 12:9
- Love Builds Up Others—I Cor. 8:1-3
- If you Love you Will **Evangelize**—II Cor. 5:14-15
- Love Unifies Believers—Col. 3:14
- The end Goal of Bible Teaching is that Believers Love—I Tim. 1:5
- Spiritual Gifts are to be Used with Love (to be effective)—I Cor. 13:1-3

See Also: Godly Relationships, and Body Life.

SPIRITUAL ANATOMY

Are human beings composed of **2 or 3 metaphysical parts**? Are we *dichotomous* or *trichotomous* in our human makeup? Are we made up of only one material and one immaterial part, or does the Bible teach that we are **SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY**? I make a *distinction* between soul and spirit (both of which are *immaterial* parts) aware that the biblical terminology can vary, though the concepts remain distinct.

This question primarily involves the role of our faculties in discerning God's will. If God can "speak" to us through the Spirit alivening His living, written word, that leading would be separate from our own thoughts and a *miraculous experience* which no human mind could ever create.

Based on the following Scriptures and my personal experience being led of God—*VERY specifically* at times—I am a **strong adherent** to the **TRICHOTOMOUS** view. If a person is **not open** to God leading *supernaturally* when our *spiritual senses* have been trained by the word of God *in practice*, they will likely not see the need for this *distinction*, or ever make complete sense of the following 3 verses, in my opinion:

Trichotomous-Indicating Verses

- (I Th. 5:23) The **entirety** of personhood seems to be presented here.
- (Heb. 4:12) Does the Bible divide between 2 things which are exactly the same (i.e., soul and spirit being analogized to joint and bone marrow)? **Why praise** the word's ability and power to so divide if there is **not two separate** (though *closely related*) things being *divided*?
- (I Cor. 14:14-17) Why make this *distinction*, if it doesn't exist? Paul is making **conscious moral effort** to also use his mind, rather than just his *spirit*. Paul *says* as much!

This topic is a bit technical, but if you ever experience God miraculously intervening and leading you, **VERY directly** and **specifically**, you will know that that experience was not something conjured up within *either* your mind or "subconscious."

The following descriptions seem to adequately capture elements of our human experience, as described in the Bible, associated with what I am calling our "**Spiritual Anatomy**" (or "**DNA**"):

(s)pirit. The ultimately and fully *spiritual aspect* or part of man—whether as a residence for the devil or God—Rom. 8:16, I Cor. 14:14-17, I Th. 5:23, Heb. 4:12

Soul. The place of man's **mind, will and emotions**, which DOES increase in holiness with *spiritual growth*—Mt. 10:28, Mt. 22:37, Lk. 12:20, Jn. 12:27

Body. NOT referring to our **sinful** "flesh," but our skin, our **physical** "flesh," the human body we all inhabit and "are," physically)—Gal. 6:17, II Cor. 4:10, Heb. 10:5, ETC.

Clear and distinguishing verses on sub-parts of our "spiritual anatomy" include the following (among others where these *distinctions* are **blurred** or **non-existent**):

Heart—Rom. 10:10

Soul—I Pet. 2:11, I Cor. 15:45, I Th. 5:23

Mind—Rom. 12:2, Phil. 4:8, Col. 3:2, I Pet. 1:13

Conscience—I Tim. 3:9, 4:2, II Tim. 1:3, Tit. 1:15

Will—Ac. 20:16, I Cor. 5:5, 7:37, etc.

(s)pirit—Pv. 20:27, Rom. 8:16, Heb. 4:12, Jas. 2:26?, I Cor. 6:17, Eph. 4:23?

- Soul (Mind, primarily) Distinguished from (a Deeper) Heart—I Pet. 1:22
- Soul as the Immaterial Part of Man—Mt. 10:28
- Heart and Soul—Ac. 4:32 (i.e., they ‘gave their all’)
- Heart and Mind—Phil. 4:7 (i.e., emotions and thoughts)

GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

In our fast-paced, multi-tasking and ever *electronic* age, Americans have **seemingly lost the concept of having deep and genuine relationships with people**. Some to be sure still understand and value deep relationships, but this lesson is intended to *highlight principles* consistent with Scripture on the **importance** of and *means* for **maintaining good human relationships** and friendships.

We understand *friendship* in part from how God interacts with us, and from our own positive experiences with people. The following traits seem **self-evident** though sorely lacking today, even in the Christian Church:

What Good Relationships ARE

Honest, genuine, sincere, caring, friendly, supportive, encouraging, exhorting, reproving when needed, faithful, deep and intimate (i.e., not surfacy), open (Ex.: vulnerable "transparency"), wanting the best for the other person, non-competitive, "letting your hair down/being yourself," sharing sorrows, disappointments and even failures, "bearing one another's burdens," responsible, role-modeling an exemplary lifestyle, godly, not torrid or sensual, uplifting, edifying, and life-giving. In a word, biblical "**love**."

What Good Relations Are NOT

Using people, cliquiness, taking advantage of people, seeing people as ways to make money for you, temporary (love them, use them and leave them), ditching them in hard times (i.e., "fair-weathered friends"), back-stabbing, gossiping, lying, harboring bitterness, cold, surfacy interaction faking that you really care or are concerned, having a hidden agenda, "kissing up" to 'important people,' flattery, etc. (all of which concepts Bible verses could be found to **prohibit**).

If we *cannot* find **godly relationships** with *fellow* church members, how do we expect to find much good friendship with those OUTSIDE the faith? Tempted to think this is **old-fashioned** or **naive idealism**? **Read your Bible** and *take the risk*. Be *friendly* and open to being *blessed* by others with this wonderful **gift**! Learn to *love people*, both lost and saved.

See: Ps. 12:2, Pv. 17:17, 18:24, Ecc. 4:12, Rom. 1:29, 9:1, 12:15-16, 16:18, I Cor. 1:12-13, 10:23, Gal. 1:10, 6:2, 10, Eph. 4:15, 29-31, Phil. 2:3, Col. 3:9, II Tim. 2:16, Tit. 2:7, Heb. 10:25, Jas. 2:15-16, 3:13-14, 5:13, I Pet. 1:22, I Jn. 3:18, III Jn. 1:5, Jude 1:16, ETC.

See Also: Body Life, and Love

FEAR GOD

An honest and serious respect for God is essential for successful Christian growth. An attitude that God is there to play Santa Claus for my *every* desire, or that we know He'll always forgive us so "better to ask forgiveness than permission," or **any other** attitude **trivializing** the position of God in our lives is spiritually detrimental and displeasing to God. His rightful place is to be **PRIORITY ONE** in our lives. (Col. 1:18)

Please read the following verses, and **assess** your own *concept* of how the Bible teaches that God is both "**abba**" (i.e., "daddy") and "**Father:**"

KEY VERSES

Praise the LORD! How **blessed** is the man who **fears the LORD**, Who greatly *delights* in His commandments. **(Ps. 112:1)**

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not **lean** on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; **Fear the LORD** and turn away from evil. **(Pv. 3:5-7)**

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; *Fools* despise wisdom and instruction. **(Pv. 1:7)**

"The fear of the LORD is to **hate evil**; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, And the perverted mouth, I hate. **(Pv. 8:13)** [Christians are supposed to hate sometimes!]

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is **God** who is at work *in you*, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. **(Phil. 2:12-13)**

The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: **fear God** and keep His commandments, because this applies to *every person*. For God will bring *every act* to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. **(Ecc. 12:13-14)**

See Also: Ps. 36:1, 111:10, 112:1, Pv. (5:21), 23:17, II Cor. 5:14, Eph. 5:21, Phil. 2:12, Heb. 12:28, I Pet. 1:17, Rev. 14:7, ETC.

HUMILITY

A major component for spiritual success is HUMILITY. Acknowledging that we can do nothing “good” in **our own abilities** is the beginning of a victorious Christian life. The Bible teaches that pride goes before destruction, but if we will humble ourselves, **God WILL exalt us**. It is not evil to desire the *glory* God offers, but it is impossible to receive without going about it God’s way. (Jn. 15:5, II Cor. 3:5, Isa. 64:6, Rom. 3:10-11)

Paul was likely one of the two greatest believers of all Christendom (Billy Graham being a close second, *in my opinion*), and his success was due in large part to his **continued humble dependence** upon God. He had every reason to trust in himself, or to be spiritually prideful about all that God had done through him, but he was *wise enough* to not allow that to happen (plus there was that nagging “thorn in the flesh” to ensure his *humility*).

How can we expect to **do great things** for God if we think we are something, or don’t realize that it is only what God does in and through us that *matters*? Please review the following verses, and I think you’ll agree that humility is *essential* to *victorious* Christian living:

KEY VERSES

And such *confidence* we have through Christ *toward God*. **Not that we are adequate** in ourselves to consider **anything** as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, **(II Cor. 3:4-5)**

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch **cannot** bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for **apart from Me you can do nothing**.” **(Jn. 15:4-5)**

But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “**GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.**” Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. **Humble yourselves** in the *presence* of the Lord, and **He will exalt you**. **(Jas. 4:6-9)**

You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for **GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE**. **Humble yourselves**, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that **He may exalt you** at the *proper time*, **casting all your anxiety** upon Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your **faith**, knowing that the same experiences of *suffering* are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. **(I Pet. 5:5-9)** [Prayer and faith-walking go *hand-in-hand*, and are expressions of **humility** and victory against the devil]

And sitting down, He called the twelve and said[^] to them, “If anyone *wants* to be **first**, he shall be **last** of all, and servant of all.” **(Mk. 9:35)**

Pride goes before **destruction**, And a haughty spirit before **stumbling**. It is better to be of a humble spirit with the **lowly**, Than to divide the **spoil** with the proud. **(Pv. 16:18-19)**

See Also: Mt. 20:16, Phil. 2:1-11, Jas. 1:21, ETC.

FASTING?

Some Christians believe that fasting is a **short-cut** or '**fast-track**' to blessings or spirituality. **If and when** God *leads* you to fast, it is very *significant* and useful for your walk with Him. But to elevate fasting *too* highly, use it as a way to try to “force” God to give you favor, or allow it to create a *holier-than-thou* spiritual pride is an **abuse** of the holy practice of a **God-led** fast.

See: Mt. 6:16-18, Mk. 2:19-20, Ac. 13:3, 14:23, etc.

PRAISE?

Praise is commending, complementing or *bragging upon* God, and is very closely related to “*worship*”—which means to attribute value and worth to.

Praise is not a secret passageway to spirituality. God desires His children to praise and brag about Him—His abilities, deeds, character, gifts and blessings—but a life lived in the flesh all week with *extreme emotional singing and shouting on Sunday morning* is **not** a life lived in *proper* understanding of *biblical praise*.

In my opinion—and feel free to prove me wrong, with Scripture—the **greatest praise** God is seeking is a **life lived in holiness** that brings Him the greatest *glory*. After all, He is not needy, and does not live *waiting* for us to brag on Him. Praise is *possibly* something that blesses **us more**, for we consider **HIS greatness and majesty**.

Saying the phrase “praise the Lord” is not *in itself* praise, though it *can* be. Praise starts with an **attitude** of heart. It is a **great activity** to engage in, but do it biblically, unto God, and not for *selfish* gain.

See: Ps. 106:1 and a huge portion of the Book of Psalms, Mt. 21:6, Rom. 14:11, 15:9,
Heb. 2:12, 13:15

See Also: Body Life