

THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT



Some words of advice from a Christian woman, to her Christian female friends in the Lord, and her children. (And anyone else who may find it useful.)

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INTRODUCTION

Many people are looking for happiness, but what is real happiness, and what's the difference between happiness, and true contentment and real peace in your heart.



Many people look to money to make them happy, other people look for position or power; others think that they will be happy if they could have maybe a bigger house, or a better car.

Many people look for happiness in relationships, perhaps they are looking for a boyfriend or girlfriend or husband or wife. Perhaps they are looking to get out of a relationship they are in and would rather not be in.

Some people do wild, crazy, or dangerous or daring things hoping that will make them happy.

Some people like to travel, go to new places and meet new people and hope to find happiness somewhere other than where they are.



People have all sorts of different ideas how to get happy.



But what is real happiness and what is the difference between having a contented, quiet, peaceful heart, and being happy?

A small child may be temporarily made happy and stop screaming in a supermarket, if he is given a lollipop, but that child is not peaceful, or content, just distracted and quiet for a short time until he finishes the lollipop, or drops the lollipop, and then starts shouting again.

Life can be like that, people may temporarily be happy if they get a new job or boyfriend, or get some unexpected money or buy a bigger house or the latest gadget, but soon that happiness wears off.

The boyfriend is not as perfect as he appeared to be, the house maybe nice but it does not really make you happy.



Activities, friends, sports, or gadgets may fill your time and make you feel happy for a time, but ultimately they will not bring true lasting happiness.

But where can I get true lasting happiness then?

We were created by God to know God and to be part of His eternal family; so nothing in this world will bring everlasting happiness, only a relationship with the one true and living God.

That is not religion, but relationship.

1 BE BORN AGAIN.

The human race has a problem, we have all sinned, and we all do wrong things sometimes. God has setup a standard He expects us to keep, - The Ten Commandments.

Most people think they are good, but when we start to examine ourselves before God, by His standards, we all fall short.

The Bible says:

Romans 3:23 KJB (King James Bible – Authorised Version.)
For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

If you have ever taken God's name wrongly, or lied, or looked lustfully after a man or woman, you have sinned. If you have coveted - wrongly wanting something belonging to someone else, then you have sinned.

If you put anything as more important than God in your life, that is in fact an idol in God's sight.

We have all sinned in some way or another, at some point in our life and the penalty, according to The Bible, is death, followed by hell and then the lake of fire.

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



JESUS HAS SET ME FREE!

Hebrews 9:27 KJB
And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Hebrews 10:30b-31 KJB
The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Death is the ultimate statistic, it happens to all normally.

We can not run around trying to be busy with our toys and pleasures, hoping we will be happy, if we have neglected our very soul, and what will happen to it after we die. We must accept we are sinners, realize that The Lord Jesus Christ left the glory of Heaven to live a sinless life on this earth, died in yours and my place, took our punishment upon Himself, so that we can go free and go to Heaven rather than Hell.



If we believe this with all our heart, repent of our sins, meaning stop doing them, are born again, and filled with the Spirit of God, then we can have peace and know that we are going to Heaven.

2. GOD IS IN CONTROL

This should be it. We should have real peace, joy and happiness. If we are truly born again by the Spirit of God then we do have absolute peace, joy, contentment and happiness.

The problem is that we are human beings; we live in a fallen sinful world, where terrible things happen. Often as Christians we do not feel that love, joy and peace we know we should have.



That is what I am going to explore now. I hope to look at why as Christians we lose the peace we perhaps once had, or how to find the contentment that we have never yet experienced.

I want to encourage you now, that whatever the horror or hopelessness of your circumstances, God is in control.

To be content and at peace as Christians, we must first understand that God is totally and utterly in control.

We may know this in our heads, but believing it with our heart is a different matter. Unless we really believe that in every situation, however difficult, God is completely in control, we will naturally panic and lose our peace and worry. It is a natural thing to be fearful and worry in many situations, but that does not mean it is right. If God has got everything under control and we really believe that, then why should we worry. God loves us, He is our loving Heavenly Father who wants the best for us. We need not fear, we may naturally fear in our fleshly bodies, but learning to quietly trust and believe that God has everything under control will quieten our fears and give us great peace.

Romans 8:28 KJB

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

However terrible the situation may be, our loving Heavenly Father is working it for the good of those that love Him.

Being a Christian does not mean that we will not have to go through the storm, but rather through the storm, or the fire, God will keep us and purify and refine us, that we may come out as pure gold.

All through the Bible we see examples of men and women who loved God going through difficult situations, but God was with them through those situations. Daniel had to go through the lions den, but God looked after him in it. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had to go through the fire, but God looked after them in the fire.

We can be sure if God allows us to go through a situation, and we truly love God, then it will be for our good. He is our loving Heavenly Father and he has our best interest on His heart.

The old hymn Trust and Obey reminds us to trust God in everything:

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*



**WE MAY NOT KNOW WHICH
WAY TO GO, BUT GOD
ALWAYS KNOWS THE WAY,
BECAUSE JESUS IS THE WAY.**



Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,
But His smile quickly drives it away;
Not a doubt or a fear, not a sigh or a tear,
Can abide while we trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,
But our toil He doth richly repay;
Not a grief or a loss, not a frown or a cross,
But is blessed if we trust and obey.

But we never can prove the delights of His love
Until all on the altar we lay;
For the favour He shows, and the joy He bestows,
Are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet.
Or we'll walk by His side in the way.
What He says we will do, where He sends we will go;
Never fear, only trust and obey.

3. DO NOT WORRY

Worry is wrapped up in this.
We are all inclined to worry in some way or another,
some more than others. But we are told:

1 Peter 5:7 KJB
Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Matthew 13:22 KJB
He also that received seed among the thorns is he
that heareth the word; and the care of this world,
and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word,
and he becometh unfruitful.



**YOU MAY FEEL LIKE
YOU HAVE THE WEIGHT
OF THE WORLD ON
YOUR SHOULDERS.
BUT DON'T WORRY,
GOD IS ABLE TO
CARRY THE WORLD.**



Philippians 4:6-7 KJB

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

4. FEAR GOD NOT MAN.

Fear is an even bigger robber of our peace. We naturally fear in certain situations. Sometimes this fear is there for a right reason. The greatest example of this is that we should fear God.

Proverbs 1:7 KJB

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 9:10 KJB

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

Psalms 19:9 KJB

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

Proverbs 16:6 KJB

By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.

2 Corinthians 7:1 KJB

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Luke 12:4-7 KJB

And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.



Proverbs 3:24-26 KJB

When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.

Correct fear of God causes us to depart from evil and do what is right, but fear because we are not trusting God is wrong.



We could naturally be fearful in some situations, but we must practice trusting God in the smaller situations, so when the larger trials of life come, we are already at peace that God is in control whatever happens.

In Mark 4 we see Jesus sleeping peacefully, with His head on a pillow. He was not afraid of the storm. He was God, in control of the storm.

We naturally fear in some situations!

Mark 4:37-41 KJB

And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so

fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

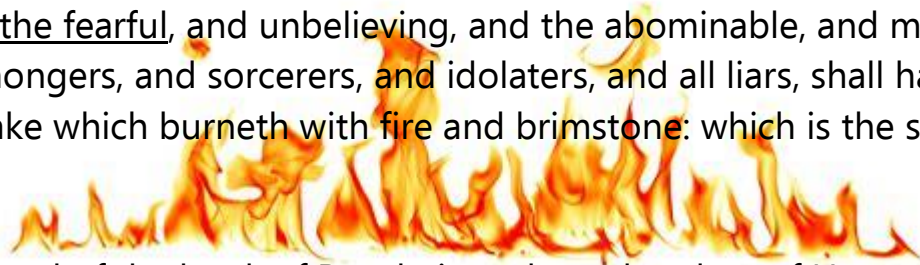
2 Timothy 1:7 KJB

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

There is a very sobering verse about the dangers of wrong fear.

Revelation 21:6-8 KJB

And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.



Right at the end of the book of Revelation where the glory of Heaven is described, we have a warning the fearful shall have their part in the lake of fire.

This is such a sobering warning about how serious fear can be. We are all naturally prone to it, as we are to many other sins, but not trusting God and having complete confidence in God is serious, and we must overcome our fears.

The fear of man is one of the biggest fears that can rob us of the peace that we could have.

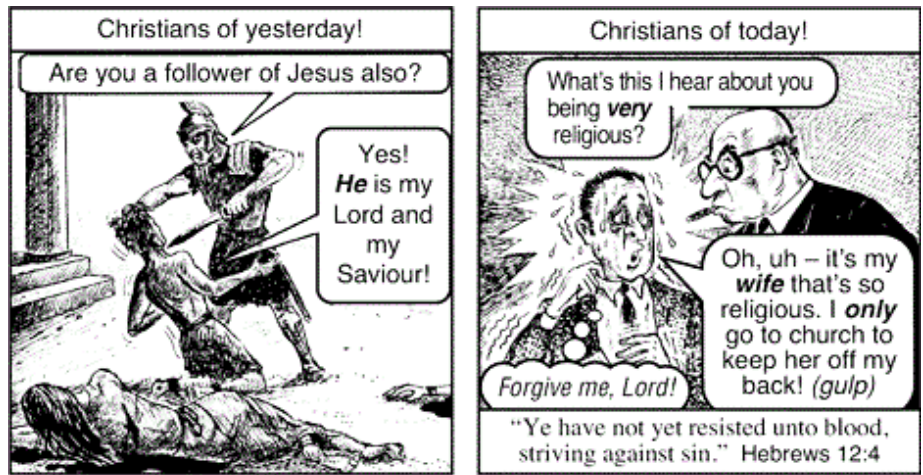
Proverbs 29:25 KJB

The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

In many places Christians are openly persecuted for trusting God. The threat of death is real, and there have been, and will be, many martyred for Jesus. We

have the wonderful, encouraging testimonies of their faithfulness unto death. (See Foxes Book of Martyrs, for example).

But we in the western world, where life has been easier, and we have not generally, in this generation, been killed for professing to be a Christian, can so often be afraid of man. I have been guilty, I confess, to being scared of saying, or doing something, because of what someone might think of me.



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We must get our minds and lives in line with what God expects of us.

Psalm 118 verse six says I will not fear what man can do to me.

This transforms our lives, and our hearts, when we truly know that God is in control, and stop being bothered what people think about us.

Psalm 118:4-6 KJB

Let them now that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth for ever. I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

Hebrews 13:6 KJB

So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

5. DO NOT COMPLAIN, BUT GIVE THANKS.



The next main problem we are prone to is to complain.



Do not complain. We naturally often even delight in complaining about anything. In England where I live the weather is so changeable that it is almost a national pastime to complain about the weather.



But God does not want us to complain.

Many of the children of Israel, when wandering through the wilderness, instead of thanking God for his amazing provision for them, by providing them with manna and quail to eat, and water to drink, complained instead. God was very angry with their complaining, they complained about so many things. Even when they were about to go into the promise land they complained, and did not trust God; God was so angry, He was about to destroy them; but Moses pleaded with God, and instead they wandered 40 years in the wilderness, until all the men that had complained, and murmured against God died. Their children entered the Promised Land instead of them. (See Numbers chapter 14.)



Instead of complaining we should give thanks in every circumstance.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 KJB

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Is it really possible to give thanks in every situation? Well God has told us to, so whether we feel like it or not, our constant striving must be to stop complaining, and have an attitude of thankfulness in every situation.

Some of you will have heard of Corrie Ten Boon. She was a Dutch Christian lady who was sent to a concentration camp in Germany during the Second World War, for hiding Jews. She suffered many things, and God kept her



to tell of God's love, mercy and strength, despite the terrible things she went through. She gives us an example of giving thanks. In the place where Corrie and Betsie her sister had to sleep, there were flees. Her sister said to her to give thanks to God for the flees. I think most of us would find it hard to give thanks for flees in our bed! But she did. Later they found out that because of the flea infestation in that place, the guards would not come into the dormitory. This made it easier for them to hide their smuggled Bible and enjoy Bible studies at night together. When they arrived they could not foresee the blessing the flees would turn out to be.



Betsie ten Boom.

We, however hard, must have an attitude of giving thanks to God for everything. When we do, we will naturally start to feel happy.

The old hymn "Count your blessings" puts it well:

When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged,
Thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

*Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God hath done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*

Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you
are called to bear?
Count your many blessings,
Every doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the
days go by.

When you look at others with
their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised
you His wealth untold.
Count your many blessings,
Money cannot buy,
Your reward in heaven,
Nor your home on high.

So amid the conflict, whether
great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings,
Angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.

I have also written a little song about giving thanks:

Are you feeling lonely?
Are you feeling sad?
Are you feeling down and that things are really bad?
I'll share this little secret,
It will help you to revive,
You'll find it in the Bible,
In one Thessalonians chapter five.



Chorus

*In everything give thanks x3
For this is the will of God in
Christ Jesus for you.*

Are you feeling grumpy?
With a cloud upon your
head?
Did you get out of the
wrong side of the bed?
Look up in the sky,
At the rainbow instead.
You will feel a blessing,
As the Bible said.



So do not be discouraged,
Praise God in everything.
Your life can be a joy.
Despite the pain and suffering,
God will give you blessing,
As you give all to Him.
Remember to thank Him,
As you praise and sing.



It really releases us and gives us a new level of peace and contentment, we can nurture an attitude of thankfulness. It is an act of our will to turn from complaining and self pity, and move into an attitude of thankfulness. If we do this, then however hard the situation may be, no one can take away our peace. if

Psalm 79:13 KJB

So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.

Psalm 92:1-2 KJB

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,

Psalm 136:1-3 KJB

O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.

1 Corinthians 15:57 KJB

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

6. PRAISE GOD.

Giving thanks to God is naturally connected with praising God, as we see in the Psalms above. Praising God is what we were made for.

Hebrews 13:15 KJB

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

Not only are we to give thanks in everything, we are to praise God continually.

1 Peter 2:9 KJB

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

As we spend time everyday singing praises to God, it lifts our spirits and is one of the best antidotes to depression you can get. As you spend time praising God it brings you closer in your heart to God, you feel the



presence of God, His Holy Spirit within you. Normally as a family, we sing together praises to God, and read the Bible twice a day. We have a great time, we use instruments and the little children love to clap and dance along. Before I was married, I used to have a time on my own, in the evening, in my room playing the guitar and singing to God. I found it a most blessed time. Praise I believe is an often underused secret of contentment.

Paul and Silas were thrown into prison, they were in a horrible situation, they had been beaten and were facing death, but they praised God. God sent an earthquake and opened the prison doors for them.

Acts 16:25-26 KJB

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

Psalms 50:23 KJB

Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

Psalms 69:30 KJB

I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.

Psalms 71:22 KJB

I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.

Psalms 98:4-6 KJB

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King.

Psalm 104:33-34 KJB

I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord .

Psalm 118:21 KJB

I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

Psalm 145:2-4 KJB

Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.

Psalm 86:12-13 KJB

I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

Psalm 102:17-21 KJB

He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord. For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death; To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem;

7. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.

While we think about giving thanks and praising continually, the Bible in the same chapter that tells us to give thanks, also exalts us to pray without ceasing.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 KJB

Pray without ceasing.



We might in our earthly minds wonder how it can be possible to give thanks, praise continually and pray without ceasing. But if we are commanded to do so, then God will show us how to work this out practically.

Our relationship with God depends on us talking to God. People who are married have to talk to each other and spend time together to grow deeper in their relationship together. How much more do we need to spend



time with God to deepen our relationship with Him. Praying is having that continual communication with God at all times wherever we are. We can talk to God in our heart wherever we are, and whatever we are doing. We do need to put time aside and be quiet alone with God, but as we grow closer to God that communication becomes continual.

James 5:16 KJB

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

8. LIVE A HOLY LIFE.

Hebrews 12:14 KJB

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:



1 Timothy 6:6-8 KJB

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

God does hear our prayers if we are right with Him.

Caleb thanking the Lord for his food.

Proverbs 15:8 KJB

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

Psalm 6:9 KJB

The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer.

Psalm 102:17 KJB

He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

Psalm 66:18-20 KJB

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

But if we turn from the commandments of God, then beware, God will not hear our prayer.

Jeremiah 7:16-17 KJB

Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee. Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

Jeremiah 11:14-15 KJB

Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble. What hath my beloved to do in mine house, seeing she hath wrought lewdness with many, and the holy flesh is passed from thee? when thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest.

Part of a prayer of Daniel:

Daniel 9:13-14 KJB

As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

1 Peter 3:10-12 KJB

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

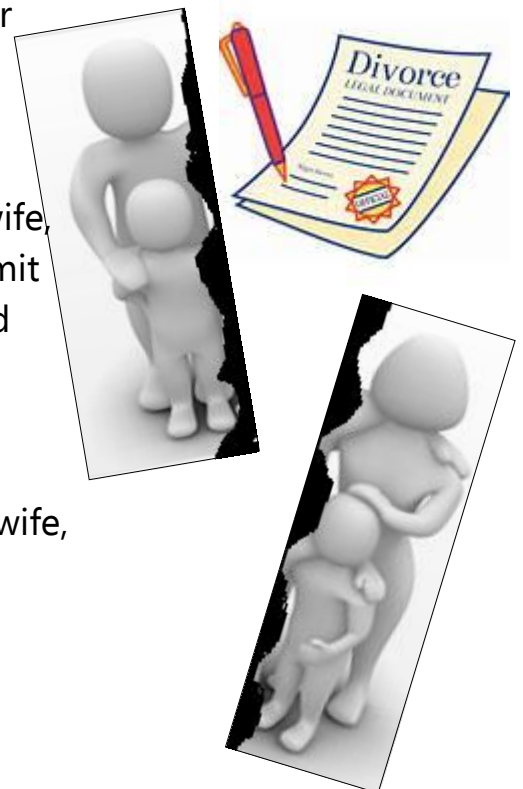


There is a false doctrine that is very prevalent in the church today. It teaches that you can do anything as a Christian and God will forgive you. It is true that whatever you did before you become a Christian and are born again is forgiven, but once you have become a Christian, you can not continually wilfully, knowingly sin, and expect God to forgive you. If you want with all your heart to love God, and do what is right, and then accidentally, not wilfully, sin, then God will forgive you, if you repent and ask His forgiveness. But you are in a very dangerous position before God if you think that you can deliberately do something that God does not want you to do, and expect God to forgive you, and let you into Heaven with unrepented sin. We must repent of our sin. One of the sins that God hates among others is sexual sin. If we are born again we can not continue to commit fornication or adultery. Fornication is sex before marriage, and adultery is sex after marriage with someone other than our first husband or wife. (Except a faithful widow or widower remarrying.) Remarriage after divorce is adultery.



Matthew 5:32 KJB

But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.



Mark 10:11 KJB

And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

Luke 16:18 KJB

Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

Romans 7:2-3 KJB

For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

Galatians 5:19-21 KJB

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 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.



James 2:10-24 KJB

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my

works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

Please see the book "To The Glory of God" written by my husband, and available to download for free from the website www.left-behind.info



This book goes into detail about this subject, sexual sin in the church and many other reasons why Christians will be left behind when Jesus returns because they are sinning against God.

You will not have real happiness, peace or contentment if your life is not in line with God's perfect prescribed way of doing things. You may feel happy for a season, or really believe that if you gave up a man or woman for Christ then you could never be happy. But it is only through obedience to what God says in His Holy Word that real peace will come; not just in this life, but in the life to come. Is anything in this world worth burning in hell forever? It is the difference between Heaven and hell, eternal life or eternal death. Do not be deceived by anyone. Read God's Word, and obey it, then even if you have temporary difficulties and sad times in this life, the glories of Heaven, as opposed to the terrors of hell will be worth it.

9. GET RID OF THE RUBBISH IN YOUR LIFE.

Sin can be all around us and must be avoided. It is not possible for us to leave this world and the temptations of it. But we do have control over what we feed our mind most of the time.



Philippians 4:8 KJB

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Many things around us are not profitable for us. Consider everything you do and ask yourself if Jesus would do that with you, or is He happy for you to do that. We must think carefully about every form of media, entertainment, or written material. The television, for example, fills the mind with every possible sin; idolatry, blasphemy, murder, hatred, disobedient to parents, adultery, fornication, coveting, lying and any other sin man has ever committed. Even the nature programs are built on a foundation of evolutionary thinking, and do not give glory to God. God does not want us to fill our minds with such sin. We must stop.



Psalms 101:3 KJB

I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.

Looking at someone with lust is a serious matter before God.

Matthew 5:28 KJB

But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

What we do with our eyes affects our heart, we must be careful what we put in front of our eyes.

God is angry if we spend the time God has given us, filling our minds with sin. The television pumps sin out constantly, even the children's programs or nature programs do not give

glory to God, they are not harmless fun. At best

they are a waste of time that should be spent in something more profitable, at worse they

teach sin that will lead to hell. If something does not give glory to God, think very carefully who wrote or produced the material, and for what purpose. This applies to everything, not

just the TV (hellivision), but the internet; YouTube for example, media, books, magazines, computer programs, or apps, theatre, cinema, or any type of entertainment that we may wish to pass time with. Even educational material can be written for the glory of God, or to promote a false world view (e.g. evolution). Children's storybooks may contain ghosts or promote witchcraft, or promote lifestyles that are not pleasing to God, as a normal or ideal way of living. We must test everything we read or watch, and everything our children read or watch, and be sure God is happy with it. We will not have peace or contentment or true happiness, if we are sinning before God. Get rid of the hellivision, videos, books, magazines, music, DVDs, CDs, or **anything** that fills your mind with things of the world, rather than things of God. Be transformed.

Romans 12:2 KJB

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 13:14 KJB

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Galatians 5:16-17, 24 KJB

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 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. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Ephesians 2:2-3 KJB

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Ephesians 4:22-24 KJB

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

2 Timothy 2:19, 21-22 KJB

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Titus 2:11-14 KJB

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and

the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

1 John 2:15-17 KJB

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.



Take it day by day, and even after a short period of withdrawal from the things of the world, a new holiness which brings real peace will start to fill your mind. Things of God, for example reading the Bible and praising God with singing, and time praying, must take the place of the worldly things you give up, and then you will start to feel the blessing and peace of God.

Mark 4:18-19 KJB

And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

1 Corinthians 10:1-14 KJB

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.



Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

10 DO NOT WORSHIP IDOLS.

1 John 5:21 KJB

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen

Another sin that gets between God and us, that prevents contentment, is idolatry. Most of us in the western world do not bow down to an image made out of stone or metal, but idolatry is not just bowing down to an image, but anything in our lives that is more important than God.

If our house, car, garden, job or career, possessions, money, hobbies, sports, holidays, food, pets, children, parents, husband or wife, or even our own life, is more important than God, then we have an idol in our life that must be thrown down.

You might say, surely not my family, or my own life?



**IDOLATRY IS NOT JUST BOWING
DOWN TO AN IMAGE, BUT
ANYTHING IN OUR LIVES THAT IS
MORE IMPORTANT THAN GOD.**

We are to love and care for our families, and our own bodies, but they must never have more importance to us than God.

Matthew 10:37-39 KJB

He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.



Matthew 19:29 KJB

And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

Luke 14:26-27, 33 KJB

If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.



These are very strong words of Jesus. But that is what God expects. We are to love and care for our family, Jesus speaks many words telling us to honour our parents,

Matthew 19:19 KJB

Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

But if in anyway our family get between us and God, then God must have first place in our lives.

Even Jesus illustrated this to us when His mother and brothers came to see Him.

Matthew 12:46-50 KJB

While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

If Jesus warns us so strongly not to love our families, or our own lives more than God, how much more should we forsake the other things that could be idols in our lives.

Houses, cars, jobs, etc are not wrong if we are living where God wants us to live, doing the job God has guided us to do, buying only the things God wants us to buy, going only the places God wants us to go etc.

We must have the attitude that everything we have, our time, our talents, our money, our possessions, even our lives are wholly given over to God. Only by truly dying to self, in every aspect of our lives, giving up our selfish ambitions, and desires, will we find true happiness, peace, and contentment.

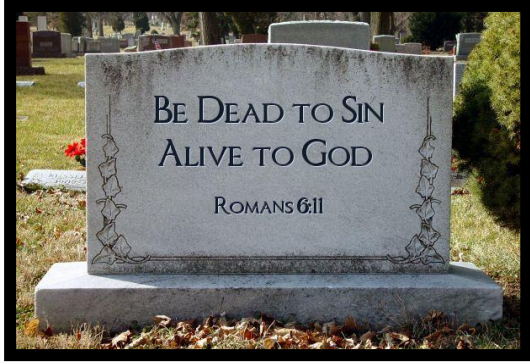


John 12:24-26 KJB

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this

world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

Only by denying self will we experience new life in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



Mark 8:34-38 KJB

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his

life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.



**WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT
A MAN, IF HE SHALL
GAIN THE WHOLE
WORLD, AND LOSE
HIS OWN SOUL?**

11. SUBMISSION TO GOD.

Accept God's will and plan for you.

As we deny self and accept God as King on the throne in our lives, then the next step is to submit to God's plan for our lives. We all naturally want to do some great work. We want to achieve something. This may be a right desire, for example to see thousands saved and born again. But however good the desire, it will not bring forth good fruit in our lives, for the true glory of God, unless we have done it in God's strength, for His glory, according to His will.

We see this so many times through the Old Testament when those that loved The Lord tried to work out what to do themselves, rather than wait on God for His timing and His perfect plan. These people loved God and wanted to do what was right, but trying in human strength and wisdom did not bring about God's perfect plan for them. Abraham and Sarah were examples of this. To human wisdom Sarah was not going to have a baby, she was too old. God had promised Abraham a son, so they used their own wisdom and Abraham had a son by Hagar, Sarah's maid. This was not God's perfect plan. Sarah was to be the

mother of Abraham's son, and when she was 90 years old, she did give birth to Isaac. Humanly speaking this was not possible, but with God all things are possible. (You can read the true story of this in Genesis chapters 17, 21 and 22). Abraham greatly loved God and was greatly blessed by God. What happened in his life is recorded so that we can learn from it. We must be very careful to seek God's will for us in everything. If we are wholehearted for God and make a mistake, then God will teach us and bring us back to the right way, but our desire must be to do God's will in everything.

God's will for our life is not always what we expect or want. While we may have great plans to convert thousands for example, God's plan for our life may first involve our sanctification. God is watching how we behave right here and now. Are we happy to help and joyfully perform the lowliest of tasks, or are we always looking for a great work. If we can not be joyful and content cleaning the house, or doing the washing up, then how can God use us for a great work? This can be a particular problem for us women in the Western world. Society wrongly tells us that our value comes from what we do, rather than because God gives us value, we are loved and important to God. This often makes it very difficult for a Christian woman in the western world to have peace and true happiness, and contentment, being a wife and mother. Staying at home and looking after our children, bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, is not seen as important by the world. But as Christian women we can have no higher calling. We can feel buried in a pile of nappies, washing up and cleaning that never seems to end. We can wonder if this is really God's plan for our lives. But we must learn to be content wherever God puts us, doing the job God wants us to do, for His glory. It is not wrong for women to do paid work. There are many examples in the Bible of women working outside the home, buying and selling for example. See Proverbs chapter 31. We have ten children and I work part-time, we believe this is what God has led me in for the moment.



Although I have an interesting, relatively enjoyable job, I would rather be at home all the time with the children the Lord has given us, I miss them even for the few hours I am at work. They will soon grow up and our opportunity to train them in the way they should go will be past. We must use the time while we have it.

Our diligence in everyday tasks around the house will be seen by God. The children will eventually grow up and God may have another task for us then, but whatever God expects you to do now, do it with your whole heart for God.

The young man may rather be the farm manager than the farm worker, doing all the unpleasant jobs. But he will probably have to learn all the dirty, unpleasant, jobs before he is promoted to tractor driver, and then maybe one day farm manager.

Joseph was sold as a slave by his own brothers, then falsely accused and was imprisoned for something he did not do. But he was diligent as a slave and promoted, he was then diligent in prison. Eventually he came out of prison to become the second ruler in Egypt. He was well trained in the hard times through the menial tasks, to trust God and have peace in God. He was then well trained and able to do the great task when God called him at the right time.

(See Genesis chapters 37-41)

Likewise David kept sheep, and during this time as a shepherd boy he fought a lion and a bear. The training he had as a shepherd, trusting God to keep him in dangerous situations, meant when there was a giant to fight, he was not afraid but went boldly in the strength of God. He went on to become king of Israel



later after many trials and difficulties. (See 1 Samuel chapters 16 through 2 Samuel and into Kings.)

We may never become a ruler of a country, but we will stand before God on Judgment day to answer to God for everything we have done. We can choose to do what God has asked us to do with joy and peace and contentment, or we can be discontented and grumpy, always looking for something better in our own eyes. If we are wholeheartedly, diligently doing the menial tasks God has asked us to do, then He may give us a task that we see as greater, but we should not seek greatness, but rather to do God's will.

We must seek God's will for our life every step of the way and continually ask God what His will is for us. If we are not doing what God wants us to do, we probably will not have peace. Like the toddler with a lollipop we may feel happy for a time. But being outside God's will, will leave us without true happiness, peace and real contentment. We will never be truly happy unless we are doing what God wants us to do.

12 SUBMISSION TO THE GOD GIVEN AUTHORITIES IN YOUR LIFE.

Hebrews 13:17 KJB

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

All of us, rich, poor, male, female, those seen as important, or those seen as unimportant by the world, have some form of authority in our life that we need to submit to. Even prime ministers, presidents and kings, except in extreme dictatorships, have to submit to the laws of the land.

1 Peter 2:13-14 KJB

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

That does not mean we always have to do everything we are told to do. If the authority in our life tells us to do something wrong, then we must not do it. The apostles gave us an example of this, they were told not to preach in the name of Jesus, but they said they ought to obey God rather than man.

Acts 5:27-29 KJB

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

Where there is a contradiction between what God expects and what an authority in your life expects, then we must obey God. But if it is not a contradiction then we should obey the authority. This applies whether it be a ruler, parent, teacher, husband or any other God given authority. By doing so, we will normally have much greater peace.

If the authorities tell us not to drive more than a certain speed, for example, that law is there for good, to limit harm, to stop us from accidentally killing someone. God does not specifically give us a maximum speed limit in the Bible, but the law is a good law. If we break that law we may break our peace. We may get caught on a speed camera, or by a policeman, or even harm or kill someone. In some way it will upset our peace if we break the good laws.



God has set up order in society; there are rulers, judges, councillors, policemen etc. There is also normally an order of authority in a work place. There is usually a manager or director, and various levels of middle managers or supervisors who organise and direct the employees. Without some form of structure the organization would be in chaos and confusion, and would be unprofitable and may even collapse. God has also set up order of responsibility in the church and home. Without this order there would also be chaos and disorder. Within a family the children are expected to obey their parents.

Ephesians 6:1-4 KJB

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Note once again the balance, "parents in the Lord". If parents ask children to disobey God then they are not to obey. Homes where children obey their parents will have much more peace and rest than in homes where children are constantly disobeying their parents. The order is there for the good of the family.

God has also given order between husbands and wives.

1 Peter 3:1 KJB

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

Colossians 3:18-19 KJB

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Ephesians 5:21-28 KJB

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

Once again the order of responsibility is there not so one can oppress another, but to give order and peace. In the western world it can be a hard thing for a wife to submit to the authority of her husband, because it goes against what society around us often teaches. But as wives when we realize that it is not about who is the most important, but about God given order and responsibility, then it can help us to understand God's perfect plan for us. As we submit to our husbands where it does not contradict God's law, then we will have peace in our hearts and houses. Wives trying to usurp the God given authority in the home will only cause tension and strife. There will not be true joy, peace and happiness. This is not about a husband oppressing his wife, but rather taking responsibility and making the final decision on a matter. A wise manager will organise the company well for the good of the company, and those that work in it. A wise husband and father will listen to God, and will order the family well under the authority of God, by the wisdom of God, for the glory of God and the good of the family. The wife has nothing to fear by submitting to her husband. God is in control.

In summary; God puts an order of responsibility in most situations anyone may find themselves in. If we submit to the God given order, it will normally bring us peace.

There may be situations where that authority is abusing its power, a corrupt judge, an abusive husband or an awkward teacher or employer. We should ask God for wisdom in those situations how we should handle the situation. We should seek to honour God, and if it is possible to submit to that authority then we should. But there will be situations where it would not be wrong, but actually God's perfect will for us, and the wise thing to do, to get out of the situation. For example leaving a job and finding another one, or even fleeing a city or country if needed, the apostle Paul often fled from city to city persecuted by the authorities.

A married couple may separate, but divorce and remarriage is not permitted biblically. (Please see the book *To the Glory of God* available to download for free on the website www.left-behind.info for more detail on this subject.)

If we ask God for wisdom and seek His will wholeheartedly, and obey His leading, then we will have peace, however hard a situation may be. There may be much sadness or tears but true peace will eventually come, even if that peace is in Heaven; the reward and resting place for those who obey and love God.

1 Peter 5:5-7 KJB

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

13. BE HUMBLE NOT PROUD.

James 4:6 KJB

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

James 4:10 KJB

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

2 Chronicles 7:14 KJB

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Pride is a deadly sin that will not only rob us of our happiness, but could also rob us of our salvation.

Proverbs 16:5a KJB

Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord:
The reason the Devil fell was pride. (See Isaiah chapter 14 King James Bible)

Matthew 23:11-12 KJB

But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

Jesus humbled himself, left Heaven to be born as a baby, live a sinless life and then die a horrible death for us. We also must humble ourselves.

Philippians 2:8 KJB

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.



Proverbs 13:10 KJB

Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

What the world sees as weakness is often great strength and peace.

Some people have a tendency to want to be the best and beat other people. Wanting to work hard is good, and even to do well, but wanting to be better than others can easily be pride. You can be good at something but use that gift to encourage and help people not gloat or put them down. Whatever we do must be done for the glory of God, not for our own glory.

Any gifts we have are given by God, to be used for the glory of God, if God had not given us health and strength and a mind to think we could do nothing. Pride in thinking we have achieved something in our own strength is only deceiving ourselves, and will end in destruction. God is well able to humble the proud, we are wise to humble ourselves.

1 Peter 5:5b KJB

For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

We all need to be humble enough to accept instruction and council. Anyone who thinks he knows everything is in a dangerous position. We have to choose that council wisely, and ensure that the council comes from God's wisdom not worldly wisdom. But we all must be humble enough to accept wise advice.

14. LEARN TO BE AT PEACE WITH ALL, AS IT DEPENDS ON YOU.

Romans 12:18-19 KJB

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.



Try, where possible, to be at peace.

Hebrews 12:14 KJB

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

We are clearly not to be at peace with the Devil, but if we are able we should try to be at peace with those around us. This is not always going to be easy, and we must never compromise and sin for a quiet life. Standing up for the truth will often bring troubles upon us, we must expect that, but we should not unnecessarily stir up trouble. This will clearly affect our own peace and contentment.

15. DEAL WITH GUILT AND SHAME.

Guilt is a reason why some people can not be happy. It is often hidden and not talked about. But hiding it deep in a metaphorical cupboard, deep in our heart and pretending that it is not there will not sort the problem out.



We are often weighed down by unnecessary guilt.

There are two reasons for guilt; the first is unrepented sin.

The second is the Devil reminding us of sins that we have repented of and are forgiven, but he will try and remind us of and make us feel guilty about. Or even try and make us feel guilty about something that we have not done or is not actually wrong.



I will start with the first; unrepented sin. When we are born again as Christians, the first thing that we must do to be born again, is repent of our sins. Repentance means turning from our sins, that means stop doing them. So if we used to steal, we must stop stealing. If we used to blaspheme, then we stop blaspheming. If we used to commit adultery or fornication, then we must stop. Whatever sin was a problem before we were born again, we repent, turn from, stop doing, or should do, when we become a Christian. If we do not turn from that sin, we have a problem. Now there will be things that we want to turn from, but we occasionally slip, even though

we do not want to. For example someone who formally used a lot of bad language, may initially when they first become a Christian, struggle to control their tongue. By God's grace, and a desire that is sincere to be rid of the foul language, they will get there, and their tongue will become pleasing to God. That is a sin that can be seen by those around. But others may have sins that were committed in the past before they became a Christian, or even since becoming a Christian, that they have not repented of. These are the sins that do serious damage to our relationship with God, and to our own souls. We must examine ourselves and if there is anything that we have done or are doing that we have not said sorry to God for, then we must pray and ask God to forgive us for. One of these skeletons in the cupboard for some could be an abortion. Surprisingly large numbers of people in the western world have been affected by abortion - killing an unborn baby. If you have yourself killed your own baby or ever encouraged anyone else to do so, you must repent of this, say sorry to God, and ask His forgiveness, understanding how serious sin is before God. Obviously the same goes for any sin we may have committed in the past.



**We must not hide sin,
but repent of our sin.**

If we understand how serious sin is, repent of it, really mean it, and are committed to ensure that we would never willingly do that sin again, then God will forgive us. He has forgiven us! We must never forget the price that God paid for us to be forgiven.

John 3:16-18a KJB

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned:

God sent His own son Jesus Christ, to leave Heaven and all the splendour and glory, and come to earth to die on a cross, a terrible agonising death, to pay the price for our sin.

When we realize how amazing God's love for us is, and how great the price he paid so that we can be forgiven is, we will never want to willingly sin again.

Also when we understand what God has done for us, we can have complete peace that our sins are forgiven. If we have repented, said sorry, and really meant it, then we can have that terrible burden of sin lifted, and run freely knowing the love, peace and blessings that only God can give.

Isaiah 1:18 KJB

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Psalms 103:11-12 KJB

For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.



Psalm 85:2 KJB

Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin.
Selah.

Psalm 32:1-2 KJB

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

Luke 7:47 KJB

Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

Ephesians 1:6-7 KJB

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

1 John 2:12 KJB

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

These verses are just a few of the many verses in the Bible that prove to us that if we truly repent of our sins, then we are forgiven our sins.

Acts 26:18 KJB

To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

This verse brings me to the next point. Satan will try to rob us of the peace and joy that we should have if we are a child of God. If we have truly repented of our sins, and turned from them, then we are forgiven. But Satan will try and remind us of our sins, and make us feel bad and guilty, when God has already removed those sins from us. The price was paid by Jesus' death on the cross.

As far as the east is from the west so far are our transgressions removed from us. This is the good news. This is the gospel! We are forgiven.

Satan, the Devil is real, he is not a made up fairy tale. We must know our enemy to be able to battle against him.

Ephesians 6:11-13 KJB

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.



When we realize that we have an enemy, then we are in a better position to fight him. We must understand that one of the wiles of the devil, is to tell us we are not forgiven when we are. Look at the verses above again.

1 John 2:12 KJB

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

If we have truly repented our sins are forgiven, and not even the devil can rob us of that unless we let him.

James 4:7 KJB

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Obviously if we are still continuing in our sins, then we must not let Satan deceive us that we are forgiven when we are not. God knows our hearts. We must search our hearts and ask God to forgive us all our sin, and if we have, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

1 John 1:7-9 KJB

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Shame is similar to guilt, but is a painful feeling because you feel other people think badly of you. This could be because you have actually done something wrong, or because you believe that other people think you have done something wrong when you haven't. If you have done wrong then confess your faults and repent. If you have not done anything wrong then try to show people that. But if they won't listen or won't believe you, then don't worry; God is the only one that we ultimately answer to. If we are right before God then it really doesn't matter what anybody else thinks. We can be at peace, and hold our head up high, and know that we are righteous and holy before God because of Jesus' death on the cross.

16. DEAL WITH UNFORGIVENESS.

Guilt is unforgiveness within ourselves, but another problem that can prevent us from true happiness, peace and blessings, is unforgiveness of others.

Most of us know the Lord's Prayer.

Matthew 6:9-13 KJB

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

The next two verses in Matthew recording the words of Jesus expound on the subject of forgiveness.

Matthew 6:14-15 KJB

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

We have just been considering the importance of having our sins forgiven. But here we see how serious it is if we refuse to forgive others. (Later we will consider that God will avenge those who have been sinned against. God will judge sin, so we can trust God to bring judgment as necessary.)

Psalms 18: 47a KJB

It is God that avengeth me.

I can not pretend to imagine what terrible things may have happened to you, or the awful things that someone may have done to you, or someone that you love. But I can only repeat the words of Jesus: "if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Jesus himself on the cross forgave.

Luke 23:33-34a KJB

And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.



BUT IF YE FORGIVE NOT MEN THEIR TRESPASSES; NEITHER WILL YOUR FATHER FORGIVE YOUR TRESPASSES.



FOR IF YE FORGIVE MEN THEIR TRESPASSES; YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER WILL ALSO FORGIVE YOU.

If we understand how serious our sin is before God, and the great price God paid to save us from our own sins, then it will help us to understand that God expects us to forgive others.

Jesus tells us this parable:

Matthew 18:23-35 KJB

Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that

**ONE OF THE
HEAVIEST THINGS
TO CARRY IS A
GRUDGE.**



**FORGIVE TO BE
FORGIVEN.**

was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

I am aware that there are people who are not happy, they hold bitterness and unforgiveness in their hearts, and until they give it up and forgive, they will never have peace, and worse than that, their own souls are in danger because God cannot forgive them.

If you have unforgiveness in your heart, give it up to God. He is able to take it from you. God is just, vengeance is for the Lord.

Romans 12:19 KJB

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

He is a righteous judge. If someone has done something terrible to you, unless they repent of that sin, they will get their just reward - hell forever. Leave it to God to sort them out, forgive them and pray for their salvation. Then God will forgive you and me, and we will have that peace that we have been longing for.

Psalms 32:1-2 KJB

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

Luke 17:3-4 KJB

Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

Ephesians 4:31-32 KJB

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

17. DEALING WITH DEATH. IT'S OK TO CRY.

John 11: 35 KJB

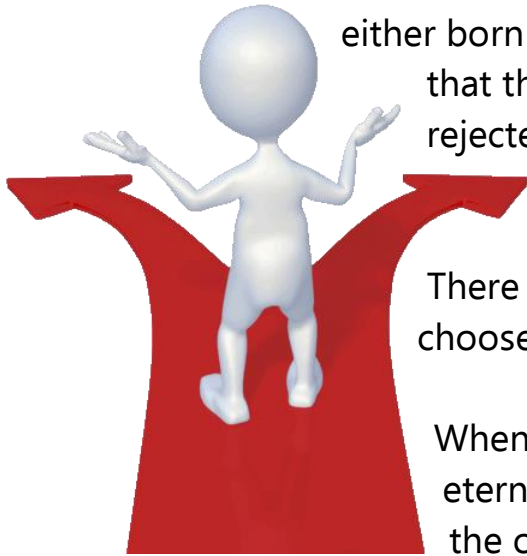
Jesus wept.

The next subject I want to address is grief and death. One of the saddest times of our lives, is



usually related to the death of some one we love. Contentment and happiness may seem impossible at such a time for some. This is where it is important to understand the difference between happiness and peace and contentment. It is possible to feel sad, but still know the peace of God in our hearts. It is not wrong, and really quite right that we feel sad sometimes. A death of a loved one is one of those times, but other times it is also right to feel sad. For example, we should feel sad about the state of someone's soul if they are not yet born again. We should feel sad about sin around us.

When we consider how we deal with death we must consider that every adult is either born again, loving and following Jesus, understanding that they are a sinner saved by grace, or they have rejected the free gift of eternal life, offered by God to them, and have decided to go their own way, which will end up in eternal damnation in hell. There is no sitting on the fence, each one of us has to choose, are we going God's way or our own way.



When someone dies they either go to be with God, or to eternal damnation in hell and the lake of fire.. Those are the only two choices.

John 14:1-3, KJB

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.



John 14:6 KJB

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

Acts 4:12 KJB

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Revelation 14:12-13 KJB

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Psalms 116:15 KJB

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

(Note; saints are anyone who is born again)

2 Peter 2:9 KJB

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

Proverbs 15:24 KJB

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.

Psalms 9:17 KJB

The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.



Luke 12:5 KJB

But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

Proverbs 15:11 KJB

Hell and destruction are before the Lord : how much more then the hearts of the children of men?

Hell is real, God does not want you, me or anyone to go there. That is why Jesus died in our place so that we don't have to go there.

Ezekiel 33:11 KJB

Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

God does not want us to go to hell, He would rather we repent, get right with God and go to be with Him when we die. But God is just, sin must be punished, if we rejected the solution that God has freely offered for our sin, then He has no choice but to send us to hell. He does not delight in this, but He is just and holy. Imagine if wicked, sinful men went to heaven, it would be a terrible place. God has to set a standard, if we accept that we are sinners saved by the grace of God, then we will forever be grateful to God, understanding that we deserve hell, and what Jesus has saved us from.



When a loved one dies, either they will have gone to be with God, or gone to eternal damnation.

If they have gone to be with God, then although we will feel sad and miss them, we know that they really are in a better place. We will feel sad and it's ok to cry. We may feel sad and emotional for even years, but that sadness comes with a peace that we know where they are, and that we will see them again one day. Our separation is only temporary; we will soon be together again, in a wonderful place where there will be no more tears, no more pain, no more death. Only everlasting life and joy.

Two of our babies have been stillborn, we called them Samuel and Isaiah. I have complete peace that they are in Heaven with God, I have felt very sad and missed them a lot. I have cried many tears, and still do occasionally. I have always had complete peace that God is in control, He has taken Samuel and Isaiah to be with Him, He knows what He is doing. As a mother ultimately all I want for my children is that they love God with all their hearts and end up in Heaven with God. They are already there. They have not had to go through any of the sorrows and pains of this life.

If our loved one knew God, was right with God before they died, then we really can have true peace and contentment. Even though we are sad and grieve for them and miss them.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 KJB

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

The death of a loved one that does not know God is completely different. We must not deceive ourselves that they have gone to heaven. If someone has not loved and served God before their death, then they can not go to be with God after they die.

Matthew 7:13-14 KJB

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

I became a Christian when I was sixteen years old, I felt a dramatic change in my life. I understood for the first time that I was a sinner on my way to hell. I wanted



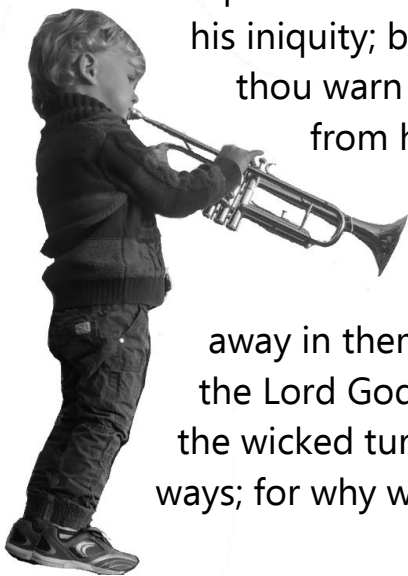
We must warn people about hell even if they don't want to know.

everyone to understand the same thing; that they were on their way to hell. It was absolutely amazing and mind boggling to me, to understand what God has done for us, in Jesus death on the cross. I wanted to tell everyone. But soon I began to realize that not everyone, in fact very few people, wanted to know. I was so concerned about this. Jesus tells us that the way that leads to destruction is broad, many will go that way. As Christians that understand the truth, we have to understand that many people are on the broad way to hell. We must do what we can to warn them, but if they will not listen, or be warned, apart from pray and continue to warn them, then there is nothing else we can do, they have chosen to ignore God's amazing gift of grace.

God made Ezekiel, an Old Testament prophet, a watchman for the house of Israel.

Ezekiel 33:8-11 KJB

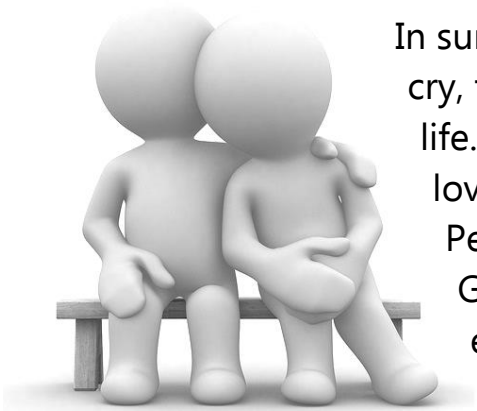
When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?



We are also called to be watchmen. We must warn people about hell and destruction and judgment to come, and how to avoid it by God's wonderful gift of grace and salvation through Jesus. If they choose to ignore God's amazing grace to them, then they have chosen the broad way to hell.

When I became a Christian, and realized that both Heaven and hell are real, and spoke to people who did not want to know, I became very concerned for an elderly lady that I knew and loved very much. I knew that she was very old and

that one day she would die. We had spoken to her many times about the Lord, but she did not really want to know. When she was in the last few days before she died, God graciously allowed me to be with her. I prayed with her but still even so close to death, she did not want to get right with God. I had always wondered how I could possibly live and function, knowing that she was in hell. God graciously allowing me to see her before she died, and seeing that she had been told the truth so many times but rejected it, gave me a peace that God is just. She made her decision. I was, and still am, very sad about this. But it is too late now. If I pretend that she has gone to heaven, I am only deceiving myself. I am still very, very sad about it, but I do have a peace that God is just, and that He is in control. I must use my sadness and grief to spur me on to continue to share with those around me the gospel, the good news about God's wonderful gift of grace to us.



In summary, we will have sad times in our lives, it is ok to cry, to grieve and mourn, and these are a normal part of life. Many other circumstances apart from the death of a loved one will cause us to feel sadness in our lives.

People may let us down or do terrible things to us, but God is in control. Being content and at peace is possible even through the most difficult times. God does not leave us when things get hard; He carries us when we feel we cannot go on.

It's OK TO CRY SOMETIMES.

Hebrews 13:5b KJB

... for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

As we look to Jesus, we can be sure He will never let us down. God's love toward us is so great, it can not fail; we can only choose to walk out of His Hand.

18. DEALING WITH DEPRESSION.

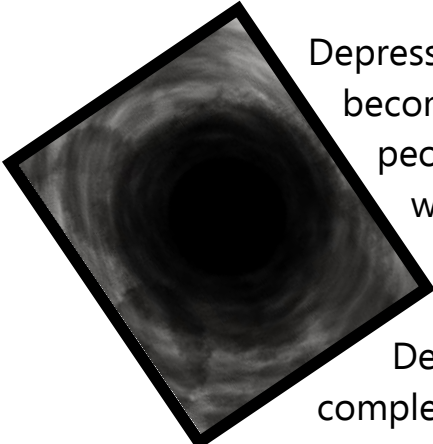
Depression is a problem of epidemic proportions in our time.



It can range from mild feelings of sadness through to complete despair of life leading to suicidal thoughts and even actual suicide.

There are many reasons why people feel depressed, usually circumstances and adverse life events are the most common causes, but for some people, physical chemical changes in their bodies can cause them to feel sad or emotional, even if there is no obvious external cause. An example of this could be after a lady has a baby, the hormone levels in her body change dramatically in the few days after the baby is born, and for no apparent reason many new mothers find themselves in tears a few days after their baby is born.

Some people naturally seem to have a more pessimistic personality than others and are more prone to depression.



Depression can happen to anyone, at any time of their life. If it becomes severe it can become overwhelming, it can prevent people from functioning in ordinary life. Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness and sadness can become so overwhelming that people can feel they are in a deep dark pit and there is no way to get out. Despair can take hold and the person can feel completely hopeless.

If we are ever in this situation we must take hope and remember God. He will never leave us or forsake us if we are truly one of His children.



Take hope, He has loved us with an everlasting love. We can never be in a place that God can not see us or help us. He is God. He takes care of the whole universe, the planets and stars move in their courses because He causes them to. You only have breath because God has given you breath. Your heart is only beating because God has given you life. God really has got everything in control, He is the answer. He is able to reach down into that deep, dark pit and pull you out. Even if you have no strength yourself to get out, cry out to God with all your heart. God will hear you.

See psalm 139, read the whole psalm, but verse 8 shows us even in the pit of hell God is with us, if we truly are one of His children.

Psalm 139:8 KJB

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.



If you have never read Pilgrims Progress by John Bunyan, I recommend you read it, the original, not a watered down modern version. In this book, Christian is locked up in a castle dungeon by Giant Despair. Giant Despair tries to tempt Christian, and his companion Hopeful, to kill themselves, and Christian seriously considers it. But then they remember that they have a key that can open any door, a key of promise and hope. They then are able to escape from Giant Despair.

If you are feeling suicidal then please consider that it is the Devil that wants you to kill yourself. He will try and tempt you. He wants you to feel down and despair of life. He wants your soul in hell. God would never want you to kill yourself. There is nothing worse you could ever do. It will not end your misery, but it will be the beginning of eternity in hell. Never listen to any lies of the Devil, he is the father of lies and will whisper many lies in your ear. Look to God alone, and God will bring you out of your despair, and will give you a complete new joy and peace and contentment and blessings and happiness, that only God can give.

There are many examples in the Bible of people who felt down. You are not alone if you are feeling depressed. Job and Elijah are two examples I will look at later. But God answered. God will always be the answer.

The psalmist wrote:

Psalm 43:5 KJB

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

God will expect us to obey Him. If we are living in a way that displeases God then we must put our life in order. There are often decisions that we make in our lives that have consequences, and we can be depressed because of the consequences of those mistakes we have made. We must confess our sins, and repent and turn from those sins, if we ever want to recover.

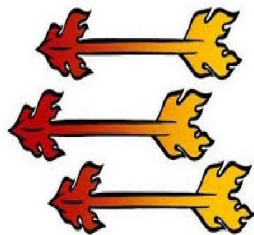
We have also already looked at how guilt and unforgiveness can affect us and how important it is to sort these things out.

But sometimes depression can be a direct attack from the enemy. It can come from nowhere very quickly. I remember years ago we had not been married for long, and my husband and I were supposed to be meeting each other at a particular place at a railway station. I was waiting in one place and he was waiting in a different place. A long time passed and we both could not understand where the other person was. It was before we had mobile phones, so there was no way of knowing that we were only a short distance from each other. We were also in a foreign country, so everything seemed more difficult.

After an hour or two, thoughts started entering my head. "He doesn't love you, if he did, he would be here." Or "maybe something terrible

has happened to him". Then the thoughts became more sinister; " Life is not worth living without Pete" "Why don't you just jump off that railway bridge in front of a train, then everything will be alright." At this point I realized that this was a fiery dart

from the Devil seeking to get me to kill myself. I was happy two hours earlier; I had never had any depression or suicidal thoughts before. Suddenly from nowhere these thoughts that appeared to come from me, but were really from the Devil, were attacking me as fiery darts. I had to do spiritual warfare with the devil. I had to rebuke the Devil in the name of Jesus. Of course we eventually found each other.



Zechariah 3:2a KJB

And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee:

Ephesians 6:16 KJB

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

We must put on the armour of God described in detail in Ephesians chapter 6, so we can fight the Devil.

Ephesians 6:10-18 KJB

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

We must be aware how crafty the Devil is. He is able to plant thoughts in our head that are not our own. When we realize what is happening it liberates us to understand the problem, so we can work on the solution.

If you are wholehearted and seriously seeking God, and obeying His Word, then God will help you. You will have the victory.

Romans 16:20 KJB

And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

2 Corinthians 2:11, 14 KJB

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

1 Peter 5:8-11 KJB

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.



The whole book of Job gives us an insight into what is going on in the spiritual realms. Job is a rich man who loves and obeys God. Satan asks permission from God to cause many terrible things to happen to him. All his 10 children die in one day, his cattle, servants and wealth all were killed, destroyed or stolen. If anyone had reason to feel depressed Job did. Then if this was not enough, his health was also taken from Him, he was covered in boils from head to toe.

We are told at the beginning of the book this was an attack of the Devil, but Job did not know this. We are told that Job was a righteous man, it was not because of his sin why it happened. Even through this terrible time that Job did not understand what was happening to him, Job was faithful to God.

This is Job's reaction when he found out that all his children had died, and most of his belongings, servants and wealth were destroyed.

Job 1:20-22 KJB

Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord . In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Job is a faithful example to us of how we should behave in the face of adversity. If you read the rest of the book of Job, you see Job had terrible anguish in his soul and even despaired of life. But he was faithful. From the outside we can see what was happening to him and we know God greatly blessed Job at the end of his life again.

If you are in the middle of a terrible trial, remember that God has got everything under control. He can see the bigger picture, He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, and he loves you. Everything that He allows to happen is for your good.

1 Corinthians 10:13 KJB

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Romans 8:28 KJB

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Going through a difficult time should make us stronger, even if it does not feel like it at the time.

Job 23:10 KJB (Job speaking)

But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

Peter was on a boat in a storm, and Jesus came walking on the water towards the boat, Peter called to Jesus "Lord if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water," so Jesus said "come". But when Peter took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the storm instead, he sank and cried out to Jesus "Lord save me". Jesus

immediately stretched out His hand and saved him. (Matthew 14:22-36)



When we take our eyes off The Lord we will sink, we must look to Jesus and He will stretch out His hand to save us.

1 Peter 5:7 KJB

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Jeremiah 31:3 KJB

The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

John 3:16 KJB

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

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 KJB

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

Elijah is another example of a man mightily used by God who boldly preached and prophesied for God. But shortly after an amazing, outstanding victory for God, he became depressed and despaired of his life. But God was very patient and caring for him. Elijah was hungry and physically exhausted, and God brought him food and gave him rest. God listened to his concerns and corrected his misunderstandings and then gave him a job to do!

Read about Elijah's mighty victory in 1 Kings chapter 18, and then his discouragement and God's answer to this in chapter 19.

If Elijah could get depressed after such mighty feats, then it could happen to any of us. But God always has the answer. Sometimes we are physically and mentally drained and need sleep, rest and some food. Other times maybe we need to move away from a situation and stand back and try and be objective about it. Whatever, as we look to Jesus and stop focusing on ourselves the answer will become clear.

God will make a way for us, He will pull us out of the pit, He will put us on solid ground. He is The Rock, and as we stand firmly on Him looking up to Heaven,

however far the finishing line appears to be, we will know that we will make it, even if God has to carry us all the way.

Hebrews 12:1-2 KJB

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Deuteronomy 33:27a KJB

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms:

19. ACCEPT YOURSELF.

Another reason people can be discontented is because they are not happy with themselves.

There can be many reasons why someone may not be happy with themselves. One reason could be to do with their appearance. Someone with brown eyes may want blue eyes, someone with straight hair may want curly hair, someone with curly hair may want straight hair, someone with grey hair may want black or white hair. Someone who is short may want to be taller, someone who is heavier may want to be lighter, someone with a big nose may want a smaller one, and the list is endless.



As Christians we must understand that God has made us. He gave us our skin, hair and eye colour. He allowed us to grow taller or shorter. He gave us a large, small or medium nose, eyes and ears etc.

If God has made us in a particular way then we have to accept that. If we constantly want to be different, then somewhere there is a problem in our heart, between us and God. We must understand that God is in control, He is our loving Heavenly Father, He made us, He knows what is best for us. If a person has a big problem with their appearance, then perhaps they need to understand that God loves them not because of what they look like, but because He made them and loves them. People can be very cruel, perhaps you have been teased or bullied because of your appearance. Be encouraged, God sees your heart, He does not look on the outward appearance, He is much more interested in your heart.

1 Samuel 16:7 KJB

But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

Matthew 6:27 KJB

Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

Many of you will know of Amy Carmichael. When she was a child she prayed for blue eyes, but God had given her brown eyes for a good reason, so He did not answer her prayer to change the colour of her eyes to blue. When she was older she was a missionary working with children who were rescued from being temple prostitutes. With brown eyes she could dress as an Indian and go places to rescue those children she would never have been able to go to if her eyes were blue. God has given you your eye, skin and hair colour



AMY CARMICHAEL

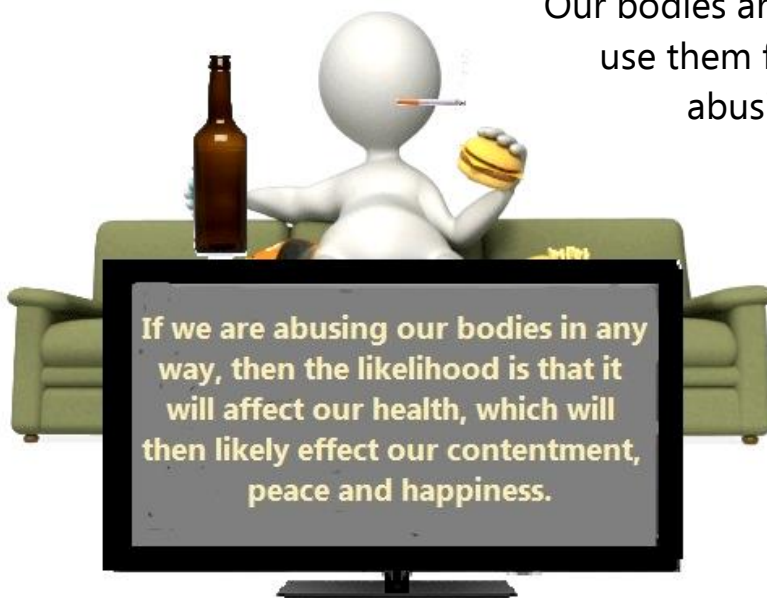
for His glory. He has made you bigger or smaller for His Glory. Thank God that He has made you as He has, he knows what He is doing, be content and do not strive to change something you can not change.

There are some aspects of our physical appearance that we can change. For example the clothes that we wear, or what we do with our hair. Also if we eat more or less, we may be fatter or thinner. If we do, or do not exercise, we may be more or less healthy. People can abuse their bodies in a variety of ways, for example smoking, or getting drunk, or taking drugs, or marking them with tattoos. Or even by eating an unhealthy diet with a lot of junk food, and little fruit or vegetables, can be harmful to our bodies.

As Christians we understand our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 KJB

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.



Our bodies are a gift from God to us. We must use them for the glory of God. If we are abusing our bodies in any way, then the likelihood is that it will affect our health, which will then likely effect our contentment, peace and happiness. We are not to make our health or bodies a God, or put the pursuit of health, happiness, peace and contentment above our love of and obedience to God. But by caring for our bodies we are being good stewards of a gift the Lord has given us.

Romans 12:1 KJB

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.



God has also gifted us with different physical and mental abilities.



SOME PEOPLE MAY FEEL THAT THEY HAVE VERY FEW TALENTS, BUT USE THE TALENTS THAT YOU DO HAVE FOR THE LORD.

Some people can run fast or have good coordination, or are good at sports. Some people are able to organise and manage well. Others find it easier to pass exams or IQ tests. Some people may feel they have very few talents. God has either given or withheld these physical and mental abilities. God is not interested in your IQ, or your exam marks or your medals, or awards or degrees or prizes or titles of men. But He is interested in your love and obedience of God, and if you are using the talents and abilities and skills He has given you for Him.

If God has only given you one talent, then He will only expect you to use that one talent for Him. But if God has given you many talents, gifts and abilities, make sure you use them all for God.



A new born baby has very few talents they can use, but God loves and values a new born baby as much as any older person that appears to be gifted. Ask any mother how much she loves her new born baby. She does not love the baby because of what it can do for her. She just loves it unconditionally as it is. She may have hopes and aspirations for that child, but even if it does not become top in some field of man, she will continue to love that child as it grows up. How much more does God love us?



If you are feeling that you have failed or are unable to achieve what someone else can, don't worry or be upset. If God did not give you the ability to run at world record speeds then don't worry. If you have failed at some test men have put you through, don't worry. Your worth does not come from what you can or can not do. Your abilities or disabilities do not affect your value or worth. God's love for His children is the genuine love of a heavenly father, that overflows greater than any love in the universe. Just accept the things you cannot change about yourself, and change the things that you can change, and use them for the glory of God.

20. DEALING WITH SICKNESS.

The subject of sickness, poor health, illness, accident and disability could be, and has been, the subject of many whole books, so I will only start to scratch the surface of the subject here.

Seeing as our happiness, peace and contentment can be so affected by our health, it is an important subject to consider.

As my job involves dealing with illnesses, it is a subject I have considered much about myself.

Illnesses can be divided up into many different categories. I am going to oversimplify these categories to make it easier to understand the causes and solutions to illnesses.

Health problems can be divided into those we are born with, accidents or injuries that happen to us, and illnesses, sicknesses and diseases that come upon us at some point in our lives.

In the illnesses, sicknesses and diseases category the illnesses can be of mind or body.



They could also be divided into short term, self limiting illnesses, such as a cold, which will get better by itself, or longer term problems that remain with you for the rest of your life. Or illnesses that would normally, if left untreated, cause death.

We need to look to see what the Bible has to say about the subject. Which really is so much, it is hard to know where to start.

All through the Old and New Testaments we see examples of illnesses. Some which were healed, and some which were not healed.



We can sometimes be so focused in that we fail to see the big picture.

God is eternal, He is outside of time and He knows the end from the beginning. We can be so caught up in our troubles, that sometimes we fail to see the eternal picture.

In the book of Revelation we are reminded that everything will be perfect in Heaven.

Revelation 21:4 KJB

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

However bad our health situation may be now, we know that God has everything under control, and that we can look forward to Heaven, where we will be completely healed and whole.

From the Bible we see that God healed many people, so even in this life we can look to Jesus for health, strength and healing.

We also see there are situations where people were not healed. We need to understand why sometimes God heals, and in other situations our prayers are not answered as we would like them to be.



Looking at Jesus we can see some of the miracles that Jesus did, and some of the types of problems Jesus healed.

We will start by looking at the man that was born blind that Jesus healed. Read John chapter 9, I love reading about Jesus healing this man.

We see that he was born blind, which shows us that God is able to heal problems that people are born with.

We also see the reason why he was born blind;

John 9:2-3 KJB

And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

This answers an important question, the disciples believed that someone must have sinned, and that was why the man was blind. But Jesus turned their thinking upside down. This man was blind that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

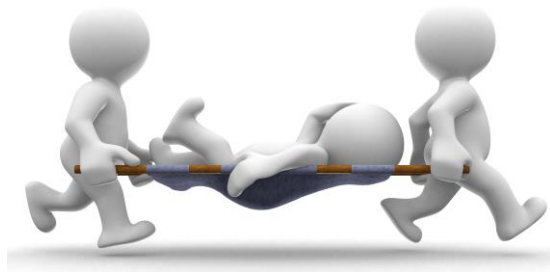
What a blessing to realise that not only is God completely in control, He also does everything for our good and His glory. This man must have been blind for a very long time before Jesus healed him. But he was healed in God's perfect time.

How often do we pray to be healed, but it is not God's perfect time yet. We just need to be patient. God does not always answer us as we expect, or want Him to. When we pray generally God gives us one of three answers: Yes, no, or not now. So often we think God has not heard us, or does not love us, but this is usually the Devil whispering fiery darts in our ears. God loves us, He is in complete control,



God has everything under control. But God's time is not always the same as our time.

He is all powerful, so if we are not healed instantly, then there is a reason. At the right time, for the glory of God, the blind man in John chapter 9 was healed.



The next example of Jesus healing I want to look at, is the man lying on his bed bought to Jesus.



Matthew 9:2-6 KJB

And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. **Jesus healed the man.**

In this example also we see that Jesus healed the man for the glory of God. By healing the man, Jesus proved that He has power to forgive sins. So not only was he showing He was powerful enough to heal and forgive sins, but He proved that He was God.

The next example I would like to consider is the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years. This is an example of a disease or illness she has developed during her life.

Mark 5:25-29 KJB

And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch

but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.

This is another example of Jesus' great love and compassion towards the woman. He did not thrust her away as an unclean sinner, but cared for her and healed her.

Mark 5:34 KJB

And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

She had faith that God could heal her, and Jesus healed her.



But we must not think that faith is something that we can drum up, and if we have enough faith we are healed. It is not faith that heals us, but God that heals us. If we put faith in a person other than Jesus, then that person becomes an idol in the place of God.

1 Timothy 2:5 KJB

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

We are called to pray for one another for healing, but that is different to believing that a person other than God can heal us.

James 5:13-16 KJB

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

We can pray ourselves directly to God, or come to the elders and ask them to pray.

There are many other examples of Jesus healing people, for example other blind men, Matthew 9 27-29, Matthew 20 v 30-34, Mark 10 v 46 - 52, and a women with a bent spine;

Luke 13:11-16 KJB

And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself . And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him , and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?



Matthew chapter 8 contains five records of miracles that Jesus did; the healing of a leper, the healing of the centurion's servant, the healing of Peter's wife's mother, and the healing of the two men possessed by devils. And the following account:

Matthew 8:16 KJB

When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:

When I look at the accounts of Jesus healings, two things come to my attention.

First that the person had faith, or someone who cared for them, e.g. the centurion caring for his servant, had faith. This does not mean that we will always be healed if we have faith. Sometimes we are not healed even though we have the faith to be healed, but it is either not God's will that we are healed, or not God's time yet. I will go through this in more detail later.

The second point that struck me was how often it mentions Satan or the devil's involvement in the health problem. We have already in an earlier section looked at Job, and how the devil asked permission from God to seriously damage Job's health. We see above in the account of the woman bent over that Satan had bound her for 18 years.



Now clearly we understand the cause in scientific terms for many diseases and illnesses; bacteria, viruses, prions, protozoa, fungi, cancers, autoimmune diseases, blood clots, genetic problems, vitamin deficiencies, poor diet, lack of exercise, smoking, drugs, etc. But the Bible takes us one step back to understand what is going on behind the scenes. I would certainly not say that every health problem is caused by the devil, but it is mentioned many times in the Bible, so we would be wise to take note what Jesus has to say.

Below are some more examples where devils are mentioned as part of the problem.

Matthew 12:22 KJB

Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

Matthew 9:32-33 KJB

As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

Luke 9:38-42 KJB

And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. And as he was

yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him . And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

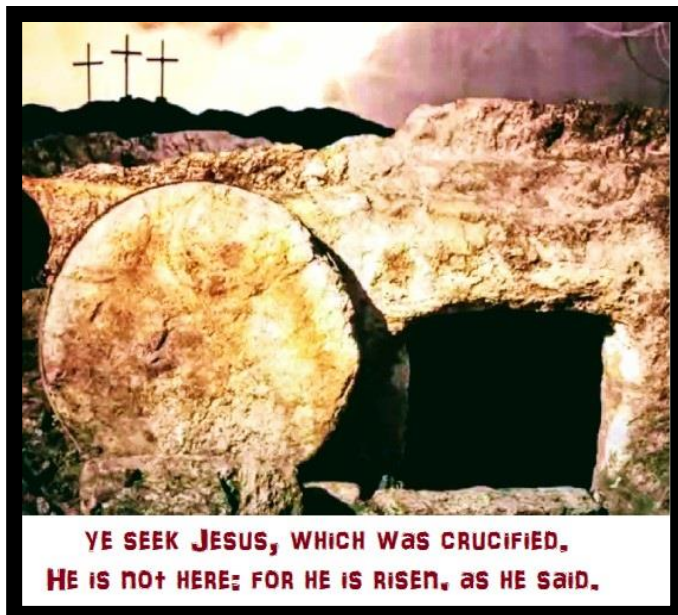
Mark 16:9 KJB

Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Although not all illnesses are caused by the direct work of Satan, the Bible does have much to say on the subject. As a Christian talking to Christians, we need to be aware that we must fight Satan not just when we have depression, or other such problems, but this also sometimes extends to physical health problems. We should rebuke the Devil in the name of Jesus also for physical illnesses. Jesus rebuked the fever that Simon Peter's mother in law had.

Luke 4: 38-39 KJB

And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.



Next I would like to mention people raised from the dead in the Bible.

We see nine separate accounts in the Bible of people being raised from the dead. Three occur in the Old Testament. At least three people were raised from the dead by Jesus, and both Peter and Paul prayed and saw a person raised from the dead.

Of course the most important person raised from the dead was Jesus himself.

I will leave this subject for now, there is so much more to say, but we can be at complete peace, that if it is God's will, then He is able to raise the dead.

The next point on ill health I want to consider is original sin.

If we look back to Genesis chapter three, we see the fall of man, and sin entering into the world.

We all should know the account in Genesis chapter three, where the serpent tempts Adam and Eve, and the consequence of sin entering into the world because of this.

Romans 5:14-15, 17 KJB

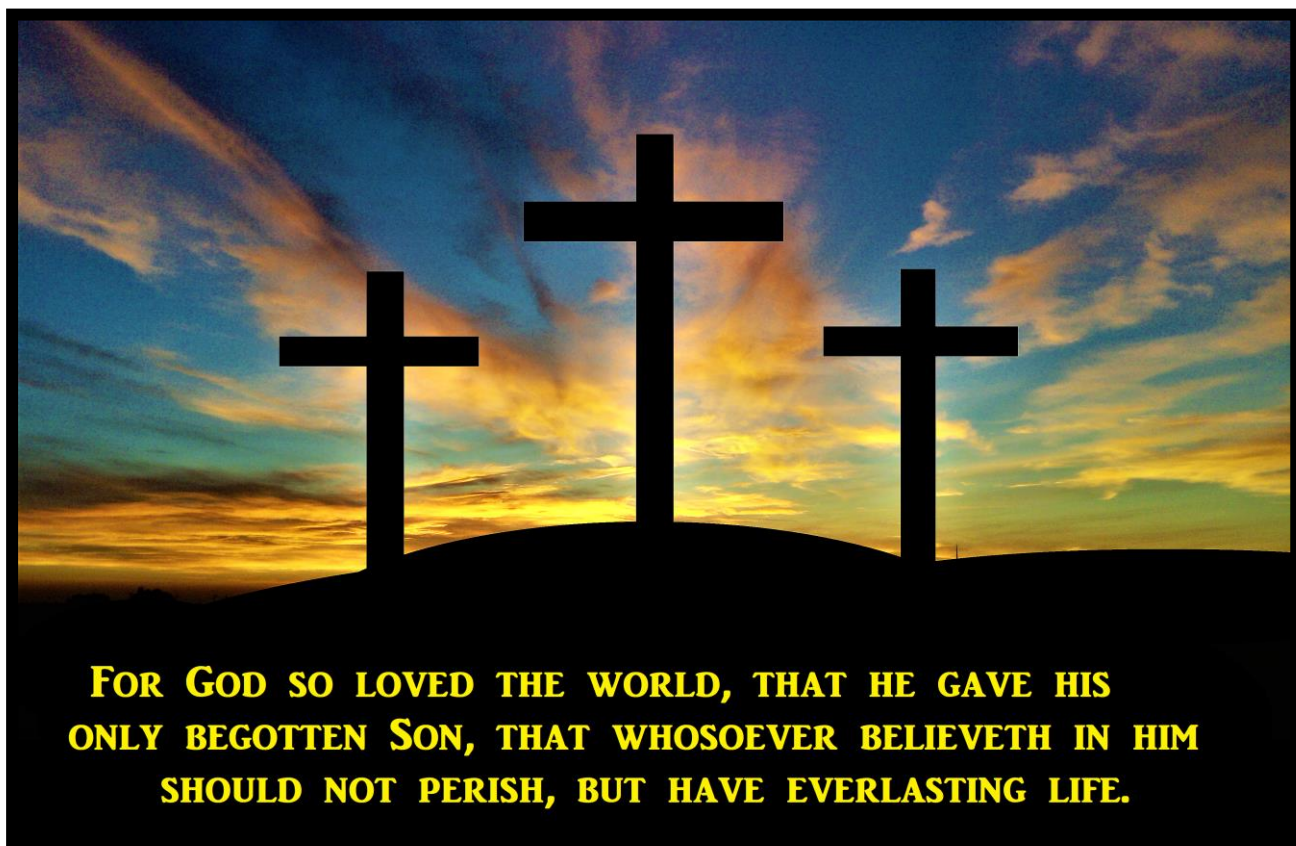
Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

We see that death is the consequence of sin that has come down the generations, and we are all subject to it. It is the free gift of Jesus death on the cross, that blows apart the power of death and gives us eternal life, if we repent and are born again by the Spirit of God.

We see from this that the majority of health problems that we may have are most likely to be related to the fall of man, and the passing down of that sin through the generations. But we must remember that God is in complete control, so He has not set the world in motion and walked away. He knows every hair on our head, and every breath that we take. It is very hard for us to understand the concept that God has everything under control, but that He allows us to be ill and suffer sometimes. But we do know that God loves us so much that He left Heaven and came to earth to suffer a terrible death on the cross for us. We can not begin to imagine what God the Father, and God the Son, Jesus, suffered so that we could go free.

John 3:16-18 KJB

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.



Romans 8:28 KJB

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

The next part of this subject I want to consider is reasons why people are not healed.

To do this I want to look at some Bible verses.

Asa a King of Judah loved God and was righteous in his younger days but nearer the end of his life he trusted man instead of God, and put a prophet that warned him he was straying from following the Lord, into prison.

2 Chronicles 16:12-13 KJB

And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians. And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.

Luke 4:25-27 KJB - (Jesus speaking)

But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

Luke 13:1-5 KJB

There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

We are all sinners that deserve hell, but it is only Jesus that saves us.



**ASA SOUGHT NOT
THE LORD, BUT
THE PHYSICIANS.**

1 Corinthians 11:27-32 KJB

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

In this verse we see a truth very rarely taught, that if we partake of the bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus' death on the cross for us, we must examine ourselves first, or else we are drinking damnation upon ourselves. And this is the reason why many are weak, sick and even dying. These are the words of the apostle Paul.

The last reason that I am going to talk about, although I am sure that there are many more reasons, also relates to the apostle Paul. We are told that he has a thorn in his flesh.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 KJB

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.



Let every man examine himself.

I think the verses above speak for themselves, Paul is understood by most people to have had a problem with his eyesight. We understand from the verses above that God choose not to heal him. No one could question the Apostle Paul's faith, so it was not a lack of faith. But it was God showing us that His strength is made perfect in weakness.

I have seen God miraculously heal me, my husband and children. But I know there are times when God says: My grace is sufficient for thee.

I have to accept that and learn to give thanks in everything. (1 Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 18).

21. EXPECT TO BE PERSECUTED.

If as Christians we expect to be healthy, wealthy, and trouble free then we are deceiving ourselves. As Christians we will receive many blessings in this life and of course in the life to come perfect eternal life with no sorrow, pain or tears. But in this life the Bible sets out a number of problems that we will expect to encounter. One of those is persecution.

2 Timothy 3:12 KJB

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Matthew 5:10-12 KJB

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Matthew 5:44 KJB

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

John 15:20 KJB

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.



THE DEATH OF WILLIAM TYNDALE

Although we expect to be persecuted in this life we have the wonderful promise that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Romans 8:35-39 KJB

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Although we can expect trials and tribulations in this world, we can be at complete peace that God has got everything under control.

John 16:33 KJB

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

22. DO NOT LET ANYONE ROB YOU OF YOUR PEACE.

No one can take your peace from you unless you let them!

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 KJB

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, **and bringing into captivity every thought** to the obedience of Christ;

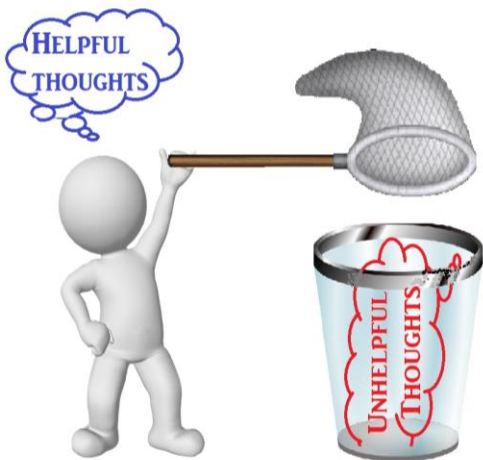


SOME PEOPLE ARE GRUMPY EVEN IN THE GOOD TIMES, OTHER PEOPLE RADIATE THE JOY OF THE LORD EVEN IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES.

In this section I want to consider a tool that can help you stay in peace and contented, despite what is going on around you. It involves taking captive every thought.

I have discussed much above about the trials and tribulations that we are likely to encounter in our walk with God, but our attitude towards those trials depend on us. How we react to those difficulties.

We all know people who are grumpy whatever happens to them and others seem to radiate the joy of the Lord in every situation.



**CAPTURE EVERY UNHELPFUL
THOUGHT AND GET RID OF THEM.
DON'T DWELL ON THEM OR ALLOW
THEM TO EFFECT YOU.
ONLY KEEP THE HELPFUL THOUGHTS.**

We can choose how we react to a particular circumstance. Last year I read a book about two Christian women in Iran who were put in prison for their faith. Their situation was terrible, they could be put to death at any point, people around them were being terribly tortured, but they absolutely beamed the love of God to those around them. They had complete peace that God is in control. They were not afraid of dying, or the judge that could have sentenced them to death. They had such peace and joy that no one could rob them of their peace. The joy that they had was clearly the supernatural joy of the Lord.

Now thankfully most of us will not have to go through the terrible things that they suffered, but our attitude towards everyday events does matter. How often do we get upset about something that really if we stand back and think about it, just is not important? How often do we feel sorry for ourselves when we shouldn't? How often do we have an upset or argument with someone that at the time seems to bother us so much, but in the light of eternity just does not matter at all?

Whenever we start to feel upset, or stressed, that is when we need to start taking captive every thought. No one can actually take the peace of God from us. We can only loose that peace if we allow them to take it away from us. Now I am talking to myself as much as anyone, but I have found it very useful if I have found myself upset about something, to stop and remember these two women in Iran and remind myself that no one can rob me of my peace, I can only allow my peace to

be robbed. Usually I find that this helps me to put things into perspective again, and my peace returns. I have certainly found the process of taking captive every thought, and not allowing anyone to rob my peace very helpful in many situations. If you are finding this hard to do, then go to God, He will help you. If you are too weak to carry yourself through a problem, then Jesus will carry you.

Hebrews 13:5b KJB

... for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

23. JOY

The Bible has many verses about the joy of the Lord.

Nehemiah 8:10b KJB

... the joy of the Lord is your strength.

Matthew 25:21 KJB

His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Luke 15:10 KJB

Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

John 16:20, 22 KJB

Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.



Acts 13:52 KJB

And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

Galatians 5:22-23 KJB

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

John 15:11 KJB

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

Psalms 5:11 KJB

But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

Psalms 16:11 KJB

Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Psalms 51:10-12 KJB

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

Psalms 95:1-2 KJB

O come, let us sing unto the Lord : let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

There is also a little children's song that reminds us the secret of joy.

J-O-Y, J-O-Y

This is what it means,

Jesus first

Yourself last

And Others in between.

Although it is a children's song, the truth is there, by putting Jesus first in our lives, others next and ourselves last, we actually unlock one of the secrets of real joy.

Another song also describes a nice summary of real joy and happiness.



Happiness is to know the
Saviour,
Living a life within His
favour,
Having a change in my
behaviour,
Happiness is the Lord.

Chorus

Real joy is mine,
No matter if the
teardrops start,
I've found the secret,
It's Jesus in my heart.

Happiness is a new
creation,
Jesus and me in close
relation,
Having a part in His
salvation,
Happiness is the Lord.

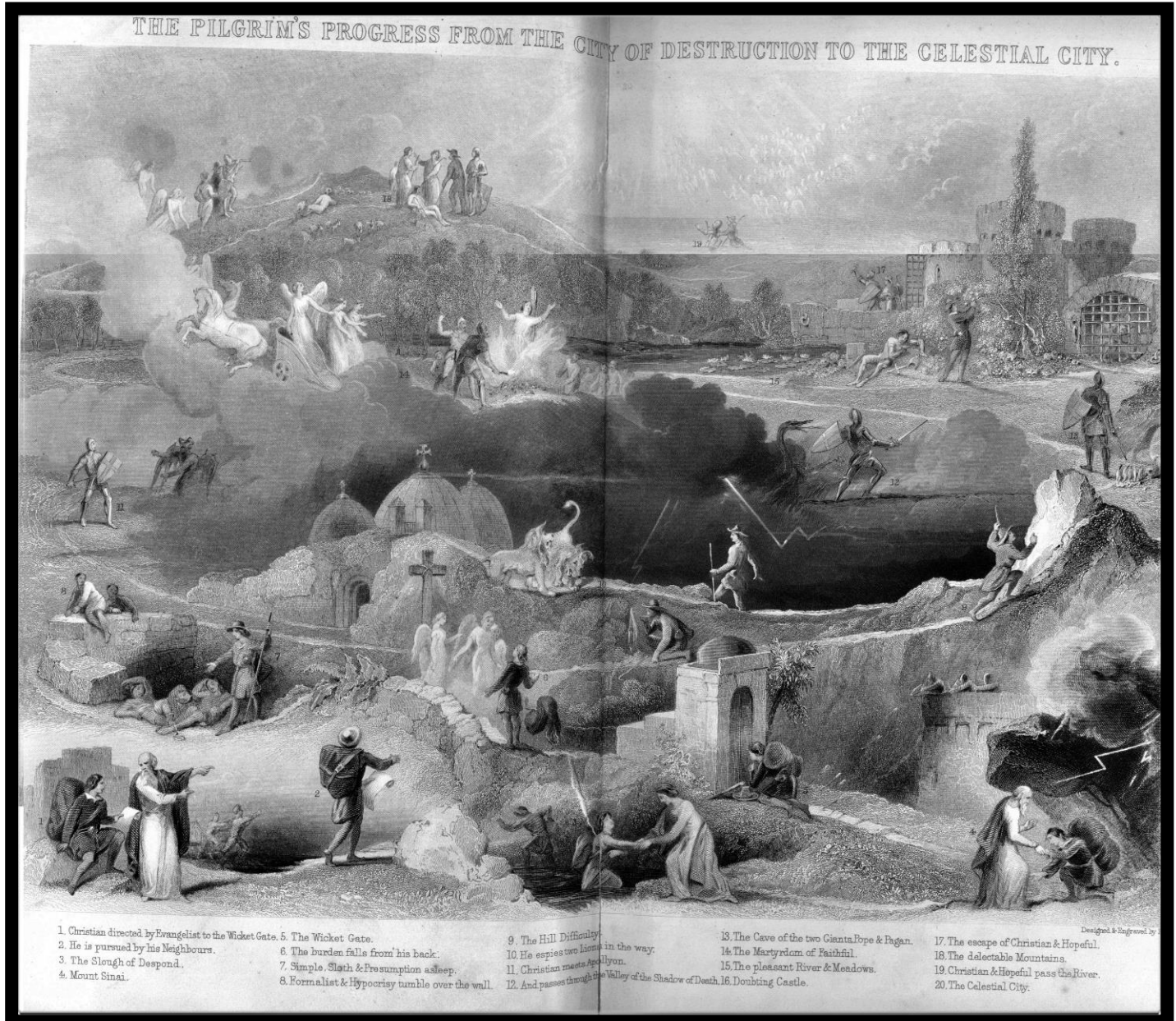
Happiness is to be
forgiven,
Living a life that's worth
the living,
Taking a trip that leads to
Heaven,
Happiness is the Lord.

24. MAKE SURE YOU REALLY ARE BORN AGAIN.

This song really brings me right back to the beginning again. Unless we really are born again, filled with God's Holy Spirit and walking in accordance to His Word, the Bible, then we will never really know real contentment, peace and happiness.

Matthew 7:13-14 KJB

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.



We must seek to enter into that strait gate and go the narrow way, forsaking all to follow Jesus with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, when we do, we will truly have real joy.

Luke 10:27 KJB

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

Psalm 37:3-9 KJB

Trust in the Lord , and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord ; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord ; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord , and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

Summary.

1. Know you are a sinner on your way to hell. Accept Jesus's death on the cross for you. Repent of your sin. Be born again by the Spirit of God. Live your life for God now.
2. Believe and live knowing that God is in control.
3. Do not worry.
4. Fear God who alone has power to cast you into hell - do not fear man.
5. Do not complain - instead give thanks in everything.
6. Praise God with music.
7. Pray without ceasing.
8. Live a holy life.
9. Get rid of the rubbish in your life.
10. Do not worship idols.
11. Submission to God.
12. Submission to the God given authorities in your life.
13. Be humble, not proud.
14. Learn to be at peace with all, as it depends on you.
15. Deal with guilt and shame.
16. Deal with unforgiveness.
17. Dealing with death. It's ok to cry.
18. Deal with depression.
19. Accept yourself.
20. Dealing with sickness.
21. Expect to be persecuted.
22. Do not let anyone rob you of your peace.
23. Joy.
24. Make sure you really are born again.

Conclusion.

The secret of contentment is this:

1. Stop looking for your own happiness and pleasures.
2. Seek God, to follow Him and trust and obey Him in everything. (Die to self).
3. Put others before yourself.
4. Then when you have given everything to God, for His glory, God will give you greater peace, real joy, real happiness and contentment more than you could ever have imagined. And finally eternal life.