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The Believer's Life and Walk: Free and Spiritual

Galatians 5:13-6:18

—Teacher's Outline and Study Bible™

1. The answer to conquering the lusts of the flesh or sinful nature: The Holy Spirit

- a. The flesh fights for dominance
- b. The flesh is contrary to the Spirit
- c. The flesh keeps a person from doing what he should

B. A Walk Combating the Great Enemy In Life: Lusts of the Flesh, 5:16-21

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

d. The flesh fails to keep the law

2. The works or acts of the flesh or sinful nature

3. The judgment of those who live by the flesh or sinful nature

Study 2: A WALK COMBATING THE GREAT ENEMY IN LIFE: LUSTS OF THE FLESH

Text: Galatians 5:16-21

Aim: To crush the lusts of the flesh.

Memory Verse:

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16).

INTRODUCTION:

Do you experience the victorious Christian life? Or would you compare your life to that of a prisoner of war? Can your life be described by this graphic testimony?

I lost my freedom while fighting in this spiritual war. Years ago, the enemy surrounded me and forced me to surrender unconditionally. And now, I stare through the fence of

bondage and long for the freedom that was once mine. Every day I listen to propaganda from the enemy. Its message is pounded into my mind that there is no hope for escape.

Can you relate to any of this man's testimony? Often we forget how to escape from the clutches of the flesh and its lusts. Through this session, God will remind us once again how to escape as well as how to stay free!

This and the next passage are two critical passages for the believer's walk. They deal with walking in the Spirit of God and conquering the flesh. The lessons being taught need to be diligently followed by the believer.

OUTLINE:

1. The answer to conquering the lusts of the flesh: the Holy Spirit (vv.16-18).

2. The works or acts of the flesh are listed (vv.19-21).

3. The judgment of those who live by the flesh (v.21).

1. THE ANSWER TO CONQUERING THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH: THE HOLY SPIRIT (vv.16-18).

The believer is to walk in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. This is the only conceivable way he can keep from fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. No person has the power to control the lusts of his flesh—not within himself. The reason why is clearly seen in the four reasons given by Scripture.

1. The flesh fights for dominance. It lusts against the Spirit, struggles and fights to control the man. The picture is that of a tug of war. The flesh stands contrary to the Spirit—tongue to tongue, face to face—and it seeks to control man.

The word “lusts” means a yearning passion for. Every person has experienced the flesh...

- yearning
- pulling
- desiring
- wanting
- craving
- hungering
- thirsting
- longing
- grasping
- grabbing
- taking

Every person knows what it is to have his flesh lusting after something, to have it yearning to lay hold of something. The flesh is very strong and difficult to control. This is the first reason why a believer’s only hope to control the flesh is the Spirit of God.

“But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members” (Ro.7:23).

2. The flesh is contrary to the Spirit. The flesh has within itself base and unregulated urges and passions. A man senses the desire to do what he likes, to lift the restraints and follow his own inclinations, desires, passions, and emotions. This is what the Bible means when it speaks of the “lust of the flesh.”

However, the genuine believer has another force within his life—the force of the Holy Spirit. When the believer feels the

constraint and the pressure between the flesh and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is giving the power to overcome the flesh. The constraint is the power. The believer who listens to the constraint and walks away from the object of the pressure and calls upon God for the courage to stay away is the believer who walks in the Spirit. The believer is to know no such thing as peaceful coexistence between the flesh and the Spirit.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the secret to conquering the lusts of the flesh?
2. What things can you do to control the power of the flesh in your life?

3. The flesh keeps a person from doing what he should. Every person has experienced the power of the flesh; everyone has caved in to the flesh and done something that he did not want to do. He fought against doing it—knew it was harmful or hurtful—yet he did not resist the flesh. He gave in to the power of the flesh and did it. He...

- over-ate
- became angry
- began smoking
- got drunk
- did evil
- lusted
- became prideful
- cursed
- acted selfishly
- committed immorality
- cheated, lied, or stole

Note another fact as well. All of us have been tempted, and we have known how to combat and overcome the temptation. However, the flesh was so strong we did not overcome it. The struggle we experienced involved that of...

- controlling
- reaching out
- loving
- being patient
- showing kindness
- giving
- giving in
- helping
- sacrificing

The point is this: the flesh is so strong that it often keeps us from doing what we should. The only hope of ever controlling the flesh is to walk in the Spirit of God—in His presence and power.

“For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; for what I hate, that do I. If then I do

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that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me” (Ro.7:15-20).

4. The flesh fails to keep the law. This has been clearly shown in the previous point. No person keeps the law all the time: the flesh causes us to fail, and no matter how much we try, we cannot do everything the law says—not all the time. What then is the answer?

The Spirit of God is the answer; being led by the Holy Spirit will free us from the flesh and from the condemnation of the law. What does this mean? It means that the Holy Spirit frees us to live as Christ lived. The active energy of life, the dynamic force and being of life—all that is in Christ Jesus—is given to the believer. The believer actually lives in Christ Jesus. And the Spirit of life which is in Christ frees the believer from the fate (law) of sin and death. This simply means that the believer lives in a consciousness of being free. He breathes and senses a depth of life, a richness, a fullness of life that is indescribable. He lives with power—power over the pressures, strain, impediments, and bondages of life—even the bondages of sin and death. He lives now and shall live forever. He senses this and knows this. Life to him is a spirit, a breath, a consciousness of being set free through Christ. Even when he sins and guilt sets in, there is a tug, a power (the Holy Spirit) that draws him back to God. He asks forgiveness and removal of the guilt (1 Jn.1:9), and immediately upon asking, the same power (the Holy Spirit) instills an instantaneous assurance of cleansing. He feels free again, and he feels full of life in all its liberating power and freedom. He is full of the “Spirit of life”—a life that is now and forever.

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom.8:2-4).

ILLUSTRATION:

With a little imagination, we can take a peek into our hearts and see the struggle between the flesh and Spirit being acted out:

The scene is a field with two opposing teams tightly

gripping a rope. On one side is a team that could pass for sumari wrestlers. On the other end of the rope is you; yes, just you. In the middle of the rope is a smelly pit of slime. As you begin to survey the situation, it doesn't take long to reach this conclusion: You will not be able to resist the pit which lies before you. The opposing team, or the temptation to go it alone, is ready to pull you in. You need help and you need it now. “Holy Spirit! Fill me now. Hold this rope with me as I hold onto You!”

Put a real face on what we have just seen. Fred was a fine Christian man. He had a wife and a child who were gifts from God. In a weak moment, Fred was tempted to break his word to his wife and child. A woman where he worked “needed” him. Fred was such a good listener, so every time she got a chance, she filled his ear with her problems. The more Fred listened, the more dangerous the situation became. Before he knew what was happening, the snares were set and every step Fred took was presented a threatening temptation, a temptation that could devastate him and his dear family.

Fred felt trapped! The more he struggled with this, the deeper he sank in despair. “Lord, I feel so weak. Please help me to resist—for the sake of my family. For Your sake, give me the strength to resist.” At that very moment, a vibrant light entered Fred's heart and a strength that was not his own took over. In a very dramatic moment, Fred jerked the rope in his heart and pulled temptation into the pit and walked away a free man—a man who walked away in the Spirit.

Don't be left holding your rope alone. Walk in the Spirit . . . and pull!

QUESTIONS:

1. Can you think of an example when you lost the tug of war and were pulled into the pit? What were some of the results of your losing that tug of war? What would you do differently today?
2. Do you think it is possible to control the power of the flesh in your life without God's help? What kind of help does God offer you?

2. THE WORKS OR ACTS OF THE FLESH (vv.19-21).

The works or acts of the flesh show just how strong the flesh is. Note a fact of extreme importance: the flesh in itself is not sinful. The flesh or human body is given by God; it is for God's use. In fact, when a person is converted to Christ, his body

becomes a temple for God to dwell in through the Holy Spirit. The Christian is not told to cleanse himself from the flesh but from “the lust of the flesh” (Ga.5:16), “the filthiness of the flesh” (2 Cor.7:1), and from “the works of the flesh” (Ro.13:12; Ga.5:19). The works of the flesh are the ‘fruit’ of sin within us, and sin originates in the heart not in the flesh. The sins of the flesh listed in this passage are clearly seen all throughout society; and tragically they are seen not only on the daily newscasts of every city, but within every community, home, and life on planet earth. The very presence of such fleshly sins shows just how strong the flesh is and how helpless man is to control his flesh.

1. *Adultery*: sexual unfaithfulness to husband or wife. It is also looking at a woman or a man to lust after her or him. Looking at and lusting after the opposite sex—whether in person, magazines, books, on beaches or anywhere else—is adultery. Imagining and lusting within the heart is the very same as committing the act.

“But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mt.5:28).

2. *Fornication*: a broad word including all forms of immoral and sexual acts. It is pre-marital sex and adultery; it is abnormal sex, all kinds of sexual vice.

“Flee fornication. Every sin that man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body” (1 Co.6:18).

3. *Uncleanness*: moral impurity; doing things that dirty, pollute, and soil life.

“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves” (Ro.1:24).

4. *Lasciviousness*: filthiness, indecency, shamelessness. A chief characteristic of the behavior is open and shameless indecency. It means unrestrained evil thoughts and behavior. It is giving in to brutish and lustful desires, a readiness for any pleasure. It is a man who knows no restraint, a man who has sinned so much that he no longer cares what people say or think. It is something far more distasteful than just doing wrong. A man who misbehaves usually tries to hide his wrong, but a lascivious man does not care who knows about his exploits or shame. He wants; therefore, he seeks to take and gratify. Decency and opinion do not matter. Initially when he began to sin, he did as

all men do: he misbehaved in secret. But eventually, the sin got the best of him—to the point that he no longer cared who saw or knew. He became the subject of a master—the master of habit, of the thing itself. Men become the slaves of such things as unbridled lust, wantonness, licentiousness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence (Mk.7:22); wanton manners, filthy words, indecent body movements, immoral handling of males and females (Ro.13:13); public display of affection, carnality, gluttony, and sexual immorality (1 Pe.4:3; 2 Pe.2:2, 18). (See 2 Co.12:21; Ga.5:19; Ep.4:19; 2 Pe.2:7).

“And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet” (Ro.1:27).

5. *Idolatry*: the worship of idols, whether mental or made by man’s hands; the worship of some idea of what God is like, of an image of God within a person’s mind; the giving of one’s primary devotion (time and energy) to something other than God.

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God” (Ep.5:5).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience” (Col.3:5-6).

6. *Witchcraft*: sorcery; the use of drugs or of evil spirits to gain control over the lives of others or over one’s own life. In the present context, it would include all forms of seeking the control of one’s fate including astrology, palm-reading, séances, fortune telling, crystals, and other forms of witchcraft.

“So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it” (1 Chr.10:13).

“And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Is.8:19-20).

7. *Hatred*: enmity, hostility, animosity. It is the hatred that lingers and is held for a long, long time; a hatred that is deep within.

“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now” (1 Jn.2:9).

8. *Variance*: strife, discord, contention, fighting, struggling, quarreling, dissension, wrangling. It means that a man fights against another person in order to get something: position, promotion, property, honor, recognition. He deceives, doing whatever has to be done to get what he is after.

“As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife” (Pr.26:21).

9. *Emulations*: jealousy, wanting and desiring to have what someone else has. It may be material things, recognition, honor, or position.

“For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance” (Pr.6:34).

10. *Wrath*: bursts of anger; indignation; a violent, explosive temper; quick-tempered explosive reactions that arise from stirred and boiling emotions. But it is anger which fades away just as quickly as it arose. It is not anger that lasts.

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (Jas.1:19-20).

11. *Strife*: conflict, struggle, fight, contention, faction, dissension; a party spirit, a cliquish spirit.

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Ph.2:3).

12. *Seditious*: division, rebellion, standing against others, splitting off from others.

“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king” (1 Sam.15:23).

“But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. presumptuous are they, self-willed, and they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities” (2 Pe.2:10).

13. *Heresies*: rejecting the fundamental beliefs of God, Christ,

the Scriptures, and the church; believing and holding to some teaching other than the truth.

“But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mt.15:9).

14. *Envyings*: this word goes beyond jealousy. It is the spirit...

- that wants not only the things that another person has, but begrudges the fact that the person has them.
- that wants not only the things to be taken away from the person, but wants him to suffer through the loss of them.

“A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones” (Pr.14:30).

15. *Murders*: to kill, to take the life of another person. Murder is sin against the sixth commandment.

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 Jn.3:15).

16. *Drunkness*: taking drink or drugs to affect one’s senses for lust or pleasure; becoming tipsy or intoxicated; partaking of drugs; seeking to loosen moral restraint for bodily pleasure.

“Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Co.6:10).

17. *Revellings*: carousing; uncontrolled license, indulgence, and pleasure; taking part in wild parties or in drinking parties; lying around indulging in feeding the lusts of the flesh; orgies.

“For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries” (1 Pe.4:3).

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you worry about being a slave to your flesh?
2. Which one of these works of the flesh has the greatest influence in your life? You may not be able to confess it publicly, but answer the question in your own heart: which work of the flesh does give you the most problem? What can be done to free you from its power over you?
3. Is it easier for you to fight the works of the flesh or to surrender to their influence over you? Why?
4. Why does God want you to be aware of the works of the flesh?

3. THE JUDGMENT OF THOSE WHO LIVE BY THE FLESH (v.21).

Very simply, those who live by the flesh shall not inherit the kingdom of God. This can be clearly seen: if God is righteous, then people must live righteous lives in order to be accepted by Him. However, people ignore the fact of God's righteousness and His demand for righteousness. People divorce their behavior from religion. People...

- profess religion
- practice religion
- talk religion
- defend their beliefs about religion

However, they go ahead and live like they want regardless of their religion. If they want to do something, they do it feeling that God will forgive them. There are few people who really think that God will reject them. They feel that they will have done enough good to be acceptable to God...

- enough kindness
- enough religion
- enough works
- enough service

In the final analysis, most people just think that God will accept them. This attitude comes from a false concept of God, a concept that looks upon God as a father who is indulgent and who gives his children the license to do some wrong.

This is a fatal mistake. It was the mistake that some of the Galatian church members were making, and it is the same mistake that teeming multitudes of religious people have made down through the centuries.

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” (1 Co.6:9).

Believers are to inherit a kingdom, a new heavens and earth where God will rule and reign. They are to be given eternal life and given the glorious privilege of being citizens in God's kingdom and world. They are to live with Him and serve Him in perfection for all eternity. But this glorious privilege is to be given only to genuine believers, those men and women who have truly given their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ— given their lives to live as Jesus Christ says to live. No matter how religious a person is—no matter how much zeal a person may have in keeping religious rituals and in attending services and in giving to charity—if he does not live a pure and righteous life, he “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” (1 Co.6:9).

“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.5:20).

“For without [the Kingdom of God] are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Re.22:15).

ILLUSTRATION:

The love of God should always be balanced with the judgment of God. Listen to this story from Warren Wiersbe's *Meet Yourself in the Psalms*.

[He] tells about a frontier town where a horse bolted and ran away with a wagon carrying a little boy. Seeing the child in danger, a young man risked his life to catch the horse and stop the wagon.

The child who was saved grew up to be a lawless man, and one day he stood before a judge to be sentenced for a serious crime. The prisoner recognized the judge as the man who, many years before, had saved his life; so he pled for mercy on the basis of that experience.

But the words from the bench silenced his plea, “Young man, then I was your savior; today I am your judge, and I must sentence you to be hanged.”

One day Jesus will say to rebellious sinners, “During that long day of grace, I was the Savior, and I would have forgiven you. But today I am your Judge. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!”

If you play with fire, you will get burned. Allow Christ to be your Savior, so you will not have to face Him as the Judge in the terrible day of judgment that is coming upon all the world.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do some believers take their salvation lightly?
2. What are some specific things you can do in order to keep your relationship with the Lord alive?
3. What inheritance are you expecting to receive from the Lord? On what basis do you make these claims?
4. For what will we be judged when we face the Lord?

SUMMARY:

Christ has done all that He needed to do in order to make you free. Have you done all that you need to do? Remember His Word to us in this session:

1. The answer to conquering the lusts of the flesh is the Holy Spirit.
2. The works or acts of the flesh are listed.
3. Those who live by the flesh will be judged.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES

(Reflection & Response)

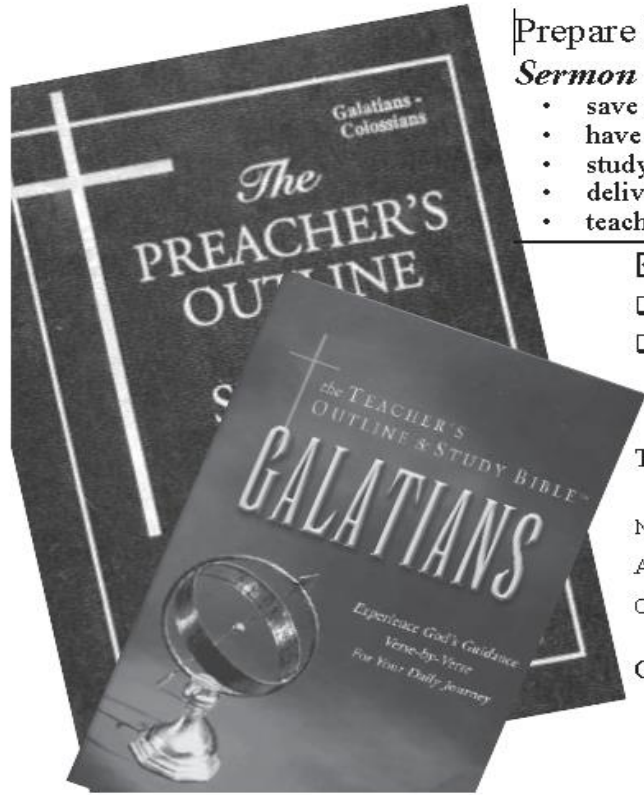
1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

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Daily Devotional

Give it to ME, Says the Lord

—By Norma Miller

I have been learning a LOT about true surrender; what it involves, what it looks like, and how much it costs. What does true surrender involve? It involves truly letting go of someone or something (a situation, goal, desire, or dream) and giving it totally to the Lord. It does not mean giving up life or hope. It means realizing that God has a wonderful plan for us, if we are willing to give Him a chance.



What does true surrender look like? It can take many forms, I am sure. It can be very, very painful and tearful, especially if we need to let go of hope, desire, dreams, or a loved one. God will not work out a situation if we cannot let it go. If I do not give Him my husband, my children, my goals and dreams, or my problems, how can He freely work on them? We have way more control than we realize. However, as we give ourselves and our problems to the Lord, we are releasing God to work on others and on their problems. If we won't let go, how will God take over?

How much does true surrender cost? This is a big question, and it does not have an easy answer. True surrender often comes at a great cost. It often involves letting go of dreams, hopes, and people we love with no assurance we will ever get them back. For the last six years, I have faced huge disappointments, losses, and broken

dreams. I felt like I was dying, and that life was not worth living. I went through the agony of being rejected and misunderstood in a very public way. I tried to let go, but I felt incomplete. It hurt incredibly beyond what I believed was possible. I went through the process of letting go over and over, only to reach out and take my problem back, time and time again. The agony this has caused me has been overwhelming.

I wish so badly that years ago I had been able to hear and understand what I heard yesterday. I am greatly blessed in having a mentor. She is a sweet, older lady from my church who has been through some of the same horrific pain I have. She has put into words the beauty of true surrender and what God can do when we truly let go.

The long and the short of it is this: I have been in torment for years. Does God bring torment? Never. If we are in torment, it means we have a door open to the enemy.

My open door was that I kept taking things back after I thought I had given them to the Lord; I kept feeding unfulfilled dreams and desires. My mentor asked me why on earth I would want to keep doing that to myself. I really cannot answer that one for you! I do have fears. That I know for certain. I fear that God will never give me the desires of my heart. I fear that I will never be fulfilled. I fear that I will go through life with an unending, aching void. I am not willing to do that. If I truly let go, God can work out the situation for me. He can return things to me if they are truly mine to have. He can work in my husband's heart. God can remove the desires and dreams from my

heart that are not part of His will for me to experience in this life. This sweet lady speaks with authority, because she has lived many years as a widow. In fact, her husband died the same month my



husband and I were married! She has struggled and struggled with the unfairness and seeming emptiness of it all, but God has done amazing things in her life. She experienced much loneliness, hurt, and unmet longings, but she pushed past all of that and gave it to God completely. She experiences God in a way many people do not believe is possible. She helped me to see the intensely personal way God ministers to me. It is an expression of how much He loves me and believes in me that He allows me to go through the things I do. She has given me courage to lay down my own will for the will of my loving Father. After all, He is mighty stubborn (although always right), and as I learned, we can do it the easy way or the hard way, He is prepared to keep on as long as He needs to! He loves me too much to allow me to go in my own way. He wants me to experience all He has for me, and that is only possible through surrender. Will you surrender to Him, too?

—Love, Norma

Salvation vs. Rewards: Continued from the May Issue

Salvation

← VS →

Rewards

10) Salvation is freely received in a point of time.

In a point of time a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and passes from death to life (John 5:24).

11) Salvation is based upon what Christ has done.

“Being justified freely by His grace THROUGH THE REDEMPTION that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24).

12) When it comes to salvation, what is man's part? The answer: FAITH

“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
(2 Timothy 3:15).

God does the saving; we do the believing.

13) The question of salvation: DID YOU BELIEVE ON CHRIST?

“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to SAVE them that BELIEVE” (1 Cor. 1:21).

14) When it comes to salvation, there are certain things that God does not remember.

“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. 10:17).

15) Salvation always involves God's full approval in Christ.

“To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us ACCEPTED [highly favored] in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:6).

16) All believers share the same salvation.

The “salvation package” of one believer contains everything that is found in the “salvation package” of another believer. We share the same “so-great salvation (Heb. 2:3). We are RICH in Christ and possess every spiritual blessing in Him (Eph. 1:3).

10) Rewards are earned throughout a whole believing lifetime.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body [from the point of salvation to the point when the believer goes to be with the Lord], according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).

11) Rewards are based upon what we have done (as believers).

“...that every one may receive the things done in his body, ACCORDING TO THAT HE HATH DONE, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).

12) When it comes to rewards, what is man's part? The answer: FAITHFULNESS.

“He that is FAITHFUL in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?” (Luke 16:10-12).

13) The question of rewards: HAVE YOU BEEN ABIDING IN CHRIST?

“And now, little children, ABIDE IN HIM; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming” (1 John 2:28).

14) When it comes to rewards, there are certain things that God does remember.

“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward His Name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb. 6:10).

15) Rewards may involve God's disapproval.

“But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons” (Col. 3:25). See also 1 John 2:28 which implies the possibility of SHAME because of God's disapproval and see Phil. 3:8 where Paul sacrificed all so that he might gain or win Christ and His approval.

16) All believers do not share the same rewards.

“And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom....And He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father (Matthew 20:21,23).

Not all believers will sit at Christ's right and at His left. This place and position will be reserved for two believers, as determined by God the righteous Judge.

Continued on next page

Salvation

VS

Rewards

17) When it comes to salvation, when will my judgment take place? Answer: It has already taken place at the cross!

“...the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Pet. 3:18). Because of this fact, the Lord assures the true believer that he will not come into condemnation or judgment (see John 5:24; Romans 8:1).

18) Salvation costs nothing.

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk WITHOUT MONEY and WITHOUT PRICE” (Isa. 55:1).

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23

19) Salvation is received at the time of JUSTIFICATION.

Salvation is something we get at the beginning.

20) We show our gratitude for salvation by faithful service.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:1-2).

17) When it comes to rewards, when will my judgment take place? Answer: At the judgment seat of Christ!

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Romans 14:10).

18) Rewards cost a life of service.

Serving Christ faithfully in a Christ-hating world can be costly: “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD in heaven” (Matt. 5:10, 12).

19) Rewards are received at the time of LORIFICATION.

Rewards are something we get at the end.

20) We show our gratitude for rewards by casting our crowns before our Saviour.

“The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and CAST THEIR CROWNS BEFORE THE THRONE, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:10-11).

The End

Paul recognized that any good thing which he did was attributed to the grace of God: “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1 Cor. 15:10). Even when it comes to faithful service for Christ, we are debtors to the grace of God!

Comments and Prayers Welcome!

1. If you have any comments, ideas, suggestions, questions, prayer requests, or might want to contribute a possible article for the Amish Voice, please let us know.
2. If you enjoy the Amish Voice and would like to help us with the cost of printing and postage or if you know of others who might benefit from the Amish Voice, please contact us.
3. Please pray for us and with us that we would all grow nearer to God.

Amish Voice
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The cover of the Amish Voice magazine features a black and white photograph of a group of people, likely Amish, in a rural setting. The title 'Amish Voice' is prominently displayed at the top. Below the title, there is a subtitle 'The Believer's Life and Walk: Free and Spiritual' and the date 'September 1, 1994'. The cover also includes a list of articles and their authors, such as 'The Believer's Life and Walk: Free and Spiritual' by the author of this document, and 'The Believer's Great Love' by John L. Smith.

Prepare Your Heart!

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

—Hosea 10:12

In the parable of the sower and the seed that Jesus told, the seed is the word of God.

All of the seed sown was good. The problem was the condition of the soil—the heart. How is your heart? Is your heart prepared to hear from God? Are you seeking Him? Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy. Are you seeking God in all that you do? Have you turned from your sin? Do you trust in Jesus? Break up your fallow ground. Fallow ground is ground which has been plowed but then has been left unplanted

for a season or more. It is land that is not in use. It is inactive. It needs to be broken up again and made soft before seed can grow in it. Has the soil of your heart been

or worldliness? Maybe it is pride or busyness. Whatever it is, it is not worth letting your heart grow hard. Break up the fallow ground of your heart and get your heart ready for God.



It is time to seek the Lord. It matters not how long you have delayed. It is time NOW to seek the Lord. You do not

know how many years or days you might have left on this earth. It is NOW time to seek the Lord. How long should you seek Him? Until He comes and rains righteousness upon you! Do not stop seeking God until He changes your heart. Call out to God to work in your heart and change you? Break up your fallow ground. It is time to seek the Lord until He comes and rains righteousness upon you.

know how many years or days you might have left on this earth. It is NOW time to seek the Lord. How long should you seek Him? Until He comes and rains righteousness upon you! Do not stop seeking God until He changes your heart. Call out to God to work in your heart and change you? Break up your fallow ground. It is time to seek the Lord until He comes and rains righteousness upon you.



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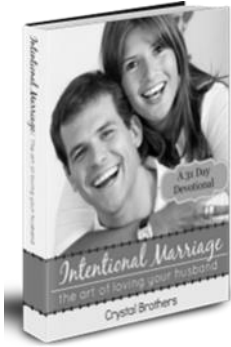
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The danger to most marriages isn't infidelity, or any of the other "big" things we tend to think of when we think of marriages dissolving. Even if infidelity is involved, the problems started long before that line was crossed. **No one in a healthy marriage wakes up and says "I think I'll have an affair today."**



No, as I mention in my book, *Intentional Marriage*, ruining a healthy marriage is a "slow fade" to borrow the Casting Crowns phrase. It is one bad decision at a time, a little bit of complacency at a time. So, if

you're interested in ruining your marriage? You can try these steps:

1. Criticize your spouse.

Girl, you deserve the absolute best, and if you aren't getting it, you need to tell him all about it. **Nag him about everything.** Analyze, criticize and micromanage everything he does. After all, if he isn't doing it your way, he's doing it wrong. If he hasn't messed up lately, be sure to bring up all his past mistakes!

While you're at it, **complain about him to your girlfriends**, crack belittling jokes about him in social settings, whether he's standing right there or not. I mean, how else are you going to fit in with your friends? What can we talk about if we don't make fun of our husbands? These days, you're accused of being a fuddy-duddy if you don't.

Finally, while you're criticizing, go ahead and ream him about his family, too. They are just the people who raised him for all these years.

2. Be selfish.

Focus on your needs and wants, not his. He isn't meeting your needs and that's all that matters. He doesn't deserve any effort from you. Make a mental list of all the ways that he isn't living up to his side of things in your marriage. But don't dare think about any of your own failures. **Refuse to change until he does.**

Since you're being selfish, you should probably go ahead and tack on some unreasonable expectations, and expect him to fill the void in your life that only Jesus can fill. If you aren't feeling complete or fulfilled, it must be your husband's fault. Yet another reason you shouldn't do anything to meet his needs. They aren't as important as yours anyway.

If you do have faults, you can easily find excuses and justifications for them.

3. Ignore your spouse.

Dating? That ends after you say, "I do." right? Don't spend time with him. Don't try to learn his love languages.

Don't make him a priority. You need time with your girlfriends.

Your kids need time with you. You live with your spouse every day, you shouldn't have to make time with him a priority. Go ahead and multi-task when you're spending time with him. It's not your fault that you just have too much stuff to do.

And, obviously between his lack of attention and your to-do list, he should understand why there is little passion in the relationship. You shouldn't have to try and force it. Don't bother.

Since you're already married, there is no need to make any effort—not at kindness, or appearance, or spending time together.

While you're ignoring him, you need someone to talk to, so you might as well go ahead and friend your old flame on Facebook and strike up an innocent "remember when" conversation. Or have a couple of close friends of the opposite sex to confide in and spend time alone with. You need a male perspective about things, that's all.

4. Fight.

Having an argument? Be sure to take everything he says in the worst possible way. And then bring up all his past mistakes. And try to read his mind. You already know what he's thinking and what he's going to say so why let him speak at all.

Don't like to argue? That's okay, you don't need to. You can just sulk and stew, until your anger and hurt feelings take root in your heart to make you bitter.

You should be as intolerant and unforgiving as possible. Mistakes are not allowed in this house. At least, not his. We aren't thinking about yours. Because you're always right. Always.

5. Play the comparison game.

Your husband isn't meeting your needs, but all of your friends have perfect husbands. Susie's husband is more thoughtful. Kelly's husband makes more money than yours and takes her on vacation. Sally's husband is more fun and outgoing. The list just goes on and on. Why can't your husband be more like that, because *then*, you would be happy.

Their husbands are better, their lives are better. Make it impossible for your husband to measure up.

And, there you go. You're well on your way to a ruined marriage.

However, if you would like to nurture your marriage instead, I would recommend that you check out my book, *Intentional Marriage*. In it, I share some devotionals and challenges to encourage us wives to be more intentional in loving our husbands.

Obviously, this is written very tongue-in-cheek. But unfortunately, these are habits that take root in our marriages every day. I have been guilty of many of them myself.

**For more information about the
Intentional Marriage book, see page 14.**

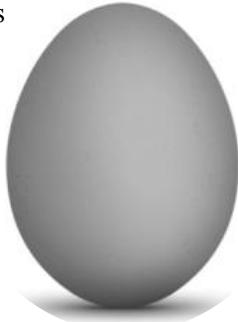
The End

The Trinity and An Egg

A child was reading the Bible, but no matter how hard he tried, he could not understand the concept of the Trinity—one God in three

Persons. He asked his teacher if she could help him to understand.

Knowing what a difficult idea it was to understand, the teacher answered, *In the Bible, God told many parables to help the disciples to understand; so my answer is sort of like a parable (an earthly story with a heavenly meaning). Look at the egg. There is a shell, a yolk, and white, but it is all one egg. This*

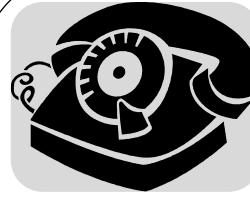


is like God. There is God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit, but only one God.

Sometimes there are things we cannot fully understand until we get to Heaven. I hope this helps you, and I pray that one day I will see you in Heaven.

We at the Amish Voice pray, too, that one day we will see you in Heaven! May we all keep seeking God and growing more like Jesus each day, walking in the Holy Spirit, trusting in Jesus, until we see Him face to face!

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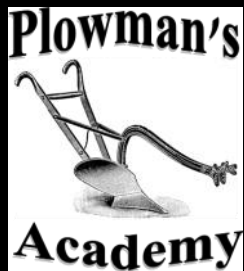
Upcoming conference calls:

- 1. July 06:** Forgiving those who hurt me
- 2. August 03:** What did Jesus mean when He said: “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature?” Mark 16:15

3. September 07: Who I am in Christ

Also, you can call in anytime and listen to some of our previous conference call recordings by dialing **(641) 715-3800**, pin # **89752**. You can even **leave us a message** at the end of the recording, which we hope you will do!

Some of the previous topics include **Faith and Works, Excommunication and Shunning, Worldliness, and Alcoholism.**



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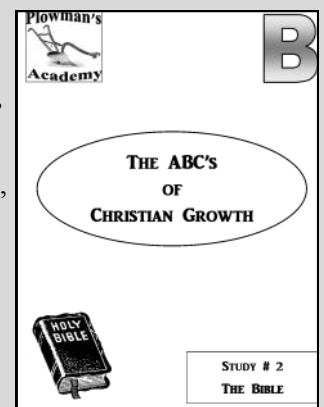
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Intentional Marriage

Marriage is a beautiful thing. God saw that it wasn't good for man to be alone and so he created him a helpmeet. Throughout scripture, marriage is shown as a parallel to the sacrificial and unconditional love that Christ has for his church.

But what about the times when marriage doesn't feel so beautiful? What if it gets lost in the shuffle of life, jobs, kids, and bills ...and sometimes it just doesn't seem worth the effort?

Then it's time to get intentional.

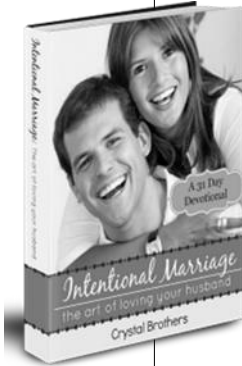
What does an intentional marriage look like?

Love is an action more than a feeling. **An intentional marriage is based on the decision to love your husband, regardless of how you might feel.**

An intentional marriage means that you are making a choice every day to put him first, and to demonstrate your love.

Enjoy a sample from the introduction of the book:

My little children, let us not love in word...but in deed and in truth. 1 John 3:18



The biggest threat to marriages in our modern world is daily neglect. When we stop trying, we start drifting apart.

We get caught up in the busyness of life. We get selfish. We get thoughtless.

We get prideful and entitled and start to focus on the ways our husband isn't doing this or that...or maybe he is doing this or that annoying thing.

Slowly, one day at a time, we can reach a crisis point in our marriage, just by {not} doing the small things.

If you are at that crisis point of your marriage, take heart. With God's help, nothing is hopeless. And you can improve yourself and improve your marriage.

This book is based on a simple concept. There is a saying attributed to Gandhi, "You must be the change you want to see in the world."

The words are true, and I believe they apply to marriage as well. This book is written for wives. Not because I believe that all of the problems in your marriage are your fault. But the fact of the matter is that focusing on your husband's faults breeds discontentment, and it isn't productive. You

cannot nag, pout, argue, or complain enough to change your husband. What you can do, though, is change yourself.

Not so long ago, I found myself in one of those bad places. I was focusing on my husband's faults and my needs, when it should have been the opposite. Through this challenge, an amazing thing happened. I started waking up asking myself, "What can I do to bless my husband today?"

It's a painfully simple concept but one that radically changed my life and marriage. Notice I said it radically changed my life. Even though this was a marriage challenge, the change went beyond my marriage. My walk with God was strengthened as I sought to honor Him through my marriage and my actions toward my husband. The even more amazing thing is that the change that took place in me changed my husband. When I started submitting to him, serving him, and intentionally loving him, he responded to me in completely different ways. . . .

To order the book, send \$11.00 to:

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Salvation By Grace (continued from back cover)

Romans 6:23 says: *For the wages (our payment) of sin is [physical and spiritual] death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

You might say: yes, but James 2:20 says, “*faith without works is dead.*” But if we truly have Jesus, we will want to obey His word out of love and the fact that He removed all our sins and gave us everlasting life; not because we are trying to get salvation from Him.

John 14:15 says: *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

Galatians 2:16 says: *Knowing that a man is not justified (made right in God’s eyes) by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*

Stop trying in the flesh to be saved!

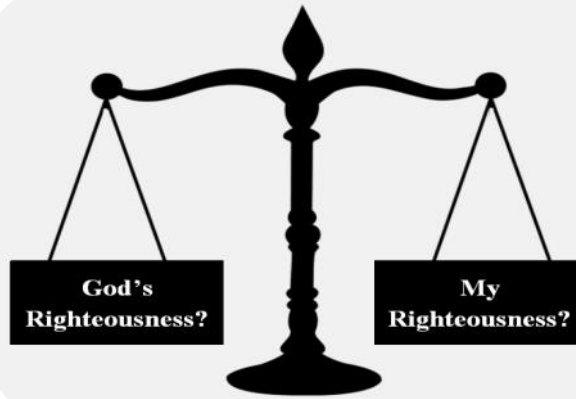
John 14:6 says, *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

John 10:7, 9: *Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

Check the motives of your heart. Are you trying so hard to get to God in the flesh that you will end up missing out on heaven? You and I cannot get to Him because we were born into a certain culture, belonged to a certain church, or lived a life free of murder, lying, stealing, and sexual immorality. We get to Him by repenting of our self-righteous attitude and works, such as thinking that I’m a

good church member, have been baptized, pray at least once a day, live a humble and plain life, and help those who are in need. We get to God by placing 100% of our trust in His son, Jesus Christ.

Matthew 7:22: *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*



Jesus wants all the honor and glory for saving us! Jesus took our sins to the cross, paying for them so we can be claimed as “not guilty.” Don’t let anyone tell you another way.

Colossians 2:8: *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

Romans 3:23 and 1 John 1:9 say that we were all born as sinners needing someone to save us, but if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Romans 5:9 makes it plain. *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

Romans 3:24-25: *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (turning God’s wrath*

away from us by taking away our sins) *through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission (removal) of sins. . . .”*

It says His righteousness; not ours. Stop performing and simply trust Jesus.

Romans 10:3 talks about people who were going about establishing their own righteousness, but had not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

Do good, obey, and serve Jesus now because you love Him. Ask Jesus what it is that He wants you to do today. There might be a soul that is lost, needing your help to find the truth. The truth sets a person free! If you try to get in some other way, you’ll miss it.

For those who are trying to get to God on their own, please listen carefully:

Romans 4:4: *Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.*

Romans 4:14: *For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:*

Jesus, I have no one but You. My focus and help is only from You. I give You my heart and soul. You are the Way to salvation and Your blood cleanses me from sin. Come into my heart and forgive my sins with your blood, clothe me with the robe of your righteousness and not mine own. I surrender my whole life and heart to you.

Romans 4:16: *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.*

Jesus is enough! Look to Him! Believe in Him! “Prayer is the key that connects us with God.”

Romans 10:13: *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

—An Amish Sister

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The Amish Voice
Conference Call Schedule
is listed on page 13!

Salvation By Grace Through Faith

—An Amish Sister

Trying to be saved by keeping the law and being saved by grace are two entirely different approaches. Christ's provision for our salvation will not help us if we are trying to save ourselves. Obeying the law does not make it any easier for God to save us. All we can do is accept His grace through faith.

Romans 11:6: *And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.*

Let me explain. The law, or our works, was never meant to be the means of our salvation. God's word was meant to show us our need for salvation. Galatians 3:24 says, *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

In our human nature, we tend to want to do good things to help us to salvation. It might be getting baptized, belonging to a church, saying your prayers, helping someone in need or whatever it might be; it's not the same thing for everyone. These are all well and good, but if you are

doing it to get God's approval and acceptance for salvation it is deceiving.

Beware of people who say we need to do more than believe in Christ to be saved. When people set up additional requirements for salvation, they deny the power of Christ's death on the cross. You see, salvation is something that Jesus already accomplished; it is finished! It is a free gift, waiting for whoever accepts Jesus and the payment He made for sin when He died on the cross.

today and going on forever) (John 3:16).

Beware of people who say, "Don't read your Bible too much."

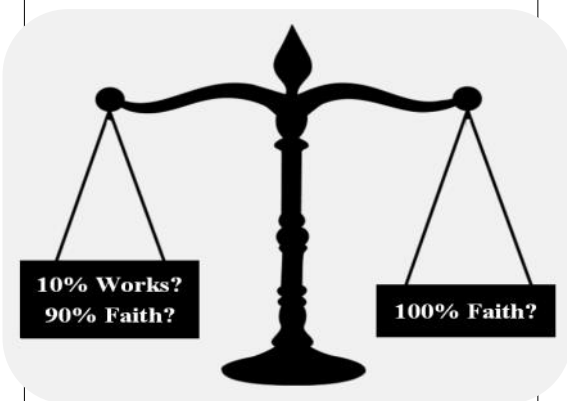
2 Timothy 3:15 says, *And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

Acts 17:11 states that the Berean Jews *received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily.*

Beware of people who say, "You can't know whether or not you are saved."

I John 5:13 says, *These things have I written unto you . . . that ye may know that ye have eternal life. . .*

Read Ephesians 2:8-9, which says in part, *For by grace are ye saved (the free gift) through faith; Faith in what? In His blood. Faith in His finished work on the cross. Faith that He died, that He rose again for our sins. and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*



For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish (in Hell), but have everlasting life (starting

Continued Inside—Page 15