

## PAYING ATTENTION TO EVANGELISM

### Ascending the Mountain of Spiritual Darkness

If we are going to be salt and light in the world of spiritual darkness, we must be intentional in how we live our lives and how we communicate the gospel. Below are three obstacles that I believe cause most Christians to struggle in being God's witness:

1. Making a natural approach. How do you get into a discussion about spiritual things?
2. Providing evidence that Christianity is real.
3. Inviting someone to receive Jesus. How we discern that person is ready to pray the sinner's prayer, and then have the boldness to ask, "Is there any reason you would not like to receive Jesus Christ right now?"

In the following pages I would like to encourage you and help you realize that any believer of any age can effectively communicate the gospel.

### Sow the Seed

Let's look at the acrostic S O W.

#### S = Say it!

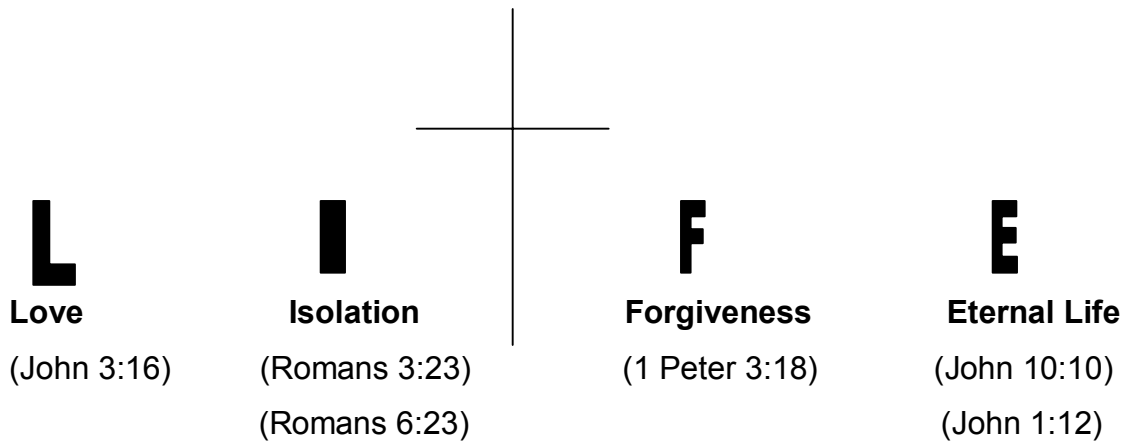
You need to have your testimony and presentation down to the degree that you can say it naturally from memory.

#### O = Offer it!

Never underestimate the power of God's word and the power of the Holy Spirit. The most powerful tools you have are your Bible and your testimony. A witness is someone who is able to tell their own experience. Every believer has a powerful story.

#### W = Write it!

The Bible says life and death are in the tongue. We want to communicate life. Because our culture is so visual, we need to be able to illustrate what we are saying, possibly using the following example.



**It is as simple to understand as A,B,C.**

**A = Admit** (Acts 5:19)

**B = Believe** (Romans 10:9)

**C = Confess** (Romans 10:9)

This is very simple, yet a very effective way to both tell the gospel and illustrate it visually.

Before you are able to share the gospel you have to build a bridge to get to the spiritual conversation. The word “**LIFE**” serves as a good transition into the gospel presentation.

- How’s life treating you?
- What is missing in your life?
- How’s life?

Learn to listen for the word “**Life**.” Someone might say, “Life stinks!” That’s a great opportunity to move the conversation to a spiritual context. “What makes you say that? Tell me about it.” I find people will often be open to discussing life’s difficulties with someone who is really concerned. Let them know they are not alone. Having heard them, they may very well be ready to hear you in return.

“You know, I once had the same concerns, but I found out something that changed my life forever. May I tell you what it is?”

You can also use approach questions like:

- What do you think the meaning of life is?
- Do you think it is possible to live forever?

### **Present the Gospel: LIFE**

**L = God loves you and wants us to have a relationship with Him.**

*“For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16, Holman CSV)*

- He wants us to have a full and meaningful life right now.

*“A thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance.” (John 10:10)*

- He wants us to be in Heaven with Him when we die.

*“In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you. If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also.” (John 14:2-3)*

**I = My sin has isolated me from God.**

*“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)*

Sin causes both physical death and spiritual death. Unforgiven sin will eternally separate you from God. The term “death” literally means separation. James 1:15 says that sin produces death. God is the source of all life. Sin is the result of being separated from God.

It’s not difficult for people to recognize they are sinners. The problem is they try to bridge the great gulf between themselves and God through:

- Religion.
- Good works.
- Trying harder and going to church.

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

This sin has made a great gulf between man and God, and nothing we do can bridge it. That's why Jesus Christ, who is God, became flesh and lived here on earth.

Because God is holy He cannot and will not allow sin into heaven. Sin deserves punishment. God's punishment for sin is severe; it is eternal separation from Him. Jesus Christ is God's solution, and man's only hope.

### **F = Forgiveness for sin is found only in Jesus Christ.**

Jesus bridges the great gulf between man and God.

***“For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.” (Eph. 2:8-9)***

Jesus died in our place. He took our penalty for sin. The wages of sin is death, but in Jesus, God offers us the free gift of eternal life. A gift is not a gift until it is received.

- I have to admit I am a sinner and need a savior. I cannot save myself no matter how good a life I live. Compared to God's perfect nature, it compares as only a filthy rag.

***“Repent, then, and turn to God so that your sins may be forgiven.” (Acts 3:19)***

- I have to believe that Jesus is who He says He is, that He died for our sins, and that He was resurrected to life.

***“...if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. With the heart one believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses, resulting in salvation.” (Romans 10:9-10)***

- I have to confess. Literally agree with what God's word says, and turn the direction of my life from my sinful lifestyle to a godly life in Jesus Christ.

If they have allowed you to share the gospel, then close the conversation with: “Is there any reason why you would not like to ask Jesus to come into your heart right now?”

If they say yes, recap the presentation, lead them in a prayer to ask Jesus to forgive their sin, and help them become a responsible member in God's forever family by inviting Jesus to become their Lord and Savior.

## **E = Eternal Life**

Every human being desires to live. The Bible says, "God has set eternity in our heart." (Eccl. 3:11) Many false religious leaders have claimed power to give eternal life. However, only an eternal God can provide eternal life. Because Jesus is eternal, He can give eternal life.

Eternal life is not simply a duration of life; it is a God kind of life. Everyone will live eternally: Hell is called eternal death. As mentioned earlier, death literally means separation. So death is an eternal existence, separated from God and all he intended for you.

Jesus is eternal life so when I have Jesus I have eternal life. With Jesus I don't just have length of life, but quality of life.

## **Greek Mythology has the following story:**

Aurora, the goddess of dawn, fell in love with Tithorus, the god of mortal youth. Zeus offered Aurora any gift she might choose for her mortal lover. She asked that Titorus might never die; but she forgot to ask that he might remain forever young. So Tithorus lived forever, growing older, and more decrepit, until life became a terrible and intolerable curse.

*"Life is only of value when it is nothing less than the life of God. This is the meaning of eternal life" ...William Barclay*

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created. Life was in Him, and that life was the light of men. That light shines in the darkness, yet the darkness did not overcome it. But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God. The Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We observed His*

***glory, the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1-5, 12-14)***

Eternal life and a one-on-one relationship with the creator of the universe can be a reality for you now and forever. Because of Jesus, the ability to have the life you’ve always dreamed about is within your grasp.

### **Follow up the Presentation**

Having invested in the person, now invite them to join you in church. It is very important to help them develop the four spiritual habits we studied from Mountain #1, “Spiritual Commitment.” As you recall these four habits are:

- Spending time in God’s Word
- Spending time in prayer
- Presenting God’s tithes each week
- Participating in fellowship with other believers

Encourage them to give their testimony by following in baptism. Then make the effort to disciple them. I believe the following will be very beneficial in our disciple making efforts.

## **D = DISCOVERING GOD’S PURPOSE**

***“<sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him, “ ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’<sup>38</sup> This is the first and great commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40)***

Let’s examine how Luke 14:26-33 amplifies these commandments.

**A. Disciples put Jesus first and love Him more than any person or thing. They manage the wealth God entrusted to them as faithful stewards, and they make Jesus' character preeminent in their lives.**

<sup>26</sup> *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26)*

1. In order to add virtue (the character of Christ) to our lives, Jesus must come before all relationships and the pursuit of all possessions. This includes our financial/monetary possessions.
2. In this passage, Jesus is explaining the cost of discipleship. To come to Christ in faith, to become a believer, costs absolutely nothing. To come to Christ and then not follow through on that decision, can be very costly, embarrassing, or it may even prove to be disastrous.

<sup>26</sup> *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."*

**B. Jesus is not telling us to hate our parents/family. He is saying there is to be a vast distance between the allegiances that we show to our family, and the allegiance we are to show to Him. To seek to be His disciple is to seek to add the virtue of Christlikeness to our faith.**

<sup>27</sup> *"And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."*

**C. This verse is a reminder that discipleship is different from coming to His cross in faith to be justified before God. This verse does not say, "come to His cross," It says, "Bear His cross." The first one is justification (faith only); the second is identification with the crucified one.**

**D.**

<sup>28</sup> ***“For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—<sup>29</sup> lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,<sup>30</sup> saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish?’”***

#### **E. Counting the cost first is foundational to a successful Christian life.**

1. The New Testament nowhere teaches that one who comes to Christ to be His disciple will necessarily continue in that process. In fact, this verse indicates that some will come and fail, and it will prove to be embarrassing for that believer. He will be a laughing stock and bring reproach on the name of Christ.

<sup>31</sup> ***“Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.”***

2. This verse is talking about understanding one’s commitment. When a believer starts following the Savior, and then finds out that it is too hard and wants to turn back, he is like a king going to battle without enough troops. He will fail and be disgraced. It can, and sometimes does, cost him an abundant life. It doesn’t cost him his eternal life, but it will cost him the life of blessings and reward he could have had. And, it may in fact, cost him his physical life. (I John 5:16-17)
3. On one side, the cost pays off handsomely with blessings in time, and glorious reward in the future. It may, in the present, require some suffering, some perseverance, or some endurance. (Matthew 10:32-33, Romans 8:17b, 1 Corinthians 3:14, 2 Timothy 2:12, 4:7-8) But the cost will not be more than we can handle. (I Corinthians 10:13) On the other side, there is an enormous price to pay. Dropping out involves temporal,

spiritual destruction. It involves a loss of fellowship with Christ. (I John 1:6)  
It involves the loss of the joy of our salvation (I Peter 1:6-9), and it  
disqualifies us from eternal rewards. (I Corinthians 9:24-27)

***“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”  
(Luke 14:33)***

4. This entire passage is telling us to not start the process of discipleship without understanding what it’s going to cost, and verse 33 is saying that we must be willing to sacrifice everything we have, if necessary, to complete the project.

### **Summary**

Jesus is saying in this passage that to be His disciple, I must put Him first. I must put Him first before even the most important relationships (people) in my life. I must put Him first in front of all things (possessions). Other than people and possessions, what else is there? Whatever there is, Jesus must be first. And to put Him first, we must adopt the virtue of Christlikeness.

Consider these two key concepts:



#### **The Practice**

- Put Jesus first (Matthew 6:33)
- Persevere under trial (James 1:12)
- Love Jesus’ followers (Romans 15:10-14)



#### **The Promise**

- Insight and understanding (I Corinthians 2:9-16)
- Kingdom possessions (James 2:5)
- Special honor (James 1:12)

## I = INVEST IN GOD'S WORD

- A. Disciples make their life's decisions in light of the Bible's teaching. They study to show themselves approved. Certainly, there are more than just eight characteristics of a disciple, and all of the additional ones are covered within this one.**

<sup>31</sup> “ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. <sup>32</sup> And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32)

The people Jesus was talking to in this passage did not see themselves as needing to be set free. They, like many believers today, were simply superficial in their faith. Their understanding of their need to grow in grace and knowledge as Peter admonished in 2 Peter 3:18, was lacking.

- B. A believer cannot advance to maturity without a daily, abiding commitment to a systematic study of the Word of God with a view toward applying the principles learned into daily living.**

1. When Jesus said that abiding in the Word will set us free, He meant free from sin, spiritual ignorance, and spiritual death. When we study the Word of God for ourselves, leaning upon the Holy Spirit to “lead us into all Truth” (John 16:13), we will be set free from the bondage of sin. We will also gain insight to discern false teachers that permeate the Church, and virtually own the airways of broadcasting.
2. This approach to a study of the Word of God will prevent us from buying into manmade theologies, ideologies, and philosophies. This kind of study, and only this kind of study, guided by the Holy Spirit, will protect us from the various “ISMs” that dominate and pervade the present day Protestant Church.

***“Like newborn babes,,desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.” (I Peter 2:2)***

Here are 5 key concepts about God’s Word:



I must accept its authority.

***“We also thank God continually because, when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of man, but actually as it is, the Word of God, which is at work in you who believe.” (I Thessalonians 2:13)***

### **Unreliable “authorities”**

- Culture (Exodus 23:2)
- Tradition (Mark 7:8)
- Reason (Proverbs 16:25)
- Personal feelings (Judges 21:25)

<sup>16</sup> ***“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right.***

<sup>17</sup> ***It is God’s way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do.” (II Timothy 3:16-17, LB)***



I must assimilate it in my life by receiving God’s Word.

1. To receive the Word means I have a prepared heart, and I welcome it.  
God wants to speak to you.
  - Cultivate an open heart.

***“...Some seed fell along the path. It was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up...” (Luke 8:5)***

***“Those along the path are the ones who hear and then the devil comes along and takes away the Word from their hearts, so they cannot believe and be saved.” (Luke 8:12)***

2. The hardened path is a defensive heart caused by:

- Fear
- Pride
- Bitterness

***“Get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the Word planted in you, which can save you.” (James 1:21)***



I must allocate God's Word.

***“Other seed fell on shallow soil with rock beneath. This seed began to grow but soon withered and died for lack of moisture.” (Luke 8:6, LB)***

***“Those on the rock are the ones who received the Word with joy when they heard it, but they have no root. They believe for a while but in the time of testing, they fall away.” (Luke 8:13)***

1. The shallow soil is a superficial heart.
2. We often are not thinking seriously about what God is saying to our heart. We are happy just being a mediocre Christian. We have no testimony or no vision. Our dreams for God have never been seriously considered.



I must eliminate distraction from the Word of God.

***“Other seed fell among thorns which grew up with it and choked the plants.” (Luke 8:7, LB)***

***“The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they don't mature.” (Luke 8:14, LB)***

1. The soil with weeds is a preoccupied heart.
2. Three types of weeds:
  - a. Worries
  - b. Riches
  - c. Pleasure



I must cooperate with what God says.

***“The seed in the good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the Word, return it and by persevering produce a crop.” (Luke 8:15, LB)***

***“We must pay close attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.” (Hebrews 2:1)***

1. By reading God's Word.

***“Happy is the one who reads this book...” (Revelation 1:3, GN)***

2. By researching God's Word.

***“Happy are those who reject the advice of evil men...instead they find their joy in obeying the law of the Lord and they study it day and night.” (Psalm 1:1-2, GN)***

- When you read take notes and check the references.

3. By remembering God's Word.

***“Remember what Christ taught and let His Word enrich your lives and make you wise.” (Colossians 3:16, LB)***

***“I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you.” (Psalm 119:1)***

4. By reflecting on God's Word.

***“Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.” (2 Timothy 2:17)***

- Always consider to whom and when the passage was written.
- Look for the timeless principles, and then personalize it to your life.

***“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” (Joshua 1:8)***

5. By applying God's principles.

***“Once you know these things you will be blessed if you do them.” (John 13:8)***

**S = SELF-CONTROL – SUBMIT TO GOD'S WILL**

**A. Disciples continually improve in the ability to deny the self (they say no to the sin nature). They are constantly improving in their ability to move from “self-centeredness” to “Christ-centeredness” and become more “others oriented.”**

Then Jesus said to his disciples, *“If anyone would come after me, he must DENY HIMSELF and take up his cross and follow me. (Matthew 16:24a)*

1. It should be understood that the phrase, “come after me” means, “come after me as a disciple.”
2. We should see ourselves as freed from the bondage of sin. What he is saying is that sin and Satan no longer have absolute control over our lives. Through our newly created human spirit (new nature), and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we can now, in our new human nature, say no to our old sinful nature.
3. It would really be great if in our daily lives we could go straight from Romans 6 to Romans 8 (skip Romans 7). But Romans 7, and the principle of “dying to the flesh,” is a fact of life for the believer here on earth. We are daily confronted with the world, the flesh and the devil.

**B. Everyday we are faced with the enticements of the world. Our old sin nature is still alive and active. Satan’s minions are always present with the three demonic tricks as described in I John 2:15-17.**

1. Lust of the flesh
2. Lust of the eyes
3. Pride of life

**C. But here’s great news! We have two sources of power. First, the indwelling Spirit of God, and secondly, the (alive and powerful) Word of God. In Ephesians 6:10-20, the apostle Paul tells us how to deal with the**

**enemy by “standing firm,” dressed in the divine armor, wielding the “Sword of the Spirit” which is the Word of God.**

1. Being an effective warrior and an accomplished swordsman in the spiritual warfare in which we find ourselves requires a great deal of preparation and practice. However, if we make a decision to say no to sin and resist the enemy, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is ours for the taking.
2. If we sin, we have two biblical principles to apply immediately. I John 1:9, we are to confess our sin, and Hebrews 12:1-2, we are to isolate that sin by laying it aside.
3. Fortunately, we are not left alone when it comes to dealing with sin. The Greek word “parakletos” is applied to Jesus in 1 John 2:1, where He is called an Advocate, and also to the Holy Spirit in John 16:7; where He is called a Helper. The primary meaning of the word is, “one who comes alongside to help.” That’s called grace, and if we receive the help by faith, we are rescued from the power of sin.
4. When Jesus says, “deny self,” and Peter says, “add self-control,” both are, in essence saying, “accept the divine help that is there for the taking by faith.”
5. Success is knowing God’s will and being in the center of it.

*<sup>15</sup> “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, <sup>16</sup> redeeming the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (Ephesians 5:15-17)*

**D. What is God’s will?**

1. God’s will is not a feeling (mystical approach). Feelings are unreliable.
2. God’s will is not a formula (mechanical approach).
3. There are not “Ten Easy Steps” to fulfilling God’s will.
  - They don’t work.
  - They tend to contradict one another

- They do not allow for mistakes.

### E. God's will is a fellowship.

1. Not rules, but a relationship.
2. Not a life map, but a lifestyle.

***“God is the one who invited you into the wonderful friendship with His Son, Jesus Christ.”  
(1 Corinthians 1:9)***

God's will is not an agenda but an attitude; it is an attitude to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:22-6:9) that produces a desire to be sanctified, submissive and willing to suffer for Christ's sake.

Four key attitudes relating to God's will in your life:



**Don't be fatalistic about God's will (an attitude of “whatever will be will be”). This is unfair to God and forces the blame on God that's not His. Insurance companies refer to some storms as “Acts of God.” It is also unfair to you. It makes us a puppet instead of a person.**

***“If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God.” (John 7:17)***

God's will involves my freedom to choose. God has given us a brain and a will. He wants us grow in maturity and take risks in faith.



**Don't be fearful about God's will. God's will is an expression of God's love.**



**Don't be frustrated about God's will.**

**<sup>28</sup> “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28)**

Being inside of God's will is a long-term process that includes both problems and pleasures.



The right attitude is one of faith.

<sup>6</sup> ***“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6)***

<sup>3</sup> ***“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (I Timothy 2:3-4)***

<sup>105</sup> ***“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:105)***

## **C = CONSIDER GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT**

<sup>16</sup> ***“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. <sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, <sup>21</sup> envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:16-25)***

***“Then Jesus said to His disciples. ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and TAKE UP HIS CROSS (Luke adds “DAILY”) and follow me.’” (Matthew 16:24)***

We should live a life in which the Holy Spirit can produce His fruit. The Holy Spirit is actively producing in our life the fruit of the Spirit. This fruit is produced in direct proportion to our willingness to allow the Holy Spirit to control our lives.

Secrets to 9 Fruits Of The Holy Spirit:

## A. The Secret Of Love

1. Ask what love is. Love is not a feeling, although it does produce feelings.

Love is a choice.

***“And over all virtues, put on love, which binds them all together.” (Colossians 3:14)***

2. Love is a matter of conduct.

***“Let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and truth.” (1 John 3:18)***

3. Act like love acts.

***“Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other making allowances for each others faults because of your love.” (Ephesians 4:2, LB)***

## B. The Secret Of Joy

“Joy” is the positive confidence I feel from knowing and trusting God, regardless of circumstances. Happiness is external, based on circumstances. Joy is internal, based on a relationship with Christ.

1. Focus on giving rather than receiving.

***“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35)***

***“Learn to put aside your own desires so that you will become patient and godly...This will make possible the next step, which is for you to enjoy other people and to like them, and finally you will grow to love them deeply.” (2 Peter 1:7, LB)***

2. Focus on healing rather than hurting.

***“Be gentle and ready to forgive; never hold grudges. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.” (Colossians 3:13, LB)***

***“We can be full of joy here and now, even in our trials and troubles. These very things will give us patient endurance; this in turn will develop a mature character.” (Romans 5:3-4, Ph)***

3. Focus on God’s power rather than my problems.

***“Trust in God at all times; pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our refuge.” (Psalm 62:8)***

***“Always be full of joy in the Lord; I say it again, rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4, LB)***

4. Why can I be joyful in spite of circumstances?

Consider 3 keys:



Because God is with me.

***<sup>2</sup> “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you.” (Isaiah 43:2)***



Because God has a plan for me.

God says, ***“I want you to trust in me in your times of trouble; so I can rescue you and you can give me glory.” (Psalm 50:14, LB)***

***<sup>11</sup> “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)***



Because God will help me.

***“Why be so gloomy and discouraged? Trust in God! Then I shall praise Him for His wondrous help. He will make me smile again.” (Psalm 43:5, LB)***

### **C. The Secret Of Peace**

God wants to give us his peace so we can be peacemakers. How do we become peacemakers?

1. Plan a peace conference. We have to take the initiative.

***“Try to live in peace with everyone; work hard at it.” (Psalm 34:14, LB)***

2. Empathize with other’s feelings.

***“Be full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.” (1 Peter 3:8, LB)***

***“We must bear the burden of being considerate of the doubts and fears of others...”***

***(Romans 15:2, LB)***

***“None of you should think only of His own affairs, but consider other people’s interest also.” (Philippians 2:4, Ph)***

3. Attack the problem, not the person.

***“Bold reproof leads to peace.” (Proverbs 10:10, LB)***

***“Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words; the kind that build up and provide what is needed.” (Ephesians 4:29, GN)***

4. Cooperate as much as possible.

***“Do everything possible on your part to live at peace with all men.” (Romans 12:8, GN)***

***“Wisdom...is peace-loving and courteous. It allows discussion and is willing to yield to others; it is full of mercy and good deeds. It is wholehearted and straightforward and sincere.” (James 3:17, LB)***

***“Peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness.” (James 3:18, LB)***

5. Emphasize reconciliation, not resolution.

- Reconciliation: To reestablish a relationship.
- Resolution: To resolve every issue.

***“God has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” (II Corinthians 5:18)***

***“Let the peace of heart that comes from Christ be always present in your heart...” (Colossians 3:15, LB)***

***“Do you want more and more of God’s kindness and peace? Then learn to know Him better and better.” (2 Peter 1:2, LB)***

#### **D. The Secret Of Patience**

***“A patient man has great understanding but a quick-tempered man displays folly.” (Proverbs 14:29)***

To be patient means to “Be slow to anger.” Consider these seven steps to manage your anger.

1. Resolve to manage it.

***“It is better to be slow-tempered than famous. It is better to have self-control than to control an army.” (Proverbs 16:32, LB)***

We can control our emotions but it is not easy. I have to accept personal responsibility and not blame others.

2. Realize the cost.

***“A hot-tempered man starts fights and gets into all kinds of trouble.” (Proverbs 29:22, LB)***

- Tempers cause arguments (Proverbs 15:18)
- Anger causes mistakes (Proverbs 14:29)
- Anger causes us to do foolish things (Proverbs 14:17)

3. Reflect before reacting.

***“A stupid man gives free reign to his anger; a wise man waits and lets it grow cool.” (Proverbs 29:11, NCV)***

4. Release anger appropriately.

***“If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin.” (Ephesians 4:26, GN)***  
***“A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.” (Proverbs 29:11)***

5. Repattern my mind.

***“...be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Romans 12:2)***

- I feel because I choose.
- I choose because of what I think.
- The way I think is because of the program of my mind.
- Our behavior is determined by our beliefs.
- I feel better about myself when I remember how God feels about me!

6. Relate to people who are patient.

***<sup>24</sup> “Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, <sup>25</sup> lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.” (Proverbs 22:24-25)***

7. Rely on Christ's help.

<sup>5</sup> *"Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus..." (Romans 15:5)*

## E. The Secret Of Kindness

<sup>4</sup> *"But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared..." (Titus 3:4)*

*"I have set my example for you...do as I have done for you." (John 13:15)*

Consider these four truths that demonstrate God's kindness.

1. He understands my weakness.

<sup>15</sup> *"This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup>So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it."* (Hebrews 4:15-16, LB)

<sup>1</sup> *"Dear brothers and sisters, if another Christian is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. <sup>2</sup>Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ."* (Galatians 6:1-2, LB)

2. He tells me the truth in love.

*"A good man...will rebuke in kindness." (Psalm 141:5, GN)*

3. He forgives my sin.

<sup>23</sup> *"For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard. <sup>24</sup>Yet now God in his gracious kindness declares us not guilty. He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins."* (Romans 3:23-24, LB)

<sup>4</sup> *"...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love..." (Ephesians 1:4)*

<sup>32</sup> *"Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32, LB)*

4. He affirms my worth.

***“You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. <sup>17</sup> How precious are your thoughts about me, O God! They are innumerable!” (Psalm 139:16-17, LB)***

***<sup>8</sup> “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)***

***“In response to all God has done for us, let us outdo each other in being helpful and kind to each other...” (Hebrews 10:24, LB)***

## **F. The Secret Of Integrity (“goodness”).**

Integrity is deciding to integrate the values of my heart into my daily actions.

***“Better is the poor who walks in his integrity, than he who is crooked though he be rich.” (Proverbs 28:6)***

***“I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity.” (I Chronicles 29:17, LB)***

How do you practice integrity?

1. Speak honestly.

***“Speak the truth in love.” (Ephesians 4:14)***

2. Confess regularly to God.

***“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)***

3. Live consistently.

***<sup>7</sup> “But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’” (I Samuel 16:7)***

4. Commit openly.

***<sup>19</sup> “I publicly proclaim bold promises. I do not whisper obscurities in some dark corner so no one can understand what I mean. And I did not tell the people of Israel to ask me for something I did not plan to give. I, the LORD, speak only what is true and right.” (Isaiah 45:19, LB)***

***<sup>2</sup> “I will behave wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.” (Psalm 101:2)***

## G. The Secret Of Faithfulness

1. Make a commitment to God's standard.

*"How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word." (Psalm 119:9)*

2. Magnify the consequence of sin.

3. Manage my mind.

<sup>14</sup> *"Temptation comes from the lure of our own evil desires. <sup>15</sup>These evil desires lead to evil actions, and evil actions lead to death."* (James 1:14-15, LB)

<sup>22</sup> *"Run from anything that stimulates youthful lust. Follow anything that makes you want to do right. Pursue faith and love and peace, and enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts."* (2 Timothy 2:22, LB)

<sup>19</sup> *"But everyone knows that you are obedient to the Lord. This makes me very happy. I want you to see clearly what is right and to stay innocent of any wrong."* (Romans 16:19)

## H. The Secret Of Gentleness

*"Let your gentleness be evident to all." (Philippians 4:5)*

### Five elements to gentleness (POWER):

- (P) 1. A personality that is under control.

<sup>4</sup> *"And you know where I am going and how to get there." (John 14:4, LB)*

- You can't have the fruit without the root.

- (O) 2. Outlook that is focused upon God.

- Gentle people are:

Understanding of others. (2 Peter 1:7)

Not demanding of their own way. (James 4:1-2)

- (W) 3. Words are under God's control.

<sup>6</sup> *"And the tongue is a flame of fire. It is full of wickedness that can ruin your whole life. It can turn the entire course of your life into a blazing flame of destruction, for it is set on fire"*

*by hell itself. <sup>8</sup>But no one can tame the tongue. It is an uncontrollable evil, full of deadly poison.” (James 3:6 & 8, LB)*

(E) 4. Expectations of others are less.

(R) 5. Response to other’s needs.

## **I. The Secret of Self-Control**

*“A man without self-control is as defenseless as a city with broken down walls.” (Proverbs 24:28, LB)*

1. Self-control is: Self under God’s control.

*“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy...” (Jude 24)*

2. Jude is informing us that protection from stumbling is provided by Jesus Christ when we are in fellowship with Him.

*10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:10-11)*

3. Please notice in verse 10 the phrase, “If you do these things again;” “these things” are the seven qualities we are to add to our faith. When we practice these seven things, Jesus protects us in our spiritual life. Every believer will enter the Kingdom, but only those who have been functional, faithful, and fruitful will receive rewards.

4. Paul told us in 2 Timothy 4:7-8 what awaited him because of his faithful service:

*<sup>7</sup> “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”*

## I = INSTRUCT OTHERS IN TRUTH

### A. God Is Omniscient: He knows everything.

The scope of God's knowledge

1. God knows all about Himself.

<sup>11</sup> *"For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God." (I Corinthians 2:11)*

<sup>7</sup> *"Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?"*

<sup>8</sup> *They are higher than heaven— what can you do? Deeper than Sheol— what can you know?* <sup>9</sup> *Their measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." (Job 11:7-9)*

2. God knows all about creation.

<sup>4</sup> *"He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name. <sup>11</sup> I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine." (Psalm 147:4; 50:11)*

<sup>29</sup> *"Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will." (Matthew 10:29)*

3. God knows all about history. After all, history is really His Story.

a. The past (Acts 15:18)

b. The present (Proverbs 15:3)

c. The future (Isaiah 46:10)

The insights of His knowledge.

4. God knows all my faults & failures.

*"My sins, O God, are not hidden from you; you know how foolish I have been." (Psalm 69:5, GN)*

*"For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord, and He examines all his paths." (Proverbs 5:21)*

5. God knows all my feelings & frustrations.

*"...you God have listened to my troubles and have seen the crisis in my soul." (Psalm 31:7, LB)*

*"You know how troubled I am; you have kept a record of my tears." (Psalm 56:6, GN)*

6. God knows all my future.

*“The days allotted to me had all be recorded in your book before any of them ever began.”  
(Psalm 139:16, GN)*

7. God knows all my fears.

*<sup>31</sup> “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.” (Matthew 6:31-32)*

8. God knows all my faithfulness.

*“Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before me, to be seen by them...then your Father who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” (Matthew 6:1, 4)*

## **B. God Is Omnipresent: God is everywhere.**

*“I am a God who is everywhere and not in one place...do you not know that I am everywhere in heaven and on earth?” (Jeremiah 23:23-24, GN)*

God is everywhere at the same time. That does not mean God is everything.

*<sup>27</sup> “...so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; <sup>28</sup> for in Him we live and move and have our being...” (Acts 17:27-28)*

Consider these 5 keys to feeling God’s presence:



**God is always with me; I just need to recognize it.**

When I am lonely: God is my companion.

*“Turn to the Lord and be merciful, because I am lonely...” (Psalm 25:16, GN)*

Jesus said, *“I will never leave you or forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5)*



**His presence cheers me up!**

When I am worried: God is my confidence.

*“When you go through deep waters and great troubles, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you won’t drown. When you walk through the fires of oppression, you won’t be burned up.” (Isaiah 43:2-3, LB)*

*“I am always aware of the Lord’s presence. He is near, and nothing can shake me. I’m so thankful and glad, and I feel completely secure...” (Psalm 16:8-9, GN)*



**His presence calms me down.**

*“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” (Psalm 23:4)*

When I am tempted, God is my counselor.

*“We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you.” (2 Corinthians 10:13)*



**His presence helps me out.**

When I am discouraged: God is my comfort.

*“The Lord is near to those who are discouraged. He saves those who have lost all hope.” (Psalm 34:18, GN)*



**His presence: Sees me through.**

How to practice God’s presence!

1. Invite Jesus into your life. (Ephesians 3:12; Colossians 1:22)
2. Talk to God about everything. (Psalm 46:10; James 4:8)
3. Praise God. (Psalm 100:4)

**C. God Is Omnipotent: God has all power.**

*“The heavens are telling the glory of God; they are a marvelous display of his craftsmanship. Day & night they keep on telling about God.” (Psalm 19:1-2, LB)*

**Jesus displayed God’s power:**

- Over nature (Mark 4:36-41, Matthew 21:19, John 2:7)

- Over illness (Luke 5:27)
- Over death (Luke 7:11-15)
- Over Satan (Luke 8:27-39)

***“...which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places...” (Ephesians 1:20)***



**God can give the power to perform whatever tasks to which He has called you.**

1. God gives me power to get started.

***“...for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”  
(Philippians 2:13)***

***“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God...” (2 Corinthians 3:5)***

***“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” (2 Corinthians 4:7)***

2. God gives me power to keep going.

***“I am worn out, O Lord...give me strength; I am completely exhausted, and my whole being is deeply troubled.” (Psalm 6:2)***

***“The Lord is the everlasting God...He never grows tired or weary...He strengthens those who are weak and tired. Those who trust the Lord for help will find their strength renewed.” (Isaiah 40:28-31, GN)***

### **How to appropriate God’s power:**

1. Admit your lack of power.

***“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.<sup>10</sup> Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)***

2. Believe in faith.

***“Everything is possible for him who believes.” (Mark 9:23)***

***“According to your faith it will be done to you.” (Matthew 9:29)***

#### **D. God Is Immutable: God Is Unchanging.**

***“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” (James 1:17)***

***“I the Lord do not change!” (Malachi 3:6)***

##### **1. God’s love for me never changes.**

***“I have loved you with an everlasting love.” (Jeremiah 3:13)***

***“Your love never changes so save me! (Psalm 119:159, GN)***

***“...Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God.” (Romans 8:38)***

##### **2. God’s Word never changes.**

***“The grass withers and flowers fade, but the Word of our God shall stand forever.” (Isaiah 40:8, LB)***

***“Long ago, I learned from your statutes that you established them to last forever.” (Psalm 119:152)***

- Stability in life comes from building my life on God’s unchanging word.

##### **3. God’s purpose for my life never changes.**

***“The Lord almighty has sworn, surely as I have planned it, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand.” (Isaiah 14:24)***

***“God is not a man, He does not change His mind.” (1 Samuel 15:29, GN)***

***“Those who trust in the Lord are as steady as Mount Zion, unmoved by any circumstances.” (Psalm 125:1)***

#### **E. God Is Gracious: God’s love towards us is unconditional, unlimited and unending.**

***“The Lord longs to be gracious to you...” (Isaiah 30:18)***

##### **1. God’s saving grace removes my guilt.**

***“Because of the sacrifice of the Messiah, His blood poured out on the altar of the Cross, we’re a free people – free of penalties and punishments chalked up by all our misdeeds. And not just barely free, either. Abundantly free! He thought of everything, provided for everything we could possibly need...” (Ephesians 1:7-8, GN)***

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,<sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)*



Salvation is based on God’s mercy, not my merit.

2. God’s strengthening grace reshapes my life.

3. God’s sustaining grace relieves my hurt.

*“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)*

*“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16)*

- It allows me to minister to others. (1 Peter 4:10; 2 Corinthians 1:4)
- It allows us to finish well. (Acts 20:28)

*“God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things as all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” (2 Corinthians 8:8)*

#### **F. God Is Sovereign: God Is In Total Control.**

*“...Everything in the heavens and earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your Kingdom. We adore you as being in control of everything.” (2 Chronicles 29:11, LB)*

I do have freedom to choose but it is limited.

1. My plans: Because God is in control my plans have a limit.

*“Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.” (Proverbs 19:21)*

*“We make our plans, but God has the last word.” (Proverbs 16:1, GN)*

*“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit’;<sup>14</sup> whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.<sup>15</sup> Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.’” (James 4:13-15)*

*“We should make plans, counting on God to direct us.” (Proverbs 16:9, LB)*

2. My problems: Because God is in control my problems have a purpose.  
*“At present, you may be temporarily harassed by all kinds of trials. This is no accident, it happened to prove your faith, which is infinitely more valuable than gold...” (1 Peter 1:6-7, Ph)*



**Because God is in control I can look past the pain to the purpose.**

*“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory...” (2 Corinthians 4:16-17)*

3. My prayers: Because God is in control my prayers have an impact.  
*“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us...” (Ephesians 3:20)*

### **How to make contact with God!**

a. Be real.

*“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.” (Matthew 6:5)*

- Don't try to impress others.
- Don't try to impress God.

b. Be relaxed.

*“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” (Matthew 6:6)*

c. Be revealing.

*“And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.” (Matthew 6:7-8)*

### **What do I say?**

1. Praise: I give God my love.

*“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.” (Matthew 6:9)*

2. Purpose: I give God my life.

*“Your kingdom come your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.” (Matthew 6:10)*

3. Provision: I give God my worries.

*“Give us today our daily bread.” (Matthew 6:11)*

4. Pardon: I give God my guilt.

*“Forgive us our debts...” (Matthew 6:12)*

5. People: I give God my hurts.

*“...as we also forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)*

6. Protection: I give God my fear & temptation.

*“And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.” (Matthew 6:13)*

### **G. God Is Faithful: God Can Be Trusted.**

*“For the word of the Lord is right and true. He is faithful in all He does.” (Psalm 33:4)*

1. God cannot do wrong. (Deuteronomy 32:4) Just

2. God cannot lie. (Hebrews 6:18) Holy

3.

4. God cannot break a promise. (Numbers 23:19) Faithful

*“God is faithful to all his promises.” (Psalm 145:13)*

#### **God’s faithfulness guarantees to you:**

5. I can depend on God to forgive my sins.

*“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9) I can depend on God to give me guidance.*

*“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

6. I can depend on God to settle the score.

*“Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, ‘I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it,’ says the Lord.” (Romans 12:19, LB)*

*“He did not retaliate when he was insulted. When he suffered, he did not threaten to get even. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.” (1 Peter 2:23, LB)*

7. I can depend on God to reward my generosity.

*“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” (Luke 6:38)*

8. I can depend on God to keep me safe.

*“He will keep you strong right up to the end, and He will keep you free from all blame on the great day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns. God will surely do this for you, for He always does just what He says, and He is the one who invited you into this wonderful friendship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (1 Corinthians 1:8-9, LB)*

*“If we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for God cannot disown Himself.” (2 Timothy 2:13)*

9. I can depend on God to remember my service.

*“For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” (Hebrews 6:10)*

## **P= PRACTICE STEWARDSHIP**

*“Your heart will be where your treasure is.” (Matthew 6:21, NCV)*

### **A. Five Disciplines For Faithful Stewardship.**

1. Keep good records.

*“Riches can disappear fast...so watch your business interests closely. Know the state of your flocks and herds...” (Proverbs 27:23-24, NLT)*

*“Get the facts at any price!” (Proverbs 27:23-24)*

**Know:**

- What you own.
- What you earn.
- Where it is going.

2. Plan your spending.

*“The more you have, the more you spend, right up to the limits of your income.”*

*(Ecclesiastes 5:11, NLT)*

*“Plan carefully and you will have plenty; if you act too quickly you will never have enough.” (Proverbs 21:5, NCV)*

3. Save for your future.

*“The wise man saves for the future.” (Proverbs 21:20, NLT)*

*“Money that comes easily disappears quickly, but money that is gathered little by little will grow.” (Proverbs 13:11, NCV)*

4. Return 10% back to God.

*“Bring the full amount of your tithes to the temple...put me to the test and you will see that I will open the windows of heaven and pour out on you in abundance all kinds of good things.” (Malachi 3:10, NCV)*

*“The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives.” (Deuteronomy 14:23, NLT)*

5. Enjoy what you have.

*“It is better to be satisfied with what you have than to be always wanting something else.”*

*(Ecclesiastes 6:9, NCV)*

**B. How To Get Started.**

1. Release your guilt to God.

*“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that He will forgive your sins.” (Acts 3:19)*

2. Make a commitment to God.

*“Make and keep your promises to the Lord your God.” (Psalm 76:11, NCV)*

3. Get some support from others.

*“So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11, NLT)*

## L = LOVE WHAT GOD LOVES

God loves people and we should invest our lives in others. Loving each other is proof that we are believers.

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

***“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?” (1 John 3:16-17)***

***“Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” (1 Corinthians 13:7)***

### A. The Secret To Lasting Love:

1. Develop habits that refresh you physically.

- Get the proper rest.

***“It is senseless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night. God wants you to get proper rest.” (Psalm 127:2, LB)***

- Eat a balanced diet.

***“You made my body, Lord; now give me sense to heed your laws.” (Psalm 119:73)***

- Exercise regularly.

2. Develop habits that recharge you emotionally.

- Find solitude.

***“Because so many people were coming and going...Jesus said to them, ‘Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.’” (Mark 6:31)***

- Take time for recreation.
- Laugh.

3. Develop habits that renew you spiritually.

- Have daily quiet time.

***“This is the reason we never lose heart. Our body does indeed suffer wear and tear, but everyday the inward man received fresh strength.” (2 Corinthians 4:16)***

- Join a Sunday School class.

***“...Let us encourage one another.” (Hebrews 10:25)***

- Attend worship services each week.

***“I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love, for you are my refuge in times of trouble.” (Psalm 56:16)***

***“And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love really is.” (Ephesians 3:18, LB)***

## **B. How To Develop A Lifestyle Of Love.**

1. Accept others unconditionally.

- Acceptance is not approval.

2. Commit yourself personally.

***“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.” (Romans 12:10)***

3. Encourage others continually.

***“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)***

4. Serve people cheerfully.

***“God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God’s generosity can flow through you.” (1 Peter 4:10)***

5. Forgive others freely.

***“...bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.” (Colossians 3:13)***

6. Share Christ verbally.

***“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.” (1 Peter 3:15-16)***

*“And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God’s marvelous love. And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love really is.” (Ephesians 3:17-18, LB)*

## **E = EVANGELIZE THE LOSE**

*“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” (Matthew 28:18-20)*

### **Four things we need to help the hopeless.**

#### **A. We Need Hope Properly Focused.**

*“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” (1 Peter 3:15)*



**Hope is: An optimistic outlook based on powerful promises from God’s Word.**

How do I know if I’m focused? What makes me confident in new and difficult situations? Have I set Christ apart in my heart as my only hope? We must continually grapple with these questions in the light of 1 Peter 3:15.

#### **B. We Need Reasons Individually Prepared. It is one thing to have hope personally, and another thing to share that hope verbally with others.**

*“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” (1 Peter 3:15)*

1. The best reasons I can give are the promises that mean the most to me personally.

2. How do I get prepared? I have promises in my heart that help me face tomorrow.

### **C. We Need Gentleness Sincerely Expressed.**

*“But do this with gentleness and respect keeping a clean conscience so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.” (1 Peter 3:16)*

### **D. We Need Confidence Courageously Maintained.**

*“Jesus went and proclaimed God’s salvation to earlier generations who ended up in the prison of God’s judgment because they wouldn’t listen. You know, even though God waited patiently all the days that Noah built his ship, only a few were saved, eight to be exact.” (1 Peter 3:19-20, The Message)*

The illustration of Noah reminds us of three things:

1. If Noah had Jesus with him, so do we.
2. If Noah didn’t have to produce results, neither do we.
3. If Noah could handle the insults and persecution, so can we.

### **E. Base Camp Evangelism**

You and I are going to heaven because someone cared enough to tell us about Christ. We need to care enough to also tell others. We have to pay attention to this mandate of God by being intentional.

One way to do this is to write down the names of six people that you want to take to heaven with you. Perhaps they are friends, family, or co-workers, but they are all people you care about, to whom you can share the good news and invite to church.

George Gallup did a survey that showed in America there are 34 million people who said, “I would go to church if someone invited me.” We all know some of

these people. The world is far more ready to be invited than we are ready to invite, so let's make the decision that we are going to make the climb.

The first statement is usually, "I don't know what to say!"

In the 7-week plan of focusing on one of these people on your list, explain to them that we are mountain-minded people. We want others to make the climb with us. We are climbing because it's what God wants us to do. Ask their permission to share how to leave base camp and make the ascent to heaven.

Consider this acrostic on the word BASE:

### **B – Believe**

"You must believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for you and showed He was God by coming back to life.

Do you believe that?" If yes, then you're ¼ the way there already.

Again, a George Gallup poll said that 87% of Americans believe this. That's why Christians celebrate Easter.

"Do you believe?" If they say, "I believe Jesus was who He said He was; God, and He proved it by coming back to life," you are getting closer.

### **A – Accept**

"You need to accept God's free forgiveness for your sin." Ask, "Would you like to accept that?" I don't know anyone who would reject it. Why would you? If you have gotten to this one, you're ½ way there. Do you agree, I have sinned, and I need to accept God's free forgiveness for my sin?"

### **S – Switch**

"Switch to God's plan for your life. That means you're going to say, "I'm no longer going to do what I want to do; I'm going to live the plan God made for me. I want

to know God's purpose for life and from now on God is going to call the shots, not me."

"When you become a Christian, you put a sign on your life that says, "Under new management!" Now you're doing God's plan for your life. After all, your plan hasn't worked out too well."

If they agree to this, you're  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way there.

### **E – Express**

"Express your desire for Christ to be the director of your life; the manager. The word for this in the Bible is Lord."

"Are you ready to express that?"

After explaining the four steps, ask the person if he/she is willing to take them. If they are, and they have never invited Christ into their life, lead them in a prayer such as the following:

"Lord Jesus, I believe you came to die for my sins so I could be forgiven. I am sorry for my sins, and I want to live the rest of my life the way you want me to. I want to grow to be a responsible member in your forever family. I ask you to come into my life and forgive me of my sins. I thank you for dying in my place and for the resurrection from the dead."

If you get the privilege of praying that prayer with someone, explain to the person that they have crossed the line. They have placed their trust in Christ. Let the person know that even if they don't understand everything yet, that's o.k. It's just like when a baby is born into a family. That baby doesn't understand everything. That's the purpose of a church family; to help babies grow spiritually.

Welcome them to God's forever family, and encourage them to begin a Bible study. Being active in a personal discipleship program is essential to leave the base camp and make the ascent to heaven.

## **F. Points of Action**

Ask God to put someone on your heart that is either an unbeliever or unchurched, and then make a commitment to invest the next 7 weeks in them.

**Week 1**      Pray for the person each day, that God will spur their heart and give you favor with them.

**Week 2**      Engage that individual intentionally to lead to spiritual conversation. Invite them to attend church with you.

**Week 3**      Ask what you can be praying for them about. Keep it updated and sincerely intercede in behalf of their need.

**Week 4**      Serve a need. Look for a way you can be a blessing to them and do it joyfully.

**Week 5**      Explore spiritual questions. “If you were to die today do you know for sure that you would go to heaven?” “If you were to die and stand before God and He were to ask ‘Why should I let you into my heaven?’ what would you say?”

**Week 6**      Share your story. Your personal testimony is a powerful tool in introducing someone to Christ. Your story should be able to be shared in 3 minutes. It should consist of your life before you received Christ, when you received the free gift of eternal life, and finally, what life has been like since you received eternal life. The emphasis should be on the 3<sup>rd</sup> section.

On the next page of the book you will find the “Book of Life Testimony” that you need to consider completing if you have not already done so. If the person receives Christ, help them fill out theirs as well.

**Week 7**     Bring them to church. We have official training for all ages to help you to comfortably and confidently share the gospel. I pray you will take advantage of these training opportunities.

# The Sunnyvale Edition



# Book of Life

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have the confidence that if I die today, I would spend eternity in heaven.

*“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.” I John 5:13*

If I were to die today and stand before God and He were to say to me, “Why should I let you into heaven”, I would respond:

As best I recall, this took place at \_\_\_\_\_ when I was \_\_\_\_\_ years of age. When I think about that important event, I remember:

Since I received Christ, I can see God’s hand at work changing me and equipping me for His service in the following ways:

I was scripturally baptized at: \_\_\_\_\_ at the age of \_\_\_\_\_. Some people whom the Lord used to bring me to Christ:

\_\_\_\_\_  
My Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor Signature

