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*Finding
Recovery*

RECOVERY THROUGH CHRIST



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R E C O V E R Y T H R O U G H C H R I S T



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RECOVERY THROUGH CHRIST



INTRODUCTION

Well done on taking the first step of your new life in recovery in Christ!

Definition of Recovery

- The act or process of becoming healthy after an illness or injury
- The act or process of recovering
- The act or process of returning to a normal state after a period of difficulty
- The process of combating a disorder (alcoholism, behaviour) or a real or perceived problem

Admitting that you need help is not easy; it takes courage, strength and humility. The good news is many have experienced total recovery through the Lord Jesus Christ, including me, and the Holy Spirit has lain on my heart for me to share my experiences through writing Finding Recovery so that others who are suffering can find the same freedom and happiness I now have.

This book is designed to help you identify and break strongholds, transform your beliefs and find freedom through Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to save us, so that we may live in righteousness through Him.

The chapters are required to be read and worked in order, preferably in a group of two or more. When working together in a group, and sharing your struggles with one another, you will have a support system in place with people who can relate and identify with what you are going through. Please note that this does not mean that this book cannot be worked through with just you and the Holy Spirit.

Each chapter prepares you for the following chapter and as you develop greater humility and establish your identity in Christ, you will lose your old coping mechanisms and experience spiritual growth. There is no quick fix and change can be challenging, however, soon you will find the freedom and recovery that you so

desperately seek. You will realise that you are not alone because the Lord is with you. He will carry you through the entire process with His love and His grace.

In Psalm 107 it states that when you cry out to the Lord in your trouble, He will calm the storm. He loves you and wants to calm your storm. Let Him.

Psalm 107:28-29 (NKJV)

Then they cry out to the LORD in their trouble,

And He brings them out of their distresses.

He calms the storm,

So that its waves are still.

It is completely natural to be experiencing feelings of fear of failure and fear for your future. Even fear of change is scary. You may have tried so many times before, but know this, failure is only once you have given up and accepted defeat. You are NOT defeated, and you are here with willingness and humility to find a new way to live your life with victory.

Look at Isaiah 41:10, the Lord is affirming you that you have nothing to fear; He is with you and will give you the strength you need to see you through this journey of recovery. He has brought you this far, He will carry you through to the end.

Isaiah 41:10 (NKJV)

Fear not, for I am with you;

Be not dismayed, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you,

Yes, I will help you,

I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

Change is never easy, but remember Rome wasn't built in a day. Change takes time. Keep yourself in the here and now; live just for today and it won't be so overwhelming.



VERY IMPORTANT

- Keep working through the chapters to the end of the book. Don't give up; finish it.
- Answer the questions to the best of your ability. Remember, there is no right or wrong answer, only the right answer for you.
- Use your recovery tools; they are designed to help you.

Get through today; focus on today and the Lord will take care of tomorrow.



RECOVERY TOOLS

These recovery tools are suggestions to help you through the recovery process, ensuring that you have all the tools and support necessary to start this amazing journey to freedom.

1. Join a life group and change your circle of friends. People, places and playthings need to change.

1 Corinthians 15:33 (NIV)

Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”

2. Volunteer to be on the service teams at your church, keep busy and start serving others.

Mark 10:45 (NKJV)

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

3. Do not try do this alone. Seek wise counsel with others who will understand your journey and who are of sound mind. You need wise counsel, so be sure to choose wisely.

Proverbs 1:5 (NKJV)

A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.

4. Take this process one day at a time, one step at a time and be kind to yourself.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NKJV)

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.



CHAPTER 1

IDENTIFYING STRONGHOLDS, FACING DENIAL AND ACKNOWLEDGING POWERLESSNESS

What are strongholds?

- Strongholds are strongly established false beliefs or behaviour that have gained a strong influence over a person
- When a stronghold is established, an individual is unable to consistently follow rules and regulations regardless of what the consequences may be

Examples of strongholds

- A behaviour that cause us, and our families, pain which we cannot stop. For example: drug abuse, alcoholism, eating disorders, self-mutilation, gambling, pornography, sex addiction, physical or verbal abuse
- A behaviour that controls us to such a degree that we will do anything to get it, no matter how severe the consequences will be (jail time, break up of relationships, job loss, health implications)
- A behaviour we have no control over - we are unable to change no matter how hard we try

Definition of Denial

- Denial is the refusal to accept reality or fact, acting as if a painful event, situation, thought or feeling does not exist
- Denial is not acknowledging a problem or that help is required
- Denial is not facing the truth

Examples of Denial

- I don't have a problem; I can stop / change any time I want to
- I have this under control; life is just so stressful right now
- I do it because I enjoy it; it is a good stress relief for me
- I don't see why everyone is so worried, I am fine

If we have friends or family members concerned about strongholds we are acting out, or if there is a stronghold which is making our lives unmanageable, this should raise alarm bells and we need to get honest with ourselves.

Acknowledging that we have a problem and need help is a crucial step in our recovery. We cannot find freedom in an area in which we can't acknowledge a problem.

Know that admitting powerlessness does not identify a person as weak or a failure, but in fact reflects a character of courage and strength.

Facing the truth sets you free and enables you the opportunity to change.

Denial is merely a stop sign which prevents you from moving forward in life.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Discuss with your group or think alone about how this is applicable to your life.

John 8:32 (NKJV)

And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

In John 8:32 we read that the truth will set you free.

What is the definition of the word Freedom?

- The state of not being imprisoned or enslaved
- The state of being unrestricted and able to move freely
- The state of being free or at liberty rather than in confinement or under physical restraint

So, what is this Scripture saying?

When you know the truth, you can find freedom. Freedom from the struggles, freedom from the burdens, freedom from the guilt and condemnation that you have been carrying for so long.



It took me a long time to come to terms with the fact that I needed help. Denial, pride, shame and arrogance kept me in bondage for so long. I tried everything to stop acting out in my strongholds and find freedom.

I so desperately wanted to find freedom and to fill that feeling of emptiness I had.

I tried all of these to find freedom, without success:

- Drugs, alcohol, anti-depressants and different substances
- Different religions
- Different relationships
- Different hobbies

Nothing worked and eventually I hit my rock-bottom, a place where I just couldn't carry on anymore. I was willing to do anything to stop the pain and fill that void with something substantial, because everything I tried kept giving the same result: me being powerless, broken and seeking.

What is Powerlessness?

- Having no control over a substance or behaviour, a stronghold
- Having no power
- Unable to do something or to stop doing something
- Lacking the authority or capacity to act (was powerless to help)

Examples of Powerlessness

- No matter how hard I tried I just couldn't change my behaviour
- I kept promising myself and my family that I would change, I really meant it at the time, however I could never see it through
- I hated what I was doing but just kept doing it

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Discuss with your group or think alone about how this is applicable to your life.

Job 11:13-15 (CEV)
*Surrender your heart to God,
turn to Him in prayer,
and give up your sins—
even those you do in secret.
Then you won't be ashamed;
you will be confident
and fearless.*

In Job 11:13 we read *Surrender your heart to God and turn to Him in prayer.*

Let's get an understanding of the word **Surrender**:

- To give up or hand over
- To stop resisting

In Job 11:15 we read *Then you won't be ashamed; you will be confident and fearless.*

Let's get an understanding of the words **Ashamed**, **Confident** and **Fearless**:

Definition of Ashamed

- Feeling shame, guilt, or disgrace
- Feeling inferior or unworthy

Definition of Confident

- Be sure of oneself
- Having no uncertainty about one's own abilities, correctness, successfulness etc.
- Self-confident; bold

Definition of Fearless

- Without fear
- Not afraid



- Brave; intrepid

So, what can we learn from this Scripture?

Recovery cannot be done on your own willpower or strength, so stop trying. Surrender your heart to the Lord, turn to Him in prayer and through Him you will be confident, fearless and find recovery.

What a beautiful promise our Father makes us; by turning to Him we won't be ashamed but confident, fearless and free. (Job 11:15)

Chapter 1 Self-Study

Pray before starting the self-study and ask the Lord to reveal what He wants to reveal to you.

When answering questions relate them to a situation / experience you encountered, it will help you to connect with the questions and relate them to your life.

Remember there is no right or wrong answer, whatever you feel impressed on your heart is what you should answer.

Strongholds

1. Do I understand what a stronghold is? Explain.
2. Can I identify my strongholds? What are they?
3. What circumstances arise when I feel the need to act on my strongholds?
4. When I experience negative feelings like unhappiness, rejection, anger, loneliness, or being overwhelmed, how do I respond?
5. If I could change my current response what would my response be?

Denial – John 8:32

1. Do I believe I have my strongholds under control? Elaborate.
2. What is the longest time frame that I have been able to resist my stronghold?
3. What situation arose that resulted in me giving into the stronghold again?
4. What do the words pride / ego / self-reliance mean to me?
5. In what areas of my life have my pride/ ego / self-reliance stopped me from asking for help? What was the outcome?
6. What is the difference between humility and humiliation to me?
7. What do I think the outcome will be if I admit and acknowledge the truth surrounding my strongholds?
8. What do I think the truth is?
9. What do I think the outcome will be?

Powerlessness – Job 11:13-15

1. What does the word powerless mean to me?
2. When do I feel powerless?
3. What stops me from accepting powerlessness?
4. In what areas of my life do I believe I have control?
5. What makes me think I am in control?
6. What areas in my life do I try control?
7. How do I try control these areas?
8. What has the outcome been?
9. How do I try and control the Lord's and other people's decisions?

Moving Forward

Admitting our strongholds and facing denial can make us feel a variety of emotions, from feeling very exposed and vulnerable, to feeling like a weight has been lifted off our shoulders.

We may experience a sense of freedom because we don't have to hide anymore, living with all the lies and dishonesty, while experiencing feelings of fear of the future at the same time.

With a combination of so many negative and positive feelings, it can be quite overwhelming. Take heart and know that this is all completely normal and part of the recovery process.

Don't give up! Keep going as you are not alone in this and there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING WHY WE WERE CREATED

Now that we understand what a stronghold is and have identified the areas where we are in bondage, let's look at why / how they managed to take control of our lives in the first place.

Human beings were created with three basic human desires:

1. Desire of Security

The state of feeling safe, stable, loved and free from fear or anxiety

2. Desire to be of Significance

The quality of being important and having purpose

3. Desire for Self-worth

A feeling that you are a good person who deserves to be treated with love and respect

Why were we created with these desires?

We were created with these desires because we were created to be in a loving relationship with God, our Heavenly Father, where all these desires would be fulfilled.

When we are not in a loving relationship with our Heavenly Father, we experience the feeling of having a void in our lives, a feeling of emptiness, like something is missing.

With that emptiness comes seeking. Seeking to try and fill the emptiness with worldly things like sex, love, porn, relationships, substances, work and money, and that is how strongholds are established.



Unfortunately, strongholds initially feel amazing and that is how we are deceived and become dependent on them. We constantly chase that initial feeling; however, the truth is that our strongholds only sustain us for a small-time frame before that emptiness returns. That emptiness becomes harder and harder to fulfil. It takes more money, harder drugs, dirtier porn, bigger wins at the casino, better physiques, more of whatever it is that we are chasing, and that is how we end up in bondage.

The reality is that before we know it we are so dependent on our strongholds, trying to fill that emptiness, that we lose touch with what is important in our lives. We end up in a vicious cycle of seeking - seeking more to fulfil our desires in the wrong areas, which is a downward spiral to self-destruction.

John 4:13-14 (NKJV)

Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

In John 4:13-14 Jesus is speaking to a sinful Samaritan woman who He met by a well. She was living in bondage and desperate for a saviour.

The thirst Jesus is referring to in this Scripture is our desires: desires to have security, significance and self-worth. Jesus explains how drinking of the water of the world will result in a constant thirst which will never be satisfied (constantly seeking).

When we drink from the water that Jesus gives us, we will have everlasting life. Jesus is explaining how when we seek God and let Him fulfil our desires, our thirst will be quenched. We will never thirst again, and we will have everlasting life. That emptiness will be filled, and we will feel whole and complete.



*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Discuss with your group or think alone about how this is applicable to your life.

Psalm 121:5-8 (NKJV)

The LORD is your keeper;

The LORD is your shade at your right hand.

The sun shall not strike you by day,

nor the moon by night.

The LORD shall preserve you from all evil;

He shall preserve your soul.

The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in

From this time forth, and even forevermore.

Let's look at Psalm 121:5-8 and get a better understanding of the words **Keeper**, **Preserve** and **Forevermore** used in this Scripture.

Definition of Keeper

- One whose job is to guard or take care of something or someone
- A guardian

Definition of Preserve

- To keep safe from injury, harm, or destruction
- To keep (something) in its original state or in good condition

Definition of Forevermore

- For an endless time
- For all time
- At all times

If we read the Scripture again with a better understanding of the definition of the words used, we will see just how much the Lord loves us, we are His children.



The Lord is our keeper, our guardian, a preserver of our souls, and He promises to fulfil this role forevermore.

He isn't just making a commitment to us for a time frame, or for when we are on our best behaviour; He is making a commitment to us forever.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Discuss with your group or think alone about how this is applicable to your life.

Psalm 37:4-5 (NKJV)

*Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the LORD,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring it to pass.*

Let's look at Psalm 37:4-5 and get a better understanding of the words Delight, Desires, Commit, Trust, and 'Shall bring to pass' used in the Scripture.

Definition of Delight

- To take great pleasure in
- Something that gives great pleasure or enjoyment

Definition of Desires

- To long or hope for
- Exhibit or feel desire for
- To express a wish for

Definition of Commit

- To put in trust or charge
- To entrust, especially for safekeeping
- To pledge or engage oneself

Definition of Trust

- Firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something
- Belief that someone or something is reliable, good, honest, effective

Definition of ‘Shall bring to pass’

- To complete successfully
- To cause to happen; bring about

If we read Psalm 37:4-5 again with a better understanding of each word, we can see that the Word clearly states that if we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us the desires of our heart. Commit to Him, trust in Him and He will bring it to pass.

This Scripture does not say that we need to be free from sin, go to church every Sunday, and do everything we think is expected from us. It simply states: delight yourself in the Lord, have a relationship with Him and let Him give you the pleasure that you so desperately seek.

Our Heavenly Father wants a relationship with us. He wants us to go to Him and trust Him with our lives. He will do the rest.

This is yet another strong commitment the Lord is making to us. He wants to love us, cherish us, be our Heavenly Father and have a relationship with us.

Chapter 2 Self-Study

Pray before starting the self-study and ask the Lord to reveal what He wants to reveal to you.

When answering questions relate them to a situation / experience you encountered, it will help you to connect with the questions and relate them to your life.

Remember there is no right or wrong answer, whatever you feel impressed on your heart is what you should answer.

Emptiness – John 4:13-14

1. How have I been trying to quench my thirst with worldly things?
2. How has this resulted in me compromising my values, convictions and principles?
3. How have the following areas affected my feeling of emptiness?
 - a. My family
 - b. Trauma / Abuse
 - c. Bondage / Obsession
4. What self-destructive behaviours have I inflicted on myself trying to fill that emptiness? List and describe them in detail.

God's will for my life – Psalm 121:5-8

1. What do I think is God's will for my life?
2. Have my decisions and choices been in accordance to God's will for me? Elaborate.
3. How have I tried to resolve / control problems on my own? List them.
4. What was the outcome of each of these situations? Write it next to each situation.
5. Can I see how these decisions have affected me and caused so much pain in my life? Explain.

Avoiding the relationship with the Lord – Psalm 121:5-8

1. What is stopping me from having a loving relationship with the Lord?
2. What resentments / hurts do I need to be honest with the Lord about? List them with reasons next to each one.
3. Am I willing to work through these resentments / hurts and let the Lord heal me? If not, what am I afraid will happen?

Accepting that I need a relationship with the Lord – Psalm 37:4-5

1. Have I seen people change when establishing their relationship with the Lord? Elaborate.
2. Have I noticed any difference in my behaviour or mindset which leads me to believe that the Lord has started working in my life? Elaborate.
3. Do I believe that the Lord can change my heart and free me from my strongholds? Elaborate.
4. Am I willing to give the Lord control of my life and trust Him to guide and heal me? Why, or why not?

Moving Forward

We have tried everything else to fill that void and ended up with nothing but pain, brokenness and emptiness. We now can fill that void with God's love and establish a loving relationship with Him.

Relationships take time to grow to a place where we feel completely secure, safe and willing to give up all control, and our Heavenly Father understands this of us. He is willing to nurture the relationship because He is patient, kind and loving.

We are His children and He will love and guide us every step of the way. We just need to make the decision to take that step of faith.

CHAPTER 3

JESUS CHRIST LORD AND SAVIOUR

Now that we have a better understanding of why we were created and are beginning to realise how much we need God in our lives, we will learn about how out of God's perfect love for us, He sent His one and only Son Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Saviour.

1 John 1:1 (NKJV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Let's look at the words Beginning and Word:

Definition of Beginning

- The first part or earliest stage of something
- The point in time or space at which something begins

Definition of Word

- A sound or combination of sounds that has a meaning and is spoken or written
- Something that a person says
- An order or command

In the beginning God created the world by speaking it into existence. (Psalm 33:9)

By the word of God the heavens were made. (Psalm 33:6)

What God speaks will be fulfilled. (Ezekiel 12:25)

We read repeatedly in Genesis 1 when God created the heavens and the earth:
"And God said."



Creation is a result of God's Word spoken in the beginning of time.

So, in the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Discuss with your group or meditate on these verses.

John 1:14 (NLT)

So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

So the Word became human and made his home among us. - The Word, which is God, became human when Jesus Christ was born on earth in Bethlehem. The Word became human and was born among us. (Luke 2:11)

He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. - This is describing the character of Jesus, which is described as full of **unfailing love and faithfulness**.

Let's look at the definition of the words **Unfailing**, **Love** and **Faithfulness**:

Definition of Unfailing

- Never changing or becoming weaker even in challenging times
- Always providing enough of what is needed

Definition of Love

- Strong affection for another arising out of kinship or personal ties (e.g. maternal love for a child)
- Unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another

Definition of Faithfulness

- Having or showing true and constant support or loyalty



- Deserving trust
- Keeping promises

So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness.

And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

Definition of Glory

- Something that is a source of immense pride
- A distinguished quality
- Great beauty and splendour

Through Jesus Christ we see God's **glory**, His begotten Son who He sent because of His perfect love for us. (1 John 4:10)

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Discuss this verse with your group or meditate on this verse.

Why do you think God sent His one and only Son Jesus Christ to live among us?

John 3:17 (NIV)

God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Read John 3:17 again, and let's look at the words **Condemn**, **Save** and **Through** to get a better understanding of this verse.

Definition of Condemn

- To give (someone) a usually severe punishment
- To cause (someone) to suffer or live in difficult or unpleasant conditions
- To pronounce guilty



Definition of Save

- To prevent (someone or something) from not being safe
- To stop (someone or something) from dying or being hurt or damaged
- To prevent (something) from ending or failing
- To make (something that is in danger of failing) successful
- To prevent (something) from being lost or wasted

Definition of Through

- Used as a function word to indicate means, agency, or intermediacy
- By means of / because of

So; John 3:17 declares that God did not send His Son Jesus Christ to **condemn** us, He sent His Son so that **through** Him we may be **saved**.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Discuss this verse with your group or meditate on this verse.

Acts 4:12 (NLT)

There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."

Read Acts 4:12 again and let's get a better understanding of the meaning **No one**, **No other** and **Salvation**:

Definition of No one

- No person
- Not a single person

Definition of No other

- No one else
- Leaving no other choice

Definition of Salvation

- Preservation or deliverance from harm, ruin or loss
- Deliverance from sin and its consequences

Acts 4:12 therefore declares that God has provided the world with, **no one** nor **no other** alternative for **salvation**. Jesus Christ was sent to be our Lord and Saviour, and **only through Him** will we find salvation.

Nowhere in the Bible does it say that we need to save ourselves, or that our families or our friends must save us. Jesus Christ was sent to be our Saviour.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Discuss this verse with your group or meditate on this verse.

John 14:6 (NLT)

Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”

In John 14:6, Jesus says that He is the way, the truth and the life, and that no one goes to the Father except through Him.

Let's look at the words **Way**, **Truth** and **Life**:

Definition of Way

- How someone or something does something
- A method or system that can be used to do something

Definition of Truth

- The real facts about something
- The things that are true

Definition of Life

- The ability to grow, change, etc.



- The experience of being alive

We read this in Acts 4:12 and in John 14:6 where Jesus confirms it. NO ONE comes to the Father except through Him. He is not saying I am one of your many options to choose from, He is our ONLY option.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life; He is our Lord and Saviour. He is the solution to our problems and it is only through Him that we will find salvation.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Discuss this verse with your group or meditate on this verse.

Why would God send His one and only Son to be our Saviour?

John 3:16 (NLT)

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

Read John 3:16 and let's look at the definition of the words **Love**, **Give**, **Believe**, **Perish** and **Eternal life** to get a better understanding of this verse:

Definition of Love

- A strong affection for another arising out of kinship or personal ties (maternal love for a child)
- An assurance of affection
- Devotion
- Unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another
- The fatherly concern of God for humankind

Definition of Give (gave is past tense)

- To freely transfer the possession of something to someone
- To present voluntarily and without expecting compensation

Definition of Believe

- To have confidence in the truth, the existence, or the reliability of something
- To be persuaded of the truth or existence of

Definition of Perish

- To become destroyed or ruined
- Cease to exist

Definition of Eternal life

- Spiritual existence after death of the body (Christian Theology)

God **gave** His one and only Son to us, so that we may not **perish** but have **eternal life**.

God did this out of His great **love** for us. We did not ask for it, nor did we earn it, it was **given** freely to us.

The only requirement from us is that we believe and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Discuss this verse with your group or meditate on this verse.

Chapter 3 Self-Study

Pray before starting the self-study and ask the Lord to reveal what He wants to reveal to you.

When answering questions relate them to a situation / experience you encountered, it will help you to connect with the questions and relate them to your life.

Remember there is no right or wrong answer, whatever you feel impressed on your heart is what you should answer.

Surrendering my will to God my Creator – John 1

1. What does the word surrender mean to me?
2. What does the term 'my will' mean to me?
3. What does the term 'God's will' mean to me?
4. What do I feel I need to surrender to God?
5. What do I think the consequences will be if I gave up control of my life and turned it over to the care of God?

God's unfailing love and faithfulness – John 1:14

1. In what situations do I feel happy, loved and secure?
2. In what situations do I feel fear, anxious and insecure?
3. Why do I believe there is such a difference in the two areas?
4. How has holding onto anger and resentment affected me? Give an example of a situation / time.
5. In what situations do I feel loved, respected and worthy?
6. Do I believe that the Lord loves me? Why? Why not?
7. Have there been situations / experiences where I felt the Lord's love for me? Explain.
8. What has happened in my past that still provokes fear / paralyses me?
9. How do I think I will feel if I let go of this fear and choose to trust the Lord with my future?

Overcoming fear - John 3:17

1. What circumstances have occurred that have resulted in me not trusting God?
2. What am I fearful will happen if I let go and trust God?
3. What behaviours do I practise when I am feeling fearful?
4. What have the outcomes of these behaviours been?

Salvation - Acts 4:12 (NLT)

1. What is my understanding of salvation?
2. How have I tried to earn my salvation?

Jesus Christ Lord and Saviour - John 14:6

1. Do I believe Jesus was sent to be my Saviour? Elaborate.
2. What is my understanding of the verse John 14:6, which states that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life? Elaborate.

Trusting God and believing in His love for me - John 3:16

1. Do I believe God loves me? Elaborate.
2. Am I willing to learn more about God's character and His love for me? Elaborate.
3. Am I willing to accept Jesus as my Lord and Saviour? Elaborate.

Moving Forward

Repeatedly, we read in Scripture just how much God loves us and how nothing can separate us from that love.

Through that great love He sent His one and only Son Jesus Christ to be propitiation for our sins, and through Him we are righteous and set free.

Ephesians 2:4-5 (NIV)

But God had so much loving-kindness. He loved us with such a great love. Even when we were dead because of our sins, He made us alive by what Christ did for us. You have been saved from the punishment of sin by His



1 John 4:16 (NLV)

We have come to know and believe the love God has for us. God is love. If you live in love, you live by the help of God and God lives in you.

Romans 8:37-39 (NLV)

But we have power over all these things through Jesus Who loves us so much. For I know that nothing can keep us from the love of God. Death cannot! Life cannot! Angels cannot! Leaders cannot! Any other power cannot! Hard things now or in the future cannot! The world above or the world below cannot! Any other living thing cannot keep us away from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.

We were born with free will and have a choice to make. We need to understand that everything is about choice.

- We can choose who we serve (Joshua 24:15)
- We can choose to accept God's love and will for our lives
- We can choose to believe that through God's Son Jesus Christ we are saved
- We can choose to accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour
- We can choose to accept salvation and find freedom from bondage

The choice is yours. Carry on as you are or accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, experience God's perfect love for you and find the freedom you so desperately seek.

Are you ready to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour? If so, say this prayer and ask Jesus to come into your life.

Heavenly Father, I humbly come before You and thank You for sending Your Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for me so that I may be saved through Him. I declare that I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour, and ask You Lord to come into my heart, take my will and my life and lead me on the path of righteousness.

In Jesus' precious name I pray, Amen.



CHAPTER 4

REPENTANCE

We know that because of God's great love He sent His only begotten Son to die for our sins and that through Him we are righteous. We realise that everything is about choice and we are becoming more willing to take the necessary steps to change our ways, however we may be wondering:

- How can I change?
- How can I be righteous after all the terrible things I have done?
- Do I need to stop sinning first and become a better person before I qualify for righteousness?

Romans 3:23 (NKJV)

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 3:23 reads that 'for **ALL** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'. Note the word **ALL**. There is not one person who can say that they have never sinned. Every one of us has done something that we wish we could change.

We need to understand that sin is sin. One person's sin is not less sinful than another's. Our 'lesser' sin does not make us better Christians than someone who we feel has greater sin. (Matthew 7:1-6) Sin is sin and Jesus died for ALL of us. (1 John 2:2)

God loves us all equally; no one is more righteous than another. Anyone who believes in Jesus Christ and accepts Him as Lord and Saviour, no matter what our past is, will have eternal life. (John 3:16)

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Discuss this verse with your group or meditate on this verse.



Matthew 11:28 (NIV)

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

In Matthew 11:28 we read that the Lord calls ALL the weary and burdened to go to Him for rest.

Let’s look at the definitions of the words **All**, **Weary**, **Burdened** and **Rest**:

Definition of All

- The whole, entire, or extent of
- Every member

Definition of Weary

- Exhausted in strength, endurance or vigour
- Having one's patience, tolerance, or pleasure exhausted

Definition of Burdened

- Something oppressive or worrisome
- Dealing with something difficult

Definition of Rest

- Freedom from activity or labour
- Peace of mind or spirit

Let’s look at that verse again:

Matthew 11:28 (NIV)

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

It does not say ‘only the selected few’ come to me.

It does not say come to me when you have your life in order.

It does not say come to me when you are free from sin.

It says come to me all you **weary** and **burdened** so I can give you **rest**. The Lord wants you to come to Him as you are right now.

It can be so easy to fall into the trap of believing that we need to be in a certain place in our lives to be worthy enough to go into the presence of the Lord our God.

I used to have that belief, so I know. I never felt worthy enough to have a relationship with the Lord or go to church. I always felt that everyone would judge me because of everything I had done in my past.

I believed that one day, when I was free from sin and a 'perfect Christian' (whatever that may be because if I were able to be perfect Christian, I would not need Jesus,) I would then be worthy enough to go into the presence of Lord.

The sad thing is that belief is so far from the truth, and only pushes us further into pain and condemnation, trying to achieve the impossible. We will never be worthy enough through our own works or behaviour; we are in fact already worthy through Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:5-6) We are perfect in God's eyes (Matthew 5:48), we are His children, He created us, and He loves us just as we are. (Psalm 100:3) God wants us to come to Him right this second, just as we are, so He can give us rest.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Discuss this verse with your group or meditate on this verse.

2 Peter 3:9 (NLT)

The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

Read 2 Peter 3:9 and let's look at the definition of the words **Patient**, **Destroyed** and **Repent**.



Definition of Patient

- Able to remain calm and not become annoyed when waiting for an extended period
- Steadfast despite opposition, difficulty, or adversity

Definition of Destroyed

- To cause (something) to end or no longer exist
- To cause the destruction of (something)
- To damage (something) so badly that it cannot be repaired

Definition of Repent

- To feel or express sincere regret or remorse for something bad or wrong that was done.
- Wanting to do what is right (to change your ways)

In this verse we see more of the character of the Lord, His **patience** and love for us. The Lord desires for us not to **be destroyed** but to **repent**.

The belief that God is now tired of us failing and demands for us to hurry and stop the continual sinning, or that He wants to bring us to our knees so that we can feel the pain, is a lie.

Please understand I am not saying God condones sin because He detests it. (Proverbs 6:16-19) However God desires mercy not sacrifice (Matthew 9:13), and He is also patient with us while we come to a place of repentance.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Discuss this verse with your group or meditate on this verse.

1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.



Read 1 John 1:9 and let's look at the definitions of the words **Confess**, **Faithful**, **Cleanse** and **Unrighteousness** to get a better understanding of this Scripture.

Definition of Confess

- Admission that you did something wrong
- A statement of (your sins) to God

Definition of Faithful

- Having or showing true and constant allegiance and loyalty
- Deserving trust by keeping your promises or doing what you are supposed to do
- Keeping your promise or keeping steadfast to an oath by which a tie was contracted

Definition of Cleanse

- To make (someone or something) clean
- To rid of impurities by, or as if by, washing
- To rid of something unpleasant or defiling

Definition of Unrighteousness

- Not righteous
- Sinful, wicked
- Unjust, unmerited

When we go to the Father and confess our sins, we are washed clean from all unrighteousness. Repentance does not make us righteous nor does it give us salvation. Righteousness and salvation come only through Jesus Christ. (Acts 4:12) It is all about relationship, our Heavenly Father wants us to come to Him, so He can make our burden light (Matthew 11:28-30) and teach us His ways. (Psalms 32:8-10)

What a truly loving merciful Father God we have. He is not asking us to grovel, to offer a sacrifice or do any specific rituals for our sins. He wants us to go to Him.



He desires a personal relationship with us which we can see repeatedly in Scripture. The Lord is personally asking us to go to Him, so He can cleanse us.



Chapter 4 Self-Study

Pray before starting the self-study and ask the Lord to reveal what He wants to reveal to you.

When answering questions relate them to a situation / experience you encountered, it will help you to connect with the questions and relate them to your life.

Remember there is no right or wrong answer, whatever you feel impressed on your heart is what you should answer.

Repentance – 2 Peter 3:9

1. What is my understanding of the word repentance?
2. What are my destructive behaviours?
3. What behaviour am I afraid of facing? Why?
4. What consequences am I currently living with because of these behaviours?
5. Are there people in my life whom I feel are responsible for my destructive behaviour? If so, who and why?
6. Am I ready to acknowledge these destructive behaviours and come to repentance? Explain why and if not, what holds me back?

Trusting God to cleanse me – Matthew 11:28

1. What guilt and shame am I still holding onto that I can't move forward from?
2. How has carrying that guilt and shame impacted on my life?
3. Do I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for me and has restored my righteousness when I accepted Him as Lord and Saviour? Elaborate.
4. Do I understand that I cannot be made righteous by my works / behaviour?
5. Am I ready to let go of self-condemnation and accept the Lord's love and mercy in my life? Elaborate.

Confession of sin – 1 John 1:9

1. Why do you think the Lord wants me to confess my sins to him?

2. Am I ready to confess my sins and be washed clean? Elaborate.
3. What am I having difficulty confessing? List them.
4. What am I scared the outcome will be of these confessions?

Moving Forward

When we repent we can see the error of our ways and move forward with our lives. We can turn away from sin by focusing on Jesus and living in God's grace. (Hebrews 6:1)

Please remember that coming to repentance can be very painful and overwhelming at times. We are focusing on everything we have done wrong and dealing with past hurts. Stop, breathe and read through Scriptures - draw closer to the Lord, He is there waiting to comfort you.

Remember ...

NOTHING can separate you from the love of God.

NOTHING that you do or don't do will make God love you more.

NOTHING that you do or don't do will make you more righteous.

You are already forgiven, you are already loved, you are already righteous through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

CHAPTER 5

PROPITIATION FOR SINS

We have confessed our sins, become aware of our destructive behaviour and come to a place of repentance. What happens now?

How do we make up for all the wrong that we have done in our lives?

1 John 4:10 (NKJV)

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

In 1 John 4:9-10 we read that the because of God's love for us, not our love for Him, **but His love for us**, He sent His Son to be **propitiation** for our sins.

Let's look at the meaning of the word **Propitiation**:

- An action meant to regain someone's favour or make up for something you did wrong
- The act of overcoming distrust and animosity
- The act of atoning for sin

Even while we are sinning God still loves us. (Romans 5:8) He loves us so much that He sent His only begotten Son to be **propitiation** for our sins.

God sent His **ONLY** Son to be **propitiation** for our sins so that we could be restored to righteousness through Him. Think about that for a minute.

Can you think of anyone you love that much? Is there anyone that you would be crucified on the cross for? Well, that is just how much God loves us.



***PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

If Jesus was sent to die for our sins then why do we still suffer consequences for it?

Unfortunately, there are consequences for sin, and consequences for actions. However, what we do need to know and understand is that those consequences are NOT God punishing us but are **consequences** of sin.

Let's look at the definition of **Consequence**:

- Something that happens as a result of a particular action
- Something produced by a cause or necessarily following from a set of conditions / actions

Let's see what Scripture says about the consequences for sin.

Romans 6:23 (NLT)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let's look at the definition of the word **Wage**:

- A payment for labour or service
- A fitting return
- A recompense / to give something to by way of compensation (as for a service rendered or damage incurred)

Let's look at the definition of the word **Death**:

- The permanent end of something
- The ruin or destruction of something

When we work for something we receive a **wage**. We receive payment for what we have done, and Scripture tells us that the wage for sin is death.



Scripture refers to three fundamental ways to experience death while we are alive.

Let's look at three ways we can experience death:

1. Consequence
2. Physical
3. Spiritual

Consequence

While we are alive and living in sin we start to experience the wages / consequences for our sin.

- We spend years smoking and end up with lung cancer – the consequence is the death of our health
- We have an affair and the possibility of our partner leaving us is high, which would result in divorce – the consequence is the death of our marriage
- We rob a bank, get caught and go to jail – the consequence is the death of our freedom

Physical

Physical death is when we physically die, our body dies and our spirit leaves our body.

Spiritual

We are created to be in a relationship with God and have eternal life; spiritual death is when we separate ourselves from the love of God.

Romans 6:23 (NLT)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let's look at the second part of the verse - *but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Let's look at the words **Eternal, Life, Free** and **Gift**:



Definition of Eternal

- Having no beginning and no end in time
- Lasting forever
- Existing at all times

Definition of Life

- The period of time when a person is alive
- The experience of being alive

Definition of Free

- Not costing any money
- Without charge

Definition of Gift

- Something that is given to another person
- Something voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation

God loves us so much that even while we were sinners He made a way for us to have **eternal** life through His Son Jesus Christ who paid the ultimate price for our sins. (Romans 5:8) Jesus was crucified on the cross so our righteousness could be restored through Him, a **gift** which is given **freely** to us.

Yes, we still live with the consequences of sin on earth; however, we have eternal life with God through Jesus Christ. (John 3:16)

It is honestly mind-blowing! We have done nothing to deserve that perfect love and mercy.

***PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.



Isaiah 44:22 (AMP)

*“I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud
And your sins like a heavy mist.
Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.”*

Let's look at the meaning of the word **Redeem**:

- To get or win back
- To free from captivity
- To help to overcome something
- To release from blame

In Isaiah 44:22 we read that our sins have been wiped out like a thick cloud. Our Heavenly Father wants us to return to Him because He has already **redeemed** us through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

We became God's children when we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. We were redeemed and adopted into God's family (Galatians 4:5), God is our Father and we are His sons and daughters (2 Corinthians 6:18). Our only requirement is to accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour and redemption is given freely to us.

God is not asking us to earn our forgiveness, to offer sacrifice or do any rituals. He is simply asking for us to go to Him, as we are, right this second, and to have a relationship with Him and acknowledge what His Son endured on the cross for us.

Chapter 5 Self-Study

Pray before starting the self-study and ask the Lord to reveal what He wants to reveal to you.

When answering questions relate them to a situation / experience you encountered, it will help you to connect with the questions and relate them to your life.

Remember there is no right or wrong answer, whatever you feel impressed on your heart is what you should answer.

God's Love for Me – 1 John 4:10

1. Am I starting to understand and believe just how much God loves me? Elaborate.
2. Is there anything preventing me from accepting this love? Elaborate.
3. Do I believe that God's love for me is unconditional and I am still loved even while I am sinning?

Propitiation of Sin - Romans 6:23

1. What is my understanding of propitiation of sin?
2. What is my understanding of the consequences of sin?
3. Are there any sins I have committed which I feel are unforgivable? List them.
4. What does Scripture say about lesser and greater sin? Is there such a thing? (Matthew 7:1-6)

Redemption – Isaiah 44:22

1. In Isaiah 44:22 we read that 'my transgressions have been wiped out and I have been redeemed by God'. What are my thoughts on that statement?
2. Find more Scriptures which declare the truth about your redemption through Jesus Christ. Find a minimum of three, write them down and when feelings of guilt and condemnation manifest, meditate on the Scriptures and remind yourself of who you are in Christ.

Moving Forward

We have all made mistakes. We all wish there were things we could change about our past, however, we cannot go back in time and change these things, we can only move forward.

It comes down to choice: choose to stay in bondage with our past or choose to forgive ourselves, accept what Jesus did on the cross for us and live according to His love and grace for our lives.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Remember, from the minute when we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour our past becomes null and void, we become a new creation in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

CHAPTER 6

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

In our lives, we hear so many different versions about our identities in Christ, and the character of God, that it tends to be confusing at times. So how do we establish the difference between the truth and a false belief or lie?

Psalm 33:4 (NIV)

*For the word of the Lord is right and true;
he is faithful in all he does*

- We find the truth in God's Word
- The answer to all our questions are found in the Word of God
- Any belief that does not line up with the Word of God is a lie
- Any thoughts which result in negative feelings like anxiety, depression, fear, guilt and condemnation and do not line up with the Word of God will stem from a lie

Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.

Read Hebrews 4:12 and let's get a better understanding of the words **Alive**, **Powerful** and **Expose**:

Definition of Alive

- Having life
- Living
- Not dead



- Continuing to exist

Definition of Powerful

- Having the ability to control or influence people or things
- Having a strong effect on someone or something
- Having or producing a lot of physical strength or force

Definition of Expose

- To leave (something) without covering or protection
- To reveal (something hidden, dishonest, etc.)

The Word of God is powerful and alive. It will expose the lies you believe. It will expose any new lies that you may be told; the Word of God will securely establish our identities in Christ.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

So how do we find and use Scripture to expose lies and affirm the truth?

There are numerous ways we can find Scriptures to help us:

1. Bible Concordance (usually at the back of your Bible) - A concordance contains an alphabetical index of words used in the Bible and the main Bible references where the word occurs. Search for words you are experiencing difficulty with – fear, faith etc.
2. Google – yes Google! Google Scriptures affirming God’s love for me or Scriptures to overcome fear etc.

Here are some examples of lies, and Scriptures to affirm the truth:

Lie: I am not righteous through Jesus Christ.

Truth: Even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference. (Romans 3:22 NKJV)



- Lie:** I am not made perfectly in God's image.
- Truth:** So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:27 NIV)
But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.
(Matthew 5:48 NLT)
- Lie:** I am not loved by God.
- Truth:** But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8 NIV)
- Lie:** I can't do this.
- Truth:** I can do all this through Christ who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13 NLT)
- Lie:** I don't have enough faith.
- Truth:** He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you. (Luke 17:6 NIV)
- Lie:** I have done too much; hurt too many people.
- Truth:** Then he says, "I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds." (Hebrews 10:17 NLT)
- Lie:** People don't change so how can I expect to?
- Truth:** This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT)
- Lie:** I am not good enough or worthy enough.
- Truth:** I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. (Psalm 139:14 NIV)
- Lie:** God is punishing me for my past actions and behaviours.

Truth: I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me. (Jeremiah 33:8 NIV)

Lie: I deserve the bad things that are happening to me because of all the sin I have committed.

Truth: God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. (Ephesians 2:8 NIRV)

Lie: I must earn grace from the Lord.

Truth: And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. (Romans 11:6 NIV)

Lie: I need to have my life together before I can go into the presence of the Lord.

Truth: Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:28-29 NIV)

Remember:

- Anything that tells you that you are not perfectly loved by the Lord your God is a lie.
- Anything that tells you that you were not made righteous through Jesus Christ is a lie.
- Anything that tells you that you are not forgiven and washed free from sin and are forgiven is a lie.

***PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.



2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT)

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realise what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

Let's look at the definition of the words **Teach** and **Realise** to get a better understanding of this verse:

Definition of Teach

- To help (someone) to learn about a subject by giving lessons
- To give lessons about (a particular subject) to a person or group
- To help (a person or animal) to learn how to do something
- Giving lessons, showing how it is done, etc.

Definition of Realise

- To bring into concrete existence
- To conceive vividly as real
- To be fully aware of

Scripture has been given to us to TEACH us the truth and REALISE what is wrong in our lives so that through the Lord's love, teachings and guidance we can find peace.

2 Timothy 3:17 (NLT)

God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

Let's look at the definition of the words **Prepare** and **Equip** to get a better understanding of this verse:

Definition of Prepare

- To make (someone or something) ready for some activity, purpose, use, etc
- To make yourself ready for something that you will be doing, something that you expect to happen, etc.

Definition of Equip

- To provide (someone) with necessary materials or supplies
- To provide (something) with a particular feature or ability
- To prepare (someone) for a particular activity or problem

Like our earthly parents send us to school to get an education, our Heavenly Father has equipped us with the power of His Word which will PREPARE and EQUIP us.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

2 Peter 1:2 (NLV)

May you have more and more of His loving-favor and peace as you come to know God and our Lord Jesus Christ better.

Let's look at the definition of the words **Favour** and **Peace** to get a better understanding of this verse:

Definition of Favour

- Gracious kindness
- A kind or helpful act that you do for someone
- Approval, support, or popularity
- Preference

Definition of Peace

- A state of tranquility or quiet
- Freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions

The more we spend time with, and develop a relationship with our Heavenly Father, the more peace we will have.

You need to understand that we have a Heavenly Father who is so powerful He spoke our entire existence into creation (Psalm 33:9), a God for which nothing is impossible (Luke 1:37), we are favoured and loved by Him because we are His children. (Galatians 3:26)

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

2 Peter 1:3-4 (NLV)

He gives us everything we need for life and for holy living. He gives it through His great power. As we come to know Him better, we learn that He called us to share His own shining-greatness and perfect life. Through His shining-greatness and perfect life, He has given us promises. These promises are of great worth and no amount of money can buy them. Through these promises you can have God's own life in you now that you have gotten away from the sinful things of the world which came from wrong desires of the flesh.

Spend a few minutes meditating on 2 Peter 1:3-4, speak to your Heavenly Father and fully comprehend the perfect love displayed in this verse.

God GIVES us EVERYTHING we need through HIS great power.

Through HIS shining greatness and perfect life He has GIVEN us promises.

The only place we learn this truth is by spending time in the Word with God, where we become more secure.

When we find ourselves overwhelmed with life and fearful of the future, find Scriptures that speak the truth about the Lord's provision, protection and love for us. With these Scriptures we can expose the lies and establish the truth.



Chapter 6 Self-Study

Pray before starting the self-study and ask the Lord to reveal what He wants to reveal to you.

When answering questions relate them to a situation / experience you encountered, it will help you to connect with the questions and relate them to your life.

Remember there is no right or wrong answer, whatever you feel impressed on your heart is what you should answer.

Believing the lies – Psalms 33:4

1. What is my understanding of lies / false beliefs I have grown to believe'?
2. What is my understanding of the power of the Word of God?

The power of God's Word - Hebrews 4:12

1. How can I expose the lies and establish the truth?
2. List two methods I can use to find the Scriptures I need?

Identifying the lies – 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Make three columns and then answer the questions below:

- a. In the first column you will write the heading 'Lie'
- b. In the second column you will write the heading 'Feeling'
- c. In the third column you will write the word 'Truth'

Answer the following questions in each column:

- a. What lies do I still believe about myself? Refer back to the beginning of this chapter for examples of lies. List them in the first column.
- b. How do those lies make me feel? List them in the second column.
- c. Find your own Scripture declaring the truth combating each lie. Google is great for this – type in Scriptures confirming God's love for me / Scriptures confirming I am forgiven / Scriptures on God's provision, whatever Scripture is needed to combat the lie. Write down the Scriptures that stand

out to you and list them in the third column.

Finding peace - 2 Peter 1:2

1. Can I see how believing the lies have affected my happiness?
2. Do I know and understand how to expose the lie (or any future lies) that surface, using Scripture?
3. Am I willing to start believing the truth and letting go of the lies?

God's perfect love – 2 Peter 1:3-4

1. What thoughts, feelings or revelations did I have while meditating on 2 Peter 1:3-4?

Moving Forward

We have been empowered with Scripture, which is God-breathed, inspired by God, used for teaching, correcting, rebuking and training in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16)

Scripture will combat every lie and wrong belief we may have. It will firmly establish the truth about our identities in Christ.

We have the solution to all our problems, and the truth to all the lies - only we can make the choice to empower ourselves with it.

Believe the truth, or believe the lies? Which brings peace, and which brings you pain? Only you can decide which you choose to believe.

CHAPTER 7

TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

We have identified the lies and found Scriptures to affirm the truth in our minds and hearts. We have made the decision that we are no longer going to believe the lies and make a choice to stand firmly on the truth. This is easy to do when life is running according to plan, but what happens when the trials and tribulations come? How do we stand on the truth when it feels like everything is going wrong in our lives?

I went through an extremely testing season. I kept bumping into people from my past who would trigger painful memories of who I was before I found Christ (guilt and condemnation), conflict arose with family and friends (anger and resentment), I lost a big deal at work, my husband wrote his car off (financial fear), we had an attempted break-in at our home, my son was suspended from school, we were experiencing fertility problems while trying to conceive, a friend passed away in a horrific car accident ... this was all in a space of six months. I felt like I was in the twilight zone - every truth I was trying to stand on was being challenged.

I was experiencing trials and tribulations and I felt like I was being tested in every single area of my life, and it was not easy.

I was tired, overwhelmed and lacking faith and I was starting to believe all the lies again. I was carrying guilt and condemnation for feeling the way I was because I knew the truth about God's love and provision for me. I felt like I was letting God down because I was full of fear and not trusting Him. I was not in a good place.

Matthew 14:29-31 (NLT)

“Yes, come,” Jesus said.

So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. “Save me, Lord!” he shouted.

Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. “You have so little faith,” Jesus said. “Why did you doubt me?”

What important lessons can we learn from Matthew 14:29-31?

1. When Peter looked at Jesus, he could walk on water - When we focus on Jesus we can walk on water, walk through the storms / tests / trials and tribulations and come through stronger on the other side.
2. Peter looked at the storm and sank - When we focus on the storm / tests / trials and tribulations, we will sink / feel overwhelmed, depressed or anxious. Remember that even Peter had moments of weakness, focusing on the storm and he walked with Jesus, was taught by him in person, so there must be no guilt and condemnation when we feel overwhelmed / anxious or depressed.
3. Peter cried out to Jesus for help and Jesus **immediately** grabbed him. Jesus did not wait so Peter could suffer a bit for doubting Him, nor did He then lash out in anger for Peter doubting, and punish him. He **immediately** reached in and grabbed Peter. That is the character of the merciful, compassionate and loving God we serve.

When we focus on the storm, we sink, and that is what was happening to me, I was sinking. I had taken my eyes completely off the Lord and His promises to me, and I was focusing directly on the storm.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.



2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV)

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Read 2 Corinthians 10:5 and let's get a better understanding of the words **Demolish, Pretension, Knowledge, Captive, Thought** and **Obedient**:

Definition of Demolish

- To do away with
- To strip of any pretense of merit or credence

Definition of Pretension

- An allegation of doubtful value
- A claim or an effort to establish a claim

Definition of Knowledge

- Information, understanding, or skill that you get from experience or education
- Awareness of something
- The state of being aware of something

Definition of Captive

- Kept within bound
- Taken and held as or as if a prisoner of war
- Being held involuntarily because of a situation that makes free choice or departure difficult

Definition of Thought

- An idea, plan, opinion, picture, etc., that is formed in your mind
- Something that you think of
- The act or process of thinking
- The act of carefully thinking about the details of something

Definition of Obedient

- Submissive to the restraint or command of authority
- Willing to obey

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God - We must demolish any pretension / negative thought which does not line up with the Word of God. Thoughts that cause feelings of fear, depression or anxiety, and anything that leads you to believe that you are not worthy, that you are alone, or that the Lord is not faithful to His promises, must be demolished.

And we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ - We take all the negative thoughts and lies captive and declare the Word of God over them, making them obedient to His Word.

Negative thoughts cause pain and anguish. God's Word gives us hope, peace and freedom and that is why it is so important for us to demolish negative thoughts. Our Heavenly Father has not commanded this because He is trying to control us, but because He loves us and wants us to be happy and content in life, not anxious and depressed.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

Matthew 4:1-11 (NIV)

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:



*“He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”*

Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test”

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

What important lessons can we learn from Matthew 4:1-11 (NIV)?

1. Jesus was led by the Spirit. Jesus did not go into the wilderness alone, nor did He go there without reason. He was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. Just know that you are not facing your trials and tribulations alone; your Heavenly Father is with you no matter how challenging and overwhelming it gets.
2. Jesus was tested in the wilderness while He was fasting for 40 days and 40 nights, and it was in the hot desert. Can you imagine how exhausted, tired and hungry Jesus must have been? We don't only get tested when life is going according to plan, or when we are relaxed and ready for tests, we also get tested when we are in the midst of our trials and tribulations.
3. Every time Jesus was tested, He responded “It is written” and responded with the Word of God. He did not once get into arguments with Satan; He declared the truth by quoting Scripture. We need to apply the same principle to lies and negative thoughts that we experience. Find Scriptures that speak the truth over your life and current situations, and stand firmly by them.
4. Satan is the one who tests us, not God – This is something so many Christians don't realise. Satan tests us, not God. Yes, God can sometimes

throughout the Bible. In the story of Job we read that God allows Satan to test Job, just like God allowed Satan to test Jesus in the wilderness. God, however, restored double everything Job lost, and God sent angels to attend to Jesus.

5. God is the one who carries us through the tests and restores double, and God is the one who sends angels to attend to us.
6. When our faith is tested, our endurance has a chance to grow. (James 1:3)

***PAUSE FOR THOUGHT**

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

Matthew 4:11 (NIV)

Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Read Matthew 4:11 and let's look at the word **Attend / Attended**:

- To look after
- To go or stay with as a companion, nurse, or servant

God was with Jesus when He went into the wilderness and He sent angels to attend to Jesus in the end.

When the tests / trials and tribulations come, our Heavenly Father is always with us. He will guide us along the unfamiliar paths; He will turn our darkness into light and make our rough places smooth. He will never leave nor forsake us. (Isaiah 42:16)

Declare Scripture over your life. Cut the lies dead in their tracks, take your thoughts captive and keep your eyes on Jesus and His promises to you.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.



Chapter 7 Self-Study

Pray before starting the self-study and ask the Lord to reveal what He wants to reveal to you.

When answering questions relate them to a situation / experience you encountered, it will help you to connect with the questions and relate them to your life.

Remember there is no right or wrong answer, whatever you feel impressed on your heart is what you should answer.

Keeping my eyes on Jesus - Matthew 14:29-31

1. Can I relate to Peter when he focused on the storm and sank? Elaborate.
2. What is my understanding of keeping my eyes on Jesus and being able to walk on water?
3. Have there been situations where the Lord has reached in and grabbed me? List them.

Trials and tribulations - 2 Corinthians 10:5

1. What is my understanding of 'taking thoughts captive' and lining them up with Scripture?
2. Are there any thoughts I still need to take captive? List them.

Jesus in the wilderness – Matthew 4:1-11

1. In Matthew 4:1-11 we read about Jesus being tested in the wilderness. What stands out for you in this Scripture, and why?
2. Why does Jesus respond to each test with "It is written"?
3. How do I handle any new thoughts / lies / trials and tribulations that surface in the future?

Character of God – Matthew 4:11

1. What does this Scripture show me about the character of God?



2. What do I think of the fact that God sent angels to attend to Jesus?
3. Do I believe that God loves me enough to send angels to attend to me? Why, or why not?

Moving Forward

Our Heavenly Father does not expect us to have perfect faith. He sympathises with us and understands first-hand that we are living in a fallen world with many challenges. Jesus walked the earth and was tempted in all the same areas we are. (Hebrews 4:15)

Trials and tribulations come, life happens and we need to understand that it has nothing to do with God punishing us, nor has He forsaken us. Remember our Heavenly Father's love is unconditional, constant and unfailing, even in times when we are experiencing lack of faith, doubt and fear. (Isaiah 54:10)

We must choose to change our lenses, and look at trials and tribulations as an opportunity to grow in character, knowing that no matter what happens, we have a Heavenly Father who loves us, and we have nothing to fear.

Here are some truths and Scriptures for you to declare over your life and stand on.

1. I choose to believe that I am free from condemnation, Jesus died for my sins and through Him I am born new.

Romans 8:1-2

Therefore there is now no condemnation [no guilty verdict, no punishment] for those who are in Christ Jesus [who believe in Him as personal Lord and Saviour]. For the law of the Spirit of life [which is] in Christ Jesus [the law of our new being] has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed passed away; behold, all things have become new.

2. I choose to focus on what's in front of me, not trying to solve all of life's problems at once. Tomorrow can be dealt with tomorrow.

Matthew 6:34

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

3. I choose not to be afraid and I choose to have faith in God, trusting Him to take care of my future.

Matthew 6:26

Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Philippians 4:19

And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

4. I choose to believe the truth that I am loved by God and nothing can change that.

Jeremiah 31:3

*The LORD appeared to him from far away.
I have loved you with an everlasting love;
therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.*



Romans 5:8

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

5. I choose to expose any lies and stand firmly on the truth of the Word.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, [and] for training in righteousness (in holy living, in conformity to God's will in thought, purpose, and action), So that the man of God may be complete and proficient, well fitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work.

CHAPTER 8

SAVED BY GRACE

When we have the revelation of God's perfect love and mercy for us, it can be so easy for us to fall into the trap of believing that we must now prove our love for God in return by our actions and by our behaviour.

We attempt to **earn** our **grace**, and **earn** our **salvation**.

Let's look at the definition of the word **Earn**:

- To obtain something in return for labour or services
- To gain deservedly in return for one's behaviour or achievements

Let's look at the definition of the word **Grace**:

- Favour or goodwill
- The condition or fact of being favoured by someone
- A manifestation of favour
- Mercy; clemency; pardon
- A divinely given talent or blessing

Let's look at the definition of the word **Salvation**:

- Deliverance from the power and effects of sin
- Preservation from destruction or failure
- Deliverance from danger or difficulty

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT)

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

Let's get a better understanding of the words **believe**, **gift**, **reward** and **boast**:

Definition of Believe

- To accept something as true
- To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something

Definition of Gift

- Something that is given freely to another person
- A thing given willingly to someone without payment
- A present

Definition of Reward

- To give money or another kind of payment to (someone or something) for something good that has been done

Definition of Boast

- A statement in which you express too much pride in yourself or in something you have, have done, or are connected to in some way
- A reason to be proud
- Something impressive that someone or something has or has done

God saved you by his grace when you believed - When you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour and **believe** in Him, you are saved by **His** grace, which is a **gift** from God.

You cannot attempt to claim or earn salvation by your own actions. You are not righteous because of your good behaviour, you are righteous because of Jesus Christ and it is a gift given freely to you when you believe.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.



Let's look at the definition of the word **Righteous**:

- To be free from guilt or sin
- To be morally good
- To be in good standing with God (Theology)

In 2 Corinthians 5:21 we read that God made Jesus, who knew no sin, to be sin for us so we could become the **righteousness** of God in Him.

This is more confirmation that we are made righteous through Jesus Christ and not ourselves. You can read this in numerous Scriptures throughout the Bible.

Isaiah 53:4-5

*Yet it was our weaknesses he carried;
it was our sorrows that weighed him down.
And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God,
a punishment for his own sins!
But he was pierced for our rebellion,
crushed for our sins.
He was beaten so we could be whole.
He was whipped so we could be healed.*

Jesus Christ was crushed for our sins, He was pierced for our rebellion, beaten so we could be whole and whipped so we could be healed. Think about that for a moment. Jesus endured so much out of His great love for us so that we could be made righteous with God through Him.

So what happens when we attempt to earn our grace and righteousness?

- We take away from everything Jesus endured at the cross for us (Galatians 2:21)
- We put the impossible expectation on ourselves to be perfect and we fail continuously. We, in turn, feel unworthy. We feel like failures and we start to withdraw from God.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

Romans 11:6 (NIV)

And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

If grace could be earned then it would not be called grace. It doesn't get any clearer than that. We are saved through the action of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, not through ourselves.

Why do we instinctively always try and earn our grace and our righteousness?

This is because that is exactly how the world works. Everything in the world teaches us that in order to achieve or receive anything, we need to work or **earn** it. We are rewarded for good behaviour and punished for bad behaviour.

- Excel at work and receive a promotion
- Skip work or miss assignments and you can get fired
- Be kind and nice to people and you will be popular
- Be nasty to people and you are rejected

It is all about earning and receiving through our own actions and behaviours. This may be how things work in the world, but this is not how things work with our Heavenly Father.

1 Corinthians 1:30 (NLT)

God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin.

Let's look at the definition of the words **United, Benefit, Pure** and **Holy**:



Definition of United

- Made one
- To become joined together, combined so as to form a single whole

Definition of Benefit

- An act of kindness
- Something that promotes well-being
- Useful aid, help

Definition of Pure

- Something that is not mixed with any other element, that is not contaminated in any way
- A person who has no sins or who is wholesome

Definition of Holy

- Exalted or worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in goodness and righteousness
- Divine
- Sacred

God **united** us with Christ Jesus, for our **benefit**. He knows that we could never earn our righteousness through our own actions. It is impossible, so stop trying. **Christ** has already made us right with God. He made us **pure, holy** and **free from sin**.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

Romans 5:8 (NLT)

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.



God gave us this merciful gift of grace and salvation because of His great love for us, not our great love for Him.

It has nothing to do with any right action or behaviour, it has everything to do with what Jesus did on the cross for us, the blood He shed, and the torture He endured. He paid the wage for all sin so that we could be made **righteous** through **HIS** actions, not our own.

No words can describe that kind of love, compassion and selflessness. Jesus willfully endured sacrifice so we could be set free – yes, willfully. Jesus knew He was going to be sacrificed (Matthew 16:21), and He could have run away and hidden. But because of His great love for us He willfully took our sin so we could be made the righteousness of God through Him.

It has nothing to do with our actions; it has everything to do with Jesus Christ.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

Chapter 8 Self-Study

Pray before starting the self-study and ask the Lord to reveal what He wants to reveal to you.

When answering questions relate them to a situation / experience you encountered, it will help you to connect with the questions and relate them to your life.

Remember there is no right or wrong answer, whatever you feel impressed on your heart is what you should answer.

Grace – Ephesians 2:8-9

1. What is my understanding of the word grace?
2. What is my understanding of trying to earn grace?
3. In what situations have I felt that I was being punished by the Lord for something I did wrong? List them.
4. In what situations have I felt that the Lord was rewarding me? List them.
5. What effect has this belief of earning grace had on my relationship with the Lord?

Righteousness - 2 Corinthians 5:21

1. What is my understanding of the word righteousness?
2. In the past what did I believe the Lord expected from me in order to be righteous?
3. Make three columns on a page with the following headings:
 - a. Action
 - b. Feelings
 - c. Outcome

And then answer the following questions in each applicable column:

- a. (Action) List all the things I have done to try achieve righteousness
- b. (Feelings) Write down the feelings I experienced in these situations
- c. (Outcome) Write down the outcome of these situations

4. Can I see the negative effects this had on my relationship with the Lord?
Elaborate.

Knowing the truth - Isaiah 53:4-5, Romans 11:6, 1 Corinthians 1:30

1. What is my understanding of receiving grace and righteousness from God through Jesus Christ alone?
2. Do I believe there is anything that I could do to earn what Jesus did on the cross for me?
3. What is the one act God requires from me to receive grace and righteousness?
4. Am I willing to accept God's grace and peace in my life?

Moving Forward

Trying to achieve the impossible task of earning righteousness causes nothing but pain, anxiety and emotional exhaustion. The belief system that our actions determine our worth only pushes us further and further into condemnation, further away from the Lord our God.

Our righteousness and grace come from Jesus Christ alone. Give Him the glory that is required because without Jesus Christ we are lost.

The only action that is required from us is accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. Not fair, is it? Completely unearned, unmerited and undeserved favour out of God's great love for us.

CHAPTER 9

FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness of ourselves, and forgiveness of others, can be extremely challenging. We may believe that forgiveness means condoning a certain behaviour which we feel we cannot do.

You may be thinking:

- That particular person did such horrible things that I just can't forgive them
- You have no idea of the horrible things that I have done, I just cannot forgive myself

Let's take a look at the definition of the word **Forgive**:

- To stop feeling anger toward (someone who has done something wrong)
- To stop blaming (someone)
- To stop feeling anger about (something)

When I first looked up the meaning of the word forgive I was quite surprised to be honest, as it was not quite what I thought it meant. I did not have to condone any situation, person or behaviour, but instead I had to let go of anger and resentment.

Proverbs 27:3 (NLT)

*A stone is heavy and sand is weighty,
but the resentment caused by a fool is even heavier.*

In Proverbs 27:3 we read that resentment caused by a fool is heavier than stone and sand.

Let's look at the meaning of words **Resentment** and **Fool**:



Definition of Resentment

- A feeling of indignant displeasure or persistent ill will at something regarded as a wrong, insult, or injury
- A feeling of anger or displeasure about someone or something unfair
- Bitter indignation at having been treated unfairly

Definition of Fool

- A person who lacks good sense or judgement
- A person who acts unwisely or imprudently

When we hold onto resentments for someone who has acted foolishly, the burden of carrying that resentment is heavy and weighty. We carry the burden, not them. We give that person or situation power over our lives, power over our happiness and allow our peace and joy to be stolen.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

Colossians 3:13 (NLV)

Try to understand other people. Forgive each other. If you have something against someone, forgive him. That is the way the Lord forgave you.

In Colossians 3:13 we read that we must try and understand other people and forgive them.

Let's look at the meaning of the words **Understand** and **Forgive**:

Definition of Understand

- The knowledge and ability to judge a particular situation or subject
- A willingness to understand people's behaviour and forgive them

Definition of Forgive

- To stop feeling anger toward (someone who has done something wrong)



- To stop blaming (someone)
- To stop feeling anger about (something)
- To forgive someone for (something wrong)

Why do we need to understand each other?

Nobody is perfect and every person has past hurts, or current circumstances, which manifest in some part of their behaviour. For example, a shop cashier is rude to you - she could have had a death in the family, she might be under financial stress, she could be fighting with her partner or parents.

People are not born angry, nasty or mean. Past and current circumstances can often determine behaviour patterns, and the abused can become the abuser.

I am in no way condoning or justifying abuse or bad behaviour, I am simply saying that when we can look at a situation with a different perspective, it can bring us peace, compassion and understanding instead of judgement, fear, resentment and anger.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

Ephesians 4:31 (NLT)

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behaviour.

Negative feelings and thoughts such as judgement, anger and resentment are not from the Spirit and will result in us not being at peace. (Romans 5:8) When we are not at peace we are emotionally and spiritually sick, we experience feelings of anger, resentment, anxiety and depression.

Emotional and spiritual sickness both cause us to be under stress.

Let's look at the definition of the word **Stress**:

- A state of mental tension and worry caused by problems in your life, work, etc.
- Something that causes strong feelings of worry or anxiety

What are the effects of stress on body?

A simple Google search on 'long-term stress effects' produces about 190,000,000 results. Chronic stress disrupts nearly every system in your body. It can shut down your immune system, upset your digestive and reproductive systems, raise blood pressure, increase the risk of heart attack and stroke, speed up the ageing process and leave you vulnerable to many mental and physical health problems.

Have you noticed that when you are going through very stressful times you are more susceptible to colds and flu?

You have got to ask yourself whether all that stress is really worth it.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verses or discuss with your group.

2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

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

In 2 Timothy 1:7 we read that God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love and sound mind.

Let's look at the definition of a **Fearful Person**

- A person who is afraid (of something or someone)
- A person who expects or worries (about something bad or unpleasant)
- A person who is afraid and worried

Let's look at the definition of a **Powerful Person**

- A person who takes responsibility for their decisions and emotions regardless of the circumstances they face, or of how they have been treated by others
- A person who has control over their behaviour / reactions to situations

When we hold onto anger and resentments we allow our joy to be stolen, we give away our power and become a fearful person.

Our Heavenly Father did not create us to live as a fearful person; He created us as powerful. He gave us a spirit of **power, love** and a **sound mind**.

Let's look at the definition of the word **Power**

- The ability to act or produce an effect
- Mental or moral efficacy
- Possession of control, authority, or influence

Let's look at the definition of the word **Love**

- A strong feeling of affection
- Deep affection, fondness, tenderness, warmth, intimacy, attachment, endearment
- A great interest and pleasure in something

Let's look at the meaning of the phrase **Sound Mind**

- Sane or rational
- Free from injury or disease
- Free from flaw, defect, or decay
- Solid, firm

We can choose to be fearful, or choose to be powerful as God created us.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verses or discuss with your group.



Chapter 9 Self-Study

Pray before starting the self-study and ask the Lord to reveal what He wants to reveal to you.

When answering questions relate them to a situation / experience you encountered, it will help you to connect with the questions and relate them to your life.

Remember there is no right or wrong answer, whatever you feel impressed on your heart is what you should answer.

Anger and Resentment – Proverbs 27:3

Draw four columns on a page with the following headings:

1. Person (including yourself) / Circumstance
2. Event
3. Negative feelings
4. Result

Answer each of the following questions, in each column according to their numbers:

1. (Person / Circumstance) Are there people / circumstances in my life that I am having difficulty forgiving or moving forward from?
2. (Event) What did this person do? What happened?
3. (Negative feelings) What holds me back from forgiveness? Here are some examples: Fear of what others may think of me? Feeling like I am condoning their behaviour? Fear of others seeing my hurts? Fear of conflict? Protecting someone else? Pride? Guilt?
4. (Result) What effect is holding onto these negative feelings having on me?

Forgiveness - Colossians 3:13

1. Read Colossians 3:13 - how does the verse make me feel?
2. Do I believe that people who have hurt me deserve forgiveness? Why, or why not?

Letting Go - Ephesians 4:31

1. Do I understand the effect holding onto anger and resentment is having on me spiritually and emotionally? Elaborate.
2. Do I understand the effect holding onto guilt and shame is having on me spiritually and emotionally? Elaborate.
3. How do I think I would feel if I had to let go of all these negative feelings? Elaborate.

Taking My Power Back - 2 Timothy 1:7

1. How would I describe a fearful person?
2. Can you think of anyone you know who is a fearful person? What is your impression of them?
3. How would I describe a powerful person?
4. Can you think of anyone you know who is a powerful person? What is your impression of them?
5. Do I desire to be a powerful person or a fearful person? Why?
6. Am I willing to take my power back and be the powerful person God created me to be? Why, or why not?

Moving Forward

Unforgiveness keeps us living in pain and bondage; we give away our power, our happiness and our freedom.

There may be hurts that are so painful that you may be feeling fearful on how to find forgiveness. Remember you are not alone; you don't have to do this on your own strength. You have a Heavenly Father who will help you, strengthen you, and through Him you will be victorious.

Isaiah 41:10 (NLT)

Don't be afraid, for I am with you.

Don't be discouraged, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you and help you.

I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.



You have God's grace and that is all you need. His power works best in your weakness and He will love, comfort and heal all areas of your life.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NLT)

Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

You already have the power of Christ in you. Only you can make the choice of whether you live as a powerful person or a fearful person.

Make the choice to no longer be the victim, but the victor.

CHAPTER 10

ARMOUR OF GOD

Throughout the previous chapters we have come to the realisation that all our decisions are based on choice. We can choose to live in fear, condemnation and oppression, or we can choose to believe that we have a Heavenly Father who loves us and will provide all our needs.

We can choose to accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, or we can reject Him.

Everything in life is about choice.

Let's look at the definition of the word **Choice**

- The act of choosing
- The act of picking or deciding between two or more possibilities
- The opportunity or power to make a decision

We have been given freedom of choice which means we can choose what we want to believe.

The Lord also understands that making the right choice is not always easy, so the Lord has left us with His armour which will equip us with the tools to make the right choices.

Ephesians 6:13 (NIV)

Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.



Let's look at the definition of the word **Armour**

- A defensive covering for the body
- A hard covering that protects something
- A quality or circumstance that affords protection

In Ephesians 6:13 we read that 'we need to put on the FULL armour of God' so that we will be able to overcome and endure every obstacle, trial and tribulation that comes our way.

Ephesians 6:14-17 (NIV)

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Let's look at the definition of **Standing Firm**

- Standing firm means refusing to abandon our opinions, to stand fast and hold stubbornly to a position

When we cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel, we must make the choice to stand firmly in the truth of God's Word. We must refuse to give up, refuse to believe the lies, and instead **stand firmly** on the promises of the Lord our God.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

Now let's look at each individual piece of armour to get a better understanding of this verse. Imagine an armed Roman soldier preparing for battle, where each piece of military gear represents a part of God's strength that He blesses and equips us with.



The pieces of our **armour** are:

- Belt of Truth
- Breastplate of Righteousness
- Gospel of Peace
- Shield of Faith
- Helmet of Salvation
- Sword of the Spirit

What is our Belt of Truth?

The belt of truth is us knowing the truth about our identity in Christ and God's love for us.

What is our Breastplate of Righteousness?

We are made righteous through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our sins are forgiven and we are the righteousness of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are loved and free from condemnation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are perfect in God's eyes through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our breastplate of righteousness is our righteousness through our Lord Jesus Christ.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

What is our Gospel of Peace?

Note that the verse reads - *And with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.*

The word readiness implies constant vigilance, doing on a daily basis, feeding ourselves with the Word of God. When you train for an event, or study for an exam, you don't just rock up and expect to perform. It takes constant vigilance, practise, studying, equipping yourself with the tools, fitness levels and ensuring you are prepared. That is what it means to *have your feet fitted with readiness.*

Our power comes from knowing the truth, and where do we learn the truth? In the Word of God. Without knowing the Word, we are sitting ducks, vulnerable and unprepared. Knowing the Word is our gospel of peace because when we know the truth we have nothing to fear.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

What is our Shield of Faith?

Our shield of faith is our belief.

Let's look at the definition of the word **Believe**

- To have a firm religious faith
- To accept something as true, genuine or real
- To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something

We **believe** in our Heavenly Father's love for us, we **believe** the promises He has made to us in Scripture, we **believe** and therefore we have faith.

What is our Helmet of Salvation?

Let's look at the definition of the word **Salvation**

- Preservation or deliverance from harm, ruin or loss
- Deliverance from sin and its consequences (Theology)

Salvation is an eternal gift given to us by our Heavenly Father through what Jesus Christ did on the cross for us.

We receive salvation when we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

We are saved by grace through Jesus Christ and that is our salvation.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.



What is the Sword of the Spirit?

The sword that Paul refers to here is Scriptures, the Word of God, the Bible. It is the all-powerful Word from our Heavenly Father, which is able to cut through every lie. Nothing can withstand its ability to cut straight to the core of a matter and uncover the truth. (Hebrews 4:12)

Scripture is the base of everything. It is God-breathed and it is where we find the tools, the knowledge and the truth. (2 Timothy 3:16-17) It is where we learn about the character of God, and where we learn about Jesus.

The Word of God is flawless. (Psalm 18:30) The Word is our reference to everything!

We are advised to **'put on'** this armour on a daily basis and this implies that we do not automatically wear it all the time. Putting on the armour of God requires a decision on our part, a choice which only we can make.

Our Heavenly Father has equipped us with the tools to overcome every trial and tribulation, every lie, and every obstacle.

Throughout the previous chapters in this book we have in fact been receiving training on arming ourselves with the powerful armour of God.

We have learned in Chapter 1, 2 and 3 about strongholds, why we were created and God's perfect love for us – **Our Belt of Truth**

We learned about our righteousness in Chapter 3, 4 and 5. We are made righteous through Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven and we are the righteousness of God through Christ Jesus.

We are loved and free from condemnation through Jesus Christ – **Our Breastplate of Righteousness**

In Chapter 6 we learned about the power of God's Word, we researched Scriptures to combat the lies, establish the truth and we found peace – **Our feet fitted with readiness in the gospel of Peace**

In Chapter 7 we learned that when trials and tribulations come we choose to stand on the truth of God's Word, we keep our eyes on Jesus no matter how bad circumstances may seem – **Our Shield of Faith**

In Chapter 8 we learned that we are saved by grace through Jesus Christ. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour we receive salvation – **Our Helmet of Salvation**

All these pieces of armour work together. One cannot be used without the other, and each and every piece requires us to use the Word of God, the Bible – **The Sword of the Spirit**

Each morning we can choose to wake up and put on our armour of God, choose to stand on the Word and choose to believe the truth about our identities in Christ.

We need to choose to put on God's armour so we can live in peace and freedom from bondage.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

Chapter 10 Self-Study

Pray before starting the self-study and ask the Lord to reveal what He wants to reveal to you.

When answering questions relate them to a situation / experience you encountered, it will help you to connect with the questions and relate them to your life.

Remember there is no right or wrong answer, whatever you feel impressed on your heart is what you should answer.

Freedom of Choice

1. What is my understanding of me having freedom of choice?
2. What is the meaning of the word believe?
3. In which areas of my life do I find it easier having faith?
 - a. List the areas.
 - b. Why do I think these areas are easier for me?
4. In which areas in my life do I find difficulty having faith and experience fear?
 - a. List the areas.
 - b. Why do I think I am fearful in these areas?
5. Can I see the difference in my emotional state living in faith versus fear?
6. What do I think would happen if I let go the fear and had faith in all areas?

Armour of God

1. What is my understanding of putting on the armour of God?
2. Is there any part of the armour I feel resistance towards? Why?
3. What is my understanding of wearing the belt of truth?
4. Is there anything that holds me back from planting my feet firmly in the gospel of peace? Elaborate.
5. What is my understanding of the shield of faith?
6. What is my understanding of the helmet of salvation?
7. What is my understanding of the spirit of the sword?

8. Do I understand how to apply each piece of armour to my life? Elaborate.

Standing Firm

1. Can I see the importance of putting on my armour on a daily basis?
Elaborate.
2. Do I understand that putting on my armour and applying it to my daily life is a choice only I can make? Elaborate.
3. Am I willing to make the choice and wear my armour?

Moving Forward

Through Scripture we have learned about breaking strongholds, and identifying lies.

Through Scripture we have learned how to overcome trials and tribulations by taking our thoughts captive and standing firmly on the truth.

Through Scripture we have found the truth about our identities in Christ.

Through Scripture we have learned the importance of forgiveness and living as a powerful person instead of a victim.

Through Scripture we have learned about the character of our Heavenly Father and His unconditional perfect love for us.

Through Scripture we arm ourselves with the armour of God.

Our Heavenly Father has left us with a 'manual' on how to live life in peace; however He also gave us free will.

With that free will we can decide whether or not we apply Scripture to our lives.

With that free will we can decide whether or not to accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

With that free will we can decide whether or not to put on our armour of God on a daily basis.

CHAPTER 11

PRAYER

What is prayer? What is the correct way of praying? What are you meant to say? There are so many questions and beliefs around how prayer should and should not be done.

For me, prayer used to be about begging, pleading and asking for things. Then it changed to ‘Lord, whatever your will for my life is, let it be’ because I realised as much as I wanted happiness, I seemed to constantly make decisions based on emotions like fear, ego and pleasing others.

This then got me thinking, how can I tell the difference between my own will and God's will?

Remember from previous chapters we learned that whenever we need to establish the truth, or when we are unsure about anything, we refer back to Scripture.

So, let's look at a few Scriptures on God's will for us:

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

1 Timothy 2:4 (NIV)

Who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

God's will for us is to know the truth and find salvation. God wants us to find freedom and live in peace, happiness and prosperity.



*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on these verses or discuss with your group.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV)

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.*

Read Proverbs 3:5-6 and let's look at the definition of the words **Trust**, **Understanding**, **Acknowledge** and **Direct** to get a better understanding of this verse.

Definition of Trust

- Reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something
- One in which confidence is placed
- Dependence on something

Definition of Understanding

- A mental grasp; comprehension
- The power of comprehending
- The capacity to apprehend general relations of particulars
- The power to make experience intelligible by applying concepts and categories

Definition of Acknowledge

- To admit to be real or true; recognise the existence, truth, or fact of
- To show or express recognition or realisation of
- To recognise the authority, validity, or claims of
- To show or express appreciation or gratitude for

Definition of Direct

- To manage or guide by advice, helpful information, instruction, etc.
- To regulate the course of.
- To guide, tell, or show (a person) the way to a place.

God's will is for us to trust Him wholeheartedly. He wants to be acknowledged and included in every area of our lives because of His great love for us, and He will direct our paths.

* PAUSE FOR THOUGHT *

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

When we look at God's will for our lives, surely we want the same thing? So how can we distinguish between our own will and God's will when making decisions?

We look at the fruits of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NIRV)

But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. There is no law against things of that kind.

We can identify God's will by looking at the fruits of the Spirit. God's fruits will produce love, peace and joy, so when we experience fear, anxiety, strife and division in our decision making, we need to step back and spend some time in prayer.

* PAUSE FOR THOUGHT *

Meditate on the verses or discuss with your group.

So, this brings me back to the first question: What is prayer and how are we meant to pray?



Philippians 4:6 (NIRV)

Don't worry about anything. No matter what happens, tell God about everything. Ask and pray and give thanks to him.

In Philippians we read that we must tell God everything and worry about nothing. Ask, pray and give thanks.

Let's look at the definition of the word **Pray**:

- Entreat, implore - often used as a function word in introducing a question, request or plea
- To make a request in a humble manner
- To address God with adoration, confession, supplication or thanksgiving

Prayer is us communicating, talking to and worshipping God. Prayer is us seeking guidance, making humble requests and giving thanks. It is having a relationship through communication with the Lord.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verses or discuss with your group.

Jeremiah 29:12 (NIRV)

Then you will call out to me. You will come and pray to me. And I will listen to you.

In Jeremiah 29:12 the Lord assures us that when we pray He will listen.

Jeremiah 29:13 (ESV)

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

In Jeremiah 29:13, we read that if we seek the Lord we will find Him.

Let's look at the definition of the word **Seek**

- Attempt to find (something)
- Attempt or desire to obtain or achieve (something)
- Ask for (something from someone)

God promises us that when we pray He will listen, when we seek Him we will find Him.

***PAUSE FOR THOUGHT**

Meditate on the verses or discuss with your group.

James 1:5 (NKJV)

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Read James 1:5 and let's look at the words **Lack**, **Wisdom**, **Ask**, **Liberal**, **Reproach** and **Given** to get a better understanding of this verse.

Definition of Lack

- To be short or have need of something
- To stand in need of
- Suffer from the absence or deficiency of

Definition of Wisdom

- Knowledge
- Ability to discern inner qualities and relationships
- Insight
- Good sense
- A wise attitude, belief, or course of action

Definition of Ask

- To call on for an answer
- To put a question about



- To make a request

Definition of Liberal

- Marked by generosity
- Give or provide in a generous and open-handed way

Definition of Reproach

- An expression of rebuke or disapproval
- The act or action of reproaching or disapproving
- A cause or occasion of blame, discredit or disgrace

Definition of Given

- Presented as a gift
- Bestowed without compensation
- Granted

Let's look at that verse again:

James 1:5 (NKJV)

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

When we call out to God, we seek Him and ask for His wisdom, and He gives liberally and without reproach. That is how much God loves us, He is our Heavenly Father, and He gives liberally without reproach and wants to give us the desires of our hearts. (Psalm 37:4)

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verse or discuss with your group.

John 10:27 (ESV)

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.



In John 10:27 we read that we hear God's voice, so when we pray and communicate with God He does listen and will answer.

How do we know we are hearing God's voice and not our own? How can we distinguish between God's voice and our own? The same way we establish God's will versus our own, through Scripture and fruits of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22 (NKJV)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Just like when we align ourselves with God's will we experience peace, God's voice brings peace, comfort, love and conviction. It does not bring guilt, condemnation and anxiety.

2 Timothy 3:16 (NLV)

All the Holy Writings are God-given and are made alive by Him. Man is helped when he is taught God's Word. It shows what is wrong. It changes the way of a man's life. It shows him how to be right with God.

God's voice and will for our lives will always line up with Scripture, the Holy writings which show us what is wrong, changes our ways and teaches us how to be right with God. God's voice will NEVER tell us to commit sin of any form.

The more we communicate and spend time with the Lord the clearer His voice will become to us, and the more we will be able to identify His voice.

We must however always remember the two references to confirm God's voice, and will, so that we are not deceived.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verses or discuss with your group.



Chapter 11 Self-Study

Pray before starting the self-study and ask the Lord to reveal what He wants to reveal to you.

When answering questions relate them to a situation / experience you encountered, it will help you to connect with the questions and relate them to your life.

Remember there is no right or wrong answer, whatever you feel impressed on your heart is what you should answer.

God's will versus my will – Jeremiah 29:11; 1 Timothy 2:4; Galatians 5:22-23

1. What is my will for my life?
2. What is God's will for my life?
3. When I am confused between God's will and my own, how can I distinguish the difference?
4. Are there situations / circumstances in my life where I can see my will was predominant over God's will? List them and explain how you know it was your will.
5. Are there situations / circumstances in my life where I can see God's will and my will were aligned? List them and explain how you know they were aligned.

Trusting God – Proverbs 3:5-6; Philippians 4:6

1. What is my understanding of trusting God and acknowledging God in everything I do?
2. Why do I think God asks this of me?
3. In Philippians 4:6 Scripture tells us to worry about nothing and pray about everything
 - a. What is my understanding of this verse?
 - b. Why do I think the Lord asks this of me?

Prayer – Jeremiah 29:12

1. What is my understanding of prayer?
2. When do I pray?
3. What do I pray about?
4. Do I feel God hears my prayers? Elaborate.

Seeking God – Jeremiah 29:13

1. In what ways have I searched for God in the past?
2. What pushed me away from Him?
3. In what ways do I now seek God?
4. Has there been a change? Elaborate.

Wisdom – James 1:5

1. What is my understanding of seeking God's wisdom?
2. In what areas of my life do I need to seek God's wisdom? Elaborate.
3. In James 1:5 Scripture tells us that if we ask for wisdom, God will give it liberally and without reproach.
 - a. What is my understanding of this verse?
 - b. How does this verse make me feel? Elaborate.

Hearing God's voice – John 10:27; Galatians 5:22; 2 Timothy 3:16

1. What is my understanding of hearing God's voice? Elaborate.
2. Do I believe I can hear God's voice? Elaborate.
3. What is my understanding of the fruits of the Spirit?
4. How do I confirm God's voice?

Deuteronomy 31:6 (NLT)

So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the Lord your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you.

In Deuteronomy 31:6 we read that we can be strong and courageous, that God will personally go ahead of us, and He will never fail nor abandon us. Over and over again, throughout Scripture, God confirms His love and commitment to us, and His desire to be in a relationship with us.

I pray and talk to the Lord throughout the day; while I am driving, standing in a queue at the mall, wherever I am, whatever I am doing. If I feel the need to talk to my Heavenly Father I do it. No, I don't always get on my knees and pray. I don't always close my eyes because it is not about what or how I pray, it's about me communicating with my Heavenly Father. I ask advice for situations; whether it's about work, finances, relationships or anything I am unsure of. I pray for strength when I am fearful, I thank the Lord when blessings occur, and I ask the Lord to calm me if I am anxious. I have a relationship with the Lord.

Prayer is all about relationship and what is so amazing is that God never gets tired, nor is He ever too busy for us. We have a 24-hour direct line to Him through his son Jesus Christ. He is always there, available to us when we need Him.

Remember it's all about relationship. Seek God and you shall find Him!

Do you want to know your Father on a more personal relationship? Talk to Him, include Him in every area of your life. He is there waiting for you.



CHAPTER 12

FISHER OF MEN

Working through the chapters we have had revelation of God's perfect love for us, broken strongholds and learned the truth about our identities in Christ. We have hope for our future and know that no matter what happens, our Heavenly Father is in control of our lives.

If God is for us who can come against us? (Romans 8:31).

So, what now? What's next, you may be thinking. I know that for me, once I had revelation of God's perfect love for me and found freedom from bondage, I wanted to tell the world. I wanted everyone to know what I had learned.

If you are not feeling that way, please understand that that's okay too. Remember there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)

The work of God is to believe in the one He has sent. (Mark 6:29)

Keep your eyes on the Lord and the Holy Spirit WILL lead you.

Matthew 4:19 (NKJV)

Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

In Matthew 4:19 Jesus says: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." God WILL MAKE YOU a fisher of men when you follow Him. Note how the Lord takes on the responsibility of training us when we follow Him.

Remember, it is by faith not works.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verses or discuss with your group.



Psalm 96:3 (NIV)

*Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.*

In Psalm 96:3 we read that we are to declare God's glory and marvelous deeds among the nations and people. What does this mean?

Let's look at the words **Declare**, **Glory** and **Deeds** to get a better understanding of this verse:

Definition of Declare

- To make known formally, officially, or explicitly
- To make clear
- To make evident

Definition of Glory

- Worshipful praise, honour, and thanksgiving
- A state of great gratification or exaltation

Definition of Deed

- Something that is done
- A usually illustrious act or action

When God calls us to share our experiences with others, to declare God's glory and miraculous deeds, the reason is so that others may also find the peace, freedom and salvation through Jesus Christ like we have.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verses or discuss with your group.

Mark 16:15 (NIV)

He said to them, “You are to go to all the world and preach the Good News to every person.

In Mark 16:15 Jesus instructs His followers to preach the Good News to ALL the world, to preach to EVERY person.

Jesus does not call us to preach only to the righteous or to those who we think are worthy of hearing the Good News. When we are called to preach, we are called to preach to each and every single person because everyone is worthy of hearing the truth about who they are in Christ Jesus.

Remember for God so loved the world that He sent His only Son Jesus Christ to die for our sins so that we may find salvation. He so loved **the world**, which is each and every person. – John 3:16

Each and every person is worthy of salvation, no matter what they have done, or who they are because nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. - Romans 8:35

There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. – Luke 15:7

1 Timothy 2:4 (ESV)

Who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

In 1 Timothy 2:4 we read that Gods desires ALL people to be saved, I cannot express that point enough. God loves each and every single one of us, His heart's desire is for all His children to know the truth and find salvation.

*** PAUSE FOR THOUGHT ***

Meditate on the verses or discuss with your group.



You may be thinking: So how can I share God's glory with everything I have done in my past? What qualifies me to give testimony of Jesus Christ?

If we take a look at the 12 disciples, we see that Jesus did not call people with 'perfect' pasts to follow Him. He in fact chose fishermen, businessmen and even a Jewish tax collector to be His disciples. You need to understand that tax collectors in those days extorted money from people and were hated, they were certainly not someone that you would classify as 'worthy' to be a disciple.

Let's look at Mary Magdalene. She may not have been classified as one of the 12 disciples however Mary was part of Jesus' inner circle and she was a prostitute before she started following Jesus.

Paul the Apostle is another perfect example of someone with an extremely shady past who ended up spreading the gospel. Paul was originally named Saul, he was a Roman who PERSONALLY hunted and persecuted the disciples and any other Christians who professed Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Saul had revelation of God's love and grace, his name was changed to Paul, and he went on to write most of the New Testament in the Bible! How amazing is our God? From persecutor to writing most of the New Testament... totally mind-blowing and more evidence of just how great and miraculous our God is.

You are worthy of giving God the glory He deserves.

You are worthy of sharing the Good News.

God has qualified you through His works, not your own.



Chapter 12 Self-Study

Pray before starting the self-study and ask the Lord to reveal what He wants to reveal to you.

When answering questions relate them to a situation / experience you encountered, it will help you to connect with the questions and relate them to your life.

Remember there is no right or wrong answer, whatever you feel impressed on your heart is what you should answer.

Fisher of men - Matthew 4:19 (NKJV)

1. What is my understanding of being a fisher of men?
2. What qualifies me to be a fisher of men?

Declaring God's glory - Psalm 96:3 (NIV)

1. What is my understanding of sharing God's glory?
2. In what way have I experienced God's miraculous deeds in my life?
3. In what areas have I experienced God's love and mercy in my life?
4. How can I use these experiences to share God's glory with others?

Sharing the Good News - Mark 16:15 (NLV)

1. Do I believe everyone deserves to hear the Good News? Elaborate.
2. Do I have reservations about sharing the Good News? List them.
3. Find a Scripture to combat each reservation and write it next to the reservation.
4. Are you willing to become a fisher of men and share God's glory?

Moving Forward

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!



As a follower of Christ we are new creations, we have a new spirit, a new walk and a new life. When we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour we were born again. Just like a newborn baby has no prior transgressions, neither do we. Our transgressions were washed away, we were washed white as snow (Isaiah 1:18) and our past became null and void in the eyes of the Lord.

We have been given a second chance in life and no longer have to let our past define us nor keep us in bondage of guilt, shame and condemnation.

We can use our past experiences to bring us humility and compassion for others. Our past can enable us to love unconditionally and share the Good News about Jesus Christ because we know, and have experienced first-hand, the consequences of sin and bondage. We can relate to the pain others are experiencing.

Luke 8:39 (NIV)

"Return home and tell how much God has done for you.' So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him."

We can use our past afflictions to glorify God and share the Good News so that others may find salvation.

PLEASE NOTE

Please be aware of not falling into the trap of trying to save the world. We cannot save anyone, nor is that our responsibility. We are simply called to share the gospel, plant seeds and let God be God to do the rest.



CONCLUSION

Writing this book has changed my life. With each chapter I experienced revelation of God's perfect love for me, His kindness, provision, compassion and mercy.

There were stages in the book where I literally felt or thought: Oh gosh, what will the next chapter bring?

Each chapter offers growth when we submit to the Father and let Him cleanse and heal our past hurts. We have to face them and work through them, which is not easy.

There were times that I wanted to stop because it was so painful looking at certain areas in my life, however, I pushed through and used all the tools that the Lord has blessed me with to overcome trials and tribulations.

I went from a broken, lost individual to a secure, stable, strong woman in Christ, and I wouldn't change a thing in my life. The gratitude and adoration I feel for the amazing God we serve overwhelms me. He truly is who He says He is, and I know with everything in me that if you submit to Him and let Him love you, you will experience complete peace and security.

Our Heavenly Father is so faithful and true and will never give us more than we can handle.

I pray this book helps you as much as writing it has helped me.

STAY IN TOUCH

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